**M-Enabling Australasia 2013 Conference**

**Day 1 – Opening Session: 9:00 – 9:20am**

JOHANNA PLANTE: We will wait until everyone gets here. We'll give everyone a few more minutes to settle. I think we might be ready to start now because we are running very late. As we always are!

Good morning to you all. Before we start, I need to highlight that we're using several different methods to make sure this event is fully accessible to everyone. So firstly, and I'll be the first one to start this. Please speak clearly and slowly for the Auslan interpreters and the live captioning. And please make sure you use microphones at all times when speaking, because we're using a hearing loop. We'd also appreciate you switching your mobile phones to silent.

I'd now like to introduce Uncle Chicka Madden, a Gadigal elder who is here from the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council to welcome you all to country. Oh, there he is. Last time you were standing there and I saw you! So thank you, Uncle Chicka.

CHICKA MADDEN: Thank you. Good morning, folks. My name is Charles Madden, known around the inner city as Chicka. That's a nickname I got many years ago going to Redfern Public School which is now NCIE, the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence. I grew up in around the Redfern area, Waterloo and Alexandria. I've lived there for practically all me life. I am, still am an active member with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council. Also, a director with the Aboriginal Medical Service at Redfern. I've been on the board there for over 40 years. Ex‑director with Aboriginal Housing Company at Redfern and Aboriginal Hostels Australia. I'm from Gadigal land, that's the land we're on now. I'd like to take this opportunity, this morning, to extend a warm and sincere welcome to all my Aboriginal brothers and sisters, non‑Aboriginal brothers and sisters. Welcome to Gadigal land, Aboriginal land. The Gadigal clan is one of 29 that makes up the Eora nation. The Eora nation is bordered by three distinctive landmarks. We have the Hawkesbury River to the north, Nepean to the west and the George's River to the south. Those three rivers form the boundaries of the Eora nation. Folks, if you've travelled across this great city of ours this morning, the state of this great country, welcome to Gadigal land. If we have any brothers and sisters here from the Torres Strait or further afar across the seas, welcome to Gadigal land. Enjoy the morning, have a safe and trouble‑free trip home. Once again, welcome, welcome, welcome! Thank you, and enjoy the morning.

(APPLAUSE)

JOHANNA PLANTE: Thank you very much, Uncle Chicka. I also want to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land of which we meet the Gadigal people and the elders past and present. My name is Johanna Plante and I'm chair of the ACCAN board. On behalf of ACCAN, I want to want to welcome you all to M‑Enabling Australasia 2013, the first conference of its kind ever held in the Southern Hemisphere. ACCAN and Telstra are pleased that as partners, we've been able to bring this event to Australia in cooperation with global initiative for inclusive ICTs and EJ Krauss and Associates. I would also like to especially acknowledge our distinguished guests here today, Senator The Honourable Kate Lundy.

Karen Peltz Strauss and Alex Leblois and executive director for the G3ict. Thank you so much for joining us here today. We have a fantastic program of speakers over the next two days and they'll undoubtedly have exciting ideas shared and debated.

Over the past few years, ACCAN has been able to contribute to a wide range of policy debates and discussions that have led to many advances in accessibility in Australia. These include the National Disability Strategy and the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, now known as Disability Care. They also include accessible set top boxes as part of the digital television switch over household assistance scheme and significant upgrades to National Relay Services including video relay, SMS relay and caption telephony. We've also been pleased with moves to improve the quality of captions and the number of television programs that are captioned.

On the seniors front, there's been the broadband for seniors initiative, the tech‑savvy senior's program and the Longer Living Better Reform

Package for aged care. And of course, the rollout of the National Broadband Network will undoubtedly deliver further opportunities and benefits for both people with disabilities and seniors. There's still much to be done and there's plenty of scope for improvement. But it's important to acknowledge how much has already been achieved. One of the great challenges for ordinary Australians is how to find out about what services and equipment are already available, and this is one of the main reasons for this conference. So I'm also pleased to announce that we're launching a new section of the ACCAN website today to assist in the information that Australians need about accessibility. We're calling it our accessibility portal and I hope you'll get a chance to try it out over the next few days and give us some feedback.

I'd like to close by telling you how delighted we are by the support we've received from industry to host this event and we'd like to especially thank our event partner, Telstra, for making the whole thing possible. I would also like to acknowledge our sponsors for ensuring the event is accessible including gold sponsor Google, silver sponsors the Mobile Manufacturer's Forum, Vodafone, Amaysim and the National Relay Service, and other sponsors Media Access Australia, Sydney University, Sophos, Red Bee Media and the Australian Communication Exchange. And for those Twitter addicts, you can contribute to the conversation on Twitter. The conference is also being webcast.

So please enjoy our next two days together at M‑Enabling Australasia 2013. I'm now very pleased to introduce Jill Riseley who is here representing our event partner, Telstra. Jill is the general manager for digital inclusion at Telstra. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

JILL RISELEY: Good morning. I'd also like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we're gathered. Telstra is really proud to partner with ACCAN to bring the M‑Enabling Conference and showcase to Australia. Being at the heart of the digital age, telecommunications has never been more dynamic. We're experiencing a wholesale digitisation of just about everything, books, photos, maps, x‑rays, my airline boarding pass this morning! You can tour the Louvre or visit the British Museum online, pay your business, book your holidays, share your photos or buy your clothes. The new communications technologies have created a truly connected world and the numbers are extraordinary. Every day, we are producing in the order of 300 billion e‑mails, 20 million SMS messages, 7 billion calls. More video is uploaded to YouTube every month than the three major US TV networks created in 60 years, so we're generating a huge amount of content. In fact, five exabytes of data. What is that? It's a billion, billion bytes? And a recent colleague recently told me that five exabytes was equal to all the words ever spoken to mankind. This incredible breadth is also a similar story with devices. Around the world today, there are six billion mobile phones. That's one for every man, woman and child. And by the end of next year, there will be ten billion – greater than the world's population. This is the connected world we live in today. It's a world underpinned by rapid technological innovation and adoption and a world that is challenging and re‑inventing traditional business and community service models as well as realising social and economic benefits. And the pace is incredible. It's hard to believe, but the first iPhone only hit the shelves in Australia in 2008. The first iPad in 2010. Yet today, smartphones and tablets are common place. In addition, devices are more intuitive than ever. I have two young children and there's something awe‑inspiring and to be honest, a little unnerving, to see a 3‑year‑old using an iPad. And as head of cyber safety at Telstra, I feel I should also say my children always use devices on aeroplane mode and strong privacy settings. And for anyone with teenage children, I would highly recommend a cyber safety product called Smart Controls which has been described to me by parents as a sanity saver.

But the key point of the remarks is not simply to sketch the remarkable and dynamic qualities of my sector, it is to highlight the importance of all Australians having access to the everyday social and economic benefits that come with being connected. And many of us take this for granted. The relationship between telecommunications technologies and people with a disability also continues to evolve rapidly. There are impressive innovations taking place with accessibility features for connected smartphones and tablets, along with the various applications which are proving to be beneficial. In addition, we hope that disability care will be an important enabler for people with a disability, especially for telly work.

We know over four million people in Australia are living with a disability. Technology is a real game changer in terms of the interaction with the world. My favourite cousin is deaf and I've seen first‑hand how technology, in particular social media, as opened up his world and I'm sure everyone in this room has an example to share of the transformative effects of telecommunications technology. Telstra looks at device accessibility, but also by helping our customers acquire the skills and knowledge to fully and safely participate in the online world.

An example of this is Telstra's partnership with Able Australia, which teaches members of the deaf blind community digital literacy skills. But there is more on the horizon and some I ovations currently being concerned include speech recognition, gesture recognition and new technologies, in particular bio senses. The tagline for the Telstra brand is – It's How We Connect. It's only four words, but we should never underestimate the power of connection or connectors for Australians. I hope you enjoy the next two days. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

JOHANNA PLANTE: Thank you so much, Jill. I'd now like to invite Teresa Corbin the ACCAN chief executive officer to say a few words.

TERESA CORBIN: Good morning, everyone. I would also like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners on the land that we're meeting and the elders past and present. It's been a long journey to bring M‑Enabling to Australia and it's exciting to see everyone finally here. It's even more exciting this morning to look around the face of the people who are actually here and the organisations that are represented. As somebody said to me, it's like a Hall of Fame of disability advocates that are actually here today. So that's an extremely exciting achievement, so I'm really looking forward to the next few days and the journey that we really are on on how we're making Australia more an inclusive society.

As none of you will be surprised, we've done quite a lot of thinking and talking at ACCAN about how we can achieve the goal of a more inclusive society. And as you've heard from Johanna Plante, ACCAN's chairperson, we're pleased with the advances. In fact, in Australia, we have foundations coming together that can enable us to build a more equal future – a future many of us have envisioned for a long time. Technological advances, recognition by Government, implementation of changes by policy makers and a growing understanding by the supply side of the needs of real people, all continue to ensure that the possibility of an M‑Enabled society is finally within reach for many people. This will be demonstrated in the next few days both by the speakers and the show cases outside. I'm sure some of you looked at them outside, but they'll all be set up at morning tea. I'm sure that many of you will be able to contribute to the discussion with information about how your lives are being M‑Enabled. With the help of technology and support from Disability Care Australia, more and more people with disabilities will be able to join the workforce. We all know too that there are growing numbers of older Australians who want to stay in the workforce and live at home for as long as possible. So now is the right time to act because ultimately, what we want is to remove any barriers to full participation. We want technology to be used as the best possible tool – a real leveller in the great enabler for all. That's what we want, but we know that it's not going to happen by magic. The Government's National Transition Strategy has been an impressive project making websites delivering services across the country accessible to all. But this work has only just begun with hundreds of Government services looking to provide online only service options in the next few years. We need to move quickly to get accessible universal policies and Government procurement plans in place as soon as possible. We need the Government to develop a road map that helps define the accessible future we want as part of the digital first strategy.

With strategic planning that incorporates accessible design in to Government web development, there will be no need for expensive retrofitting because things will be done right the first time around. In the next few days, we'll hear about the 21st century Video Communications and Disabilities Act for the CVAA. Everything has an acronym. I have a special request from you all. I want you to think about the special relevance in the Australian context because we think an Aussie 21st century video and communications act would ensure that all Australians are able to travel on the road with everyone else to our exciting digital future. Adopting an Australian communications and video accessibility act would help us implement and achieve the National Disability Strategy. It would help us achieve the strategy that we're already committed to and it would mean all Australians would be able to take advantage of a National Broadband Network as it is rolled out. It would mean all Australians would be provided to access of benefits of services over the NBN including e‑health services, remote monitoring for assisted living, interactive learning opportunities, employment, increased connectedness with the community and improved access to communication services. An Australian Communications and Video Accessibility Act would be a platform to bring the final acts together for an M‑Enabled society. It would put Australia up with other world leaders in accessibility. Such legislation would, for example, ensure that audio description is on all Australian television, but it would also ensure access features such as closed captions and audio description follow content across broad platforms, so regardless of whether the content is delivered over the airwaves to TV, or via fibre and Internet, or via a broadband service, you would still be able to see the conversations and have the audio description. It would also ensure the delivery. It would ensure that services like fixed services in your home meet basic mention marks to ensure that people of all abilities can have a standard telephone service they can use regardless of whether they're using any assisted devices such as hearing aids.

An Australian Communications and Video Accessibility Act would provide help for a significant number of deaf blind Australians. It would guarantee broadcasters responsible for transmitting emergency warnings ensure that messages are accessible with Auslan interpreters and captioning. So let's look at an Australian Communications and Video Accessibility Act as building the next bridge in our inclusive futures roadmap. But before I finish, I want to tell you about a campaign called Kill CAPTCHA. We're going to put a slide up. It's getting a cheer! CAPTCHA is the annoying test that you have to do or the puzzle that you have to solve and sometimes the illegible string of numbers that you have to type in before you can use a web service such as posting a message online, signing up for Skype or subscribing to a newsletter or even using some Government services. They're frustrating for all Internet users. I know myself, I often sit there and keep clicking until I know there's one I can actually read. But they're particularly problematic for people who are vision impaired. CAPTCHA prevents them from accessing Government services because they can't be read by screen‑reading software. CAPTCHA minimises it by requiring web users to prove they're humans, not computers. But even the official standards body, the World Wide Web Consortium says that CAPTCHA excludes people with disability and they've looked at several methods of proving that web users are humans. One is a simple e‑mail activation link. Audio CAPTCHA was supposed to solve the problem for blind and vision impaired people, but these are almost as inaccessible as CAPTCHA. For from our perspective, it is time to Kill CAPTCHA. Our partners are Media Access Australia, Able Australia and the Australian Deaf Blind Council. I hope you will join us in our call on organisations big and small to phase out CAPTCHA. Check your own websites and I'm sure you will be surprised that you can make a contribution. We believe the biggest Internet companies like Google and Microsoft should take leadership in eradicating and eventually, hopefully the rest of the web will follow. We have, I believe, over 1,700 signatures already in just a week. And those signatures are actually coming from across the blob because our Kill CAPTCHA campaign has gone global. We're aiming for 10,000 signatures so please go to www.change.org and search for the campaign and sign up. You can also go to our website and follow the link from the ACCAN website. It will only take you a few minutes and there is no CAPTCHA. I'm looking forward to the next few days and I hope you enjoy the conference as much as I know I'm going to.