NEWS RELEASE

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Business award winners grew from "nothing" to world-scale software firm

SYDNEY – A small-town Australian software firm has won a prestigious Australian Consensus Award for its success in changing the way big companies all over the world manage their internal computer systems.

SPARX Systems of Creswick, Victoria won the national award Thursday night for software that helps large organizations like banks and government agencies create their own customized software to support day to day business.

Almost all large organizations develop "in house" software systems. The SPARX product –marketed around the world under the brand name Enterprise Architect – helps lower development costs and reduce the time needed to complete projects.

SPARX home base of Creswick – population 2,250 – is an old gold rush town 20 minutes north of Ballarat. SPARX marketing manager Craig Allan believes one of the reasons SPARX won a Consensus Award is because it has brought millions of dollars from around the globe into the economy of rural Australia – while competing head-on with industry giants IBM and Borland.

"In six years we've grown from one person operating out of his home to 20 full time people," said Allan. "We use the internet and strategic business partnerships to sell our software in more than a hundred countries. The revenue creates well paying jobs in a small Australian town where the traditional economy isn't creating a lot of new well-paying jobs."

ENTERPRISE ARCHITECT

Allan said the award was timely – SPARX is predicting a breakout year where its worldwide customer base will grow from 45,000 to 70,000. SPARX Enterprise Architect software is already used by 20 per cent of the top 100 firms in America. It is available in Japanese and Spanish versions, with German and Korean to follow this year.

Allan said the SPARX had recently done several large "migrations" – where customers dropped a competing software line for SPARX' Enterprise Architect.

"We actually get fan mail," said Allan. "The techies who've switched love our software because it's easier to use and has a better toolkit, and the business people love it because it costs less than a tenth the competition."

Allan hopes the publicity surrounding the Consensus Award will encourage small Australian start-ups to think big and think globally. "Sometimes we don't realize how good we are in Australia until we get out and compete with the wider world," he said. "The Internet has shortened the distance between Australia and global markets – and that creates tremendous opportunities for this country that never existed before.

"SPARX is the living proof of that."

The annual Consensus Awards are jointly sponsored by the Australian government and the technology industry. They are awarded each year to several outstanding Australian technology companies selected by a blue-ribbon panel of independent judges drawn from the technology field.

The 2005 awards are co-sponsored by Microsoft, and were presented April 21 by Senator Helen Coonan, federal minister for communications and information technology, at a gala dinner held in Sydney.

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