

Chairman's Report 2019

Summary

The hunger for political reform has never been stronger. Brexit, the rise of extremist parties across Europe and the deepening divide in the US are all manifestations of the public's disaffection with politics-as-usual. More and more politicians are now open to new ways of doing things, and thanks to the pioneering developments in Canada and Ireland, precedents have been forged. Together with all of our colleagues in Deliberative Democracy, we're reassured to see many political actors turning to us for an alternative 'playbook'.

The stand-out this year has been the Summer School in Eupen, as well as the very useful role that Democracy R&D is providing, led of course by David Schecter.

Locally

The 'Sydney 2050' City of Sydney Jury is the biggest, most high profile project and will run through to November 2019.

The Byron Shire Council concluded its Citizen Panel consultations with a big list of recommendations, and we can already see evidence that council is acting to embed a permanent role for randomly selected everyday people. A significant Regional NSW project, likely to commence next year, is addressing a highly topical issue with complex (technical & political) aspects.

The various initiatives arising from the Symposium in 2017/18 have resulted in three submissions to the Senate Legal & Constitutional Affairs References Committee – Inquiry into nationhood, national identity and democracy.

The three are: Percy Allan's *Evidence Based Policy Group*; Glenn Barnes' *Citizens for Democratic Renewal*; and our own.

We continue to publish Research Notes which are resonant for elected representatives (and their advisors) seeking to innovate, and practical for those charged with operating the projects. We are seeing growing audience for the knowledge gleaned from our pilot projects and the concise format for sharing this is clearly the right one.

As always, we respond to requests for manuscript reviews and journal articles, and provide comments on new projects that are being trialled throughout the world. The newDemocracy Foundation is increasingly seen as leading the field of deliberative practice. Current collaborations include the European Commission and the OECD.

Internationally

The Eupen Summer School has proven to be the most experiential and practical event for engaging with politicians. It was everything we could have hoped for and more. Organised by the G1000 group in Belgium, (David Van Reybrouck and Yves Dejaeghere) Iain's contribution was transformative. The Speaker and 4 NSW cross-party MPs, plus the clerk of the Parliament, attended as participants and came away as joint advocates for a potential NSW citizens' assembly for parliamentary reform.

The outcome could well be a milestone project for nDF.

The UN Democracy Fund project continues with the handbook effectively completed and the first project underway in Fortaleza Brazil.

The international communication amongst the R&D network is working well thanks to David's management. New members have been enlisted, a broader funding base obtained including Ned Crosby's contribution.

More Generally

We continue to investigate a longer term institutional home for nDF. Discussions are ongoing with UTS and The Athens Democracy Forum: our reputation and operational experience are drawing an interest from a wide pool of potential partners so this is a decision which will be made slowly.

The small nDF team (3 FTE's) continues to work well.

Founder

Luca Belgiorno-Nettis