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Australia's first national Citizens Parliament wins international award

The newDemocracy Foundation has been awarded the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) 2009 Special Recognition Award for the Citizens Parliament held at Canberra's Old Parliament House in February this year.

NewDemocracy founder and Chairman, Luca Belgiorno-Nettis said, "we are very proud to be the recipient of this award.

"We wanted to know if a dose of deliberative democracy could revitalise public participation in Australia's political system. One hundred and fifty citizens randomly selected from around the country participated in the first national Australian Citizen's Parliament. The aim was to let those who tend to see themselves as the silent majority have their say.

"The participatory processes our facilitators and volunteers used were innovative and thoroughly engaged this group of disparate citizens in the discussion. All our Citizen Parliamentarians certainly left the four day event with a new enthusiasm for democracy in Australia."

"A report summarising the parliament's recommendations was provided to the Prime Minister and all Members of the Australian Parliament. And I am pleased to report that now, newDemocracy has made available the Citizens Parliament Handbook which reports on the successes and the learnings from the event in February as well as providing a guide to how others might stage their own similar event."

NewDemocracy and its Citizens Parliament were honoured during the Core Values award celebration at the IAP2 17th International Conference in San Diego, California on September 21st 2009.

In presenting the award, IAP2 Core Values judging panel chairman said, "The IAP2 Core Values awards are for projects which demonstrate the use of innovative techniques, sustainable solutions to problems that face the field of public participation, and the successful involvement of the public in new areas.

"We are very pleased to honour the extraordinary achievements of both the people who put together Australia's first national Citizen's Parliament and its participants."

The Citizens' Parliament was funded by an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant in conjunction with the newDemocracy Foundation.

Further information or to arrange interviews please contact Vickianne Lane on 61 419 460 592.

The Citizens' Parliament website: <http://www.citizensparliament.org.au>

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