MPs and Citizen Engagement, plus the Spring Edition of NetworkNews

Friday, April 22, 2005 – Canadians taking part in CPRN's many deliberative dialogues have demonstrated, time and again, their interest in new avenues for participation in the major decisions that affect their lives. Elections, on their own, don't fill the bill.

In a presentation to federal MPs last fall, CPRN's President, Judith Maxwell outlines the growing expectations citizens have of the political process and the practice of government. Transparency and accountability rank high among their values.

Distrust of the political process often leads to demands for third party oversight of political decisions. Ironically, such proposals could weaken the link between the state and citizens. The alternative, Maxwell suggests, is a commitment to opening the way for citizens to influence decisions by interaction with their governments between elections.

She reviews the requirements for successful engagement, when it is appropriate, and the value of the results. And she suggests how MPs and Parliament can lead and facilitate citizen engagement initiatives, referring to examples from abroad and elsewhere in Canada.

You can access or download a copy of her presentation, ***Engaging Canadians: Briefing for New MPs***, by clicking here.

NetworkNews, Spring Edition

The Spring issue of our quarterly newsletter, *NetworkNews*, is now available on our Web site. Articles in this issue feature research on cities as laboratories for a new federalism, on-the-job skills development for low-skilled workers, the role of performance measurement in health care accountability, housing as a vehicle for social policy and more.

You'll find the latest news on the comings and goings of our staff, an update from our campaign and, of course, our regular President's Commentary. This time, Judith Maxwell, looks at the importance of getting the balance right in our attempts to ensure accountability in government.

To access or download ***NetworkNews #29***, click here.

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