Apps for All Challenge Awards Ceremony

TERESA CORBIN: OK, everyone, we might get seated and, just see if the interpreters and captioners are ready.

I'm at risk of my excitement getting ahead of me here, so please forgive me if I trip over my words at the end of a long day, because this is actually a very exciting day, because this is an idea that came after our conference last year, our M-Enabling conference, as to how we could continue the positive vibe and continue the message from that conference of educating developers and broadening people's awareness of accessibility. So I'm very excited at this inaugural launch of our Telstra prize Apps for All Challenge that has been jointly sponsored by ACCAN, Telstra and the Australian Human Rights Commission. I have to give an apology from Susan Ryan, who is a commissioner at the Human Rights Commission, who would be here today, except that she is actually giving an address to the Press Club tomorrow, so she couldn't be here in person. So I pass on her apology. We launched this award at the end of our M-Enabling conference. We wanted to raise awareness of issues faced by people with disabilities and older Australians with inaccessible apps. We've all come across apps these days – we can't really do much these days without coming across at least one or two apps over a day. I also want to acknowledge Wayne Hawkins, who's our disability policy officer, who has worked very, very hard to pull this together. I also want to acknowledge the people that have sat on our judgement panel, who have really assisted us in deciding who the winners will be. This is a particularly important prize because of the fact that mobile phone usage is continuing to grow. We just don't want people to be left behind. We don't want the digital divide to grow. We want technology to enable people and to be used to actually make the world a more level playing field. Without further ado, I would really like to introduce our former disability Discrimination Commissioner, Graeme Innes, who helped us launch this award last year. He's here today to also help us present to the winners. Graeme Innes.

(APPLAUSE)

GRAEME INNES: Thanks, Teresa. I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet. I wake in the morning. There's an app for that.

(LAUGHTER)

I check the weather. There's an app for that. I look at Twitter. There's an app for that. I check my emails. There's an app for that. I send a text. There's an app for that as well. I navigate my environment to a place that I've never visited. I read a book or document. I browse the Web. I listen to the cricket from overseas. I operate my home music system. I read blogs. I listen to podcasts. My life with my iPhone. I said to someone who was interviewing me a couple of months ago that my iPhone is my favourite possession. But it only works if the apps are accessible. I'm really pleased to be here and speak with you today. This feels like old times! Feels like July 4 never happened!

(LAUGHTER)

I appreciate your preparedness to put up with an ex-commissioner from the human right commission. But I'm doing lots of other interesting things now, and happy to talk about those with you, and I've got my new business card, if anyone wants to keep in touch who doesn't have my contact details. But it's probably appropriate because ACCAN convinced the Australian Human Rights Commission to be a supporter of this competition when I was the commissioner. That's not that long ago. As Teresa said, our new commissioner, Susan Ryan, is unable to be here tonight because she's doing her first job as Age Discrimination Commissioner at the National Press Club tomorrow, and so she needs to be in Canberra, preparing for that. So I'm pleased to be here in Susan's place. May I also say how pleasing it is that Telstra has come on board with this competition. One of the 20 Years, 20 Stories movies – yeah, I still talk about it – which I was involved in making, related to Jeff Scott, who just wanted to make a TTY call when everyone else made phone calls. In those days, phones were provided as part of the rental but TTYs weren't. Telstra, at that time, opposed Jeff in the Human Rights Commission when he lodged a discrimination complaint about the fact that he wasn't provided with a TTY. But they're clearly a company who has the capacity to change. They now support the TTY scheme, but they do lots of other things to support access to the telephone system and internet throughout Australia. Landline, mobile and the internet, for people with disabilities. I won't list them all, because

that would take too long. But their recent work with Google Glass, for people who are blind or have low vision, and around developing apps, et cetera, for people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment, is pretty awesome, I reckon. Here they are, also supporting this competition, and supporting access in yet another way. The convention on the rights of people with disabilities, which I like to call the DISCO – some of you who've seen me speak before have probably seen me do my five second of dad dancing when I talk about the DISCO – I won't do it tonight – promotes, through Australia's commitment, a new approach to and for people with disabilities. We're no longer to be viewed as objects of pity and charity. Rather, we're to be regarded as subjects and citizens. And as the bearers of rights in the same way as other citizens. However, this convention, and the legislation which supports it in most countries of the world, is only worth the paper it's written on if it's not put into practice. We live in a society where, as Teresa said, the smartphone is playing a more and more important part in the lives of all of us. Those of us with disabilities must be able to use smartphones on an equal basis with others in order to participate in society on an equal basis with others. So there are two ways in which access of smartphones and access of apps can be achieved. One way is that people such as myself, who are prepared to launch discrimination complaints – I've got a bit of a reputation for that – could launch complaints against all of the app developers who don't make their apps accessible. I and others have done that in the past. And no doubt, we'll do it again on some occasion. That's the stick to enforce the convention and the disability discrimination act. But the easier way for app developers is for them to be proactive and to build their apps accessibly from the start. In the same way as buildings are cheaper if built accessibly rather than having to be modified, apps are cheaper if built accessibly rather than having to be modified. It's the cheaper way, as well as the easier way. And those are the carrots. Congratulations to all the app developers who've accepted the carrot approach and participated in this competition. Winners will be announced in a minute or so, and I particularly congratulate you. But I regard all the participants in this competition as winners, for joining us in the journey towards a society that includes everyone, not just people without disabilities or people who can use apps that aren't accessible. Keep eating those carrots. I'm sure there's an app for that as well.

(LAUGHTER)

Thanks for the chance to speak with you this afternoon.

(APPLAUSE)

TERESA CORBIN: Thank you very much for that, Graeme. As always, very entertaining. Now I'd like to introduce to you Karsten Wildberger. Is that pronounced with a "v"?

KARSTEN WILDBERGER: Perfect.

TERESA CORBIN: He is from Telstra, group manager of Consumer. He's going to say a few words before we make the presentation.

KARSTEN WILDBERGER: Thank you, Teresa, and good evening, all. Before I say a few word, I just want to say, Teresa and the whole of ACCAN, a big thankyou for my side and from Telstra's side. In my two years I've been with Telstra now, I really have enjoyed working together. I really have to congratulate you on the work that you are doing representing customers and raising the voice of so many that often get overheard and don't have a voice. I really appreciate that, and it keeps myself and us on our toes, also, to do the right thing. A big thankyou, and congratulations. I'm really delighted to be here tonight, and very honoured on behalf of Telstra, to actually announce the inaugural winners of the Apps for All Challenge and present the prizes. I have to say, I've been really pleased, talking also to our digital team, to see all the different applicants coming through with great ideas. It's very much anchored around the design and the accessibility. We had high standards in the competition that had to be met, because it's very important that everyone can use them and, in particular, also, people with disability and older people. At Telstra, we actually refreshed our values and also our purpose as a company, and I personally think we have a great purpose as a company that hopefully all people adhere to, which is to connect a brilliant connected future for everyone. For me, very important is "everyone". That's not just something that we put on the walls, but it's something we take very seriously. And I also know that there's still a long way to go to really fulfil that purpose. It's about that connectivity – to make sure that everyone can participate in today and in the future. Applications play such an important role. As a matter of fact, Australia is one of the leading countries in terms of

smartphone adoption, by far. It's one of the top two countries, with South Korea. Incredibly well penetrated, also, with internet. And very well advanced. On the average smartphone in Australia, there are 30 applications. 30 apps today. That's a growing number. And, yes indeed, there is an app for everything, and there are more apps coming. There are also useless apps.

(LAUGHTER)

..and there are lots of helpful and useful apps. And I hope we see, in particular, more of those in the future – particularly for people with disabilities and older people. And that could be any of us very, very soon.

Before I get to announcing the winners, I'd like to tell you just a few things that Telstra has done in recent times in that space. Not to tell you how great we are – just to make it more tangible, what it means, and what it can also mean going forward. Today, we're actually launching a new portal on Telstra.com. That portal helps people find the mobile device that best meets their needs, with all the different functionalities. So we can look after features, particularly for people with speech, vision, cognitive or mobility impairment, and so that people can actually find the best device for them. That portal is actually based on the guidelines, of an international body called the Mobile Manufacturers' Forum, MMF. That creates an international standard how to search for devices and functionalities. We are proud that we are actually the first telco in the world launching that functionality. I hope that lots of customers find that useful and will use this and we hopefully evolve it from there.

(APPLAUSE)

Another step we've taken – it was last year that we removed the captcha authentication from Telstra.com. And I think everyone...

(APPLAUSE)

I tell you, often I click when I get captchas for the next one, because it's very annoying and hard to read. But captcha is for, for those who don't know, the combination of numbers and letters you have to input to just verify that you're not a robot. That's particularly unhelpful for people with any sort of impairment. So we got rid of this. Finally, we're doing some work in our movie space and the media space. We now have open captioning on 14 popular BigPond movies that's not a lot, but there's more to come. Open captioning is not just subtitles, but where you also include, um, that relate to a door being opened or a telephone ring, so you see the noises of the movie, and create a different experience for customers watching the movies. So there's more to come in that space, and that's quite exciting. They're just a few examples to make it more tangible. I'll tell you, there is so much more we need to do. It's not always easy, in such a big company, especially in mass market, to do it, but I can tell you, all our employees take our purpose very seriously, and it's a pleasure to work with representative bodies of all the consumer groups to make sure that we have digital inclusion for everyone in this country. But right now, I'd like to actually recognise and reward, together with Teresa, the developers of some really great apps for their commitment to making apps that can be accessed and enjoyed by everyone, particularly by customers with disability and older people. Teresa, if you want to kick us off...

TERESA CORBIN: I'll do my bit from here, and you can do your bit and congratulate the winners as they come up on the stage.

KARSTEN WILDBERGER: I'll do that.

TERESA CORBIN: Obviously, also for the winners, please pause so we can take a photograph and maybe just hang around the front here so we can have a group photograph after that.

KARSTEN WILDBERGER: OK. Super.

TERESA CORBIN: Let me just say thank you to everyone that nominated. We couldn't have had a competition without nominees, so thank you very much. Hopefully this will only be the first time we run this, and we will get lots of nominees next year, too, when they see what a great challenge this really is. The first category of the Apps for All Challenge is Most Accessible Mainstream App. The

nominations are Energy Rating, ACCC Shopper, and My Bus, the Canberra Transport application. Maybe give a round of applause for nominees.

(APPLAUSE)

KARSTEN WILDBERGER: And the winner of the Most Accessible Mainstream App is ACCC Shopper.

(APPLAUSE)

(APPLAUSE)

TERESA CORBIN: Delia Rickard, the deputy ACCC chairperson collecting that award. Thank you very much, Delia. Our next category, the second category of the Apps for All Challenge is Most Innovative App Designed for People with Disability or Older Australians. The nominees are Walsh Bay Sculpture Tour, OpenMi Tours, and OpenMi Silent Tweets.

(APPLAUSE)

KARSTEN WILDBERGER: And the winner of the Most Innovative App Designed for People with Disability or Older Australians is OpenMi Tours.

(APPLAUSE)

TERESA CORBIN: Should just say that the OpenMi Tours app provides information for users at museums, art galleries and cultural venues in a variety of inclusive formats. These include audio-only, audio with captions, Auslan with captions, audio description, as well as foreign languages. I was very excited to see that they are also playing around with Google Glass. And, of course, we actually have our recipient wearing Google Glass!

(LAUGHTER)

..modelling it today.

NEW SPEAKER: Should I take a picture of everyone as well?

TERESA CORBIN: Have we got everyone's permission for a picture?

(LAUGHTER)

TERESA CORBIN: In the vein of today – go ahead.

NEW SPEAKER: Wait for it. There we go. Thank you.

TERESA CORBIN: I should probably also just jump back a little bit. I did forget to mention that the ACCC Shopper app provide useful consumer information to users and, includes tools to keep copies of receipts. It can be used to set reminders for lay-boys, warranties, and gift vouchers, write complaint letters to businesses, or ask common shopping questions, such as "When can I get a refund?" Sorry I missed that description earlier, Delia. Catching up now. The next category, the third category, of the Apps for All Challenge is Most Accessible Children's App. The nominations are Positive Penguins, Row Row Your Boat, and Allen's Adventure.

(APPLAUSE)

KARSTEN WILDBERGER: And the winner of the Most Accessible Children's App – there's actually two winners. They are Row Row Your Boat and Positive Penguins. Congratulations.

(APPLAUSE)

TERESA CORBIN: Row Row Your Boat app provides an interactive learning experience with educational ideas, games and sounds to encourage the development of listening and language skills in young children. The app particularly is useful for families who have reduced hearing or language problems. Great work, Row Row Your Boat.

The Positive Penguins app was created as a tool for children to understand emotions come from their teaching and thinking – challenged to problem-solve or tell the stories themselves. The app was created by a Melbourne student, with the idea initially being created in a PowerPoint presentation on healthy mind and healthy body. This is why our Melbourne student wasn't able to actually come to collect the award, but I can tell you that they were extremely excited to know they were on the short-list. I think our student is 13 years old…

CROWD: Awwww!

.. so we're extremely excited about that win as well. Hopefully we'll be able to get some great media about that out, and hopefully promote that application. So that's Positive Penguins.

The fourth and final category of the Apps for All Challenge is Most Accessible Gaming App. I'm sorry to say that we have not received any nominations that have met the accessibility criteria. So the challenge goes out there for next year! We want some accessible games out there, and we want some nominations. But in the meantime, I'd really like to congratulate, again, the inaugural winners of the challenge, and I don't know if Graeme or Karsten want to make a final word... No?

KARSTEN WILDBERGER: I just hope that this is the beginning of a great journey for us, and I'm looking forward to next year's award ceremony, where we have, in all categories, applications that qualify. Thank you very much.

TERESA CORBIN: Hear, hear. And join me for drinks out in the front. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)