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Day 2, Thursday 15th September

9:20-9:30am: Mapping ADSL Availability – ACCAN Research

TERESA CORBIN: Great, thanks, Charlie. What we're going to do now is actually start our first session and to do that, I'm actually going to ask Rachel to come up. Rachel is one of our policy guns at ACCAN. You saw one of them yesterday and now you get to see another one. Yesterday's one, we hijacked from New Zealand. This one we've hijacked from Ireland. So she has travelled a long way to come and work with us, because we're such a great organisation to work with, of course! And they don't have one of these in Ireland so you have to come here to do that. Anyway, I'm sure that's not exactly the truth but that's fine – I'll believe it! So the other thing I just want to say is that the other person that she is going to be introducing and talking with via showing a video is a very bright young person, up-and-coming person, called Ken Tsang, and he has done an amazing new thing that Rachel is going to talk about and I think that this new tool that ACCAN is launching today and tomorrow will actually really be a great new help for consumers. So anyway, I'm going to hand over to Rachel now.

RACHEL THOMAS: Thanks, Teresa. I'm just going to talk today about our Get Connected program. There's two parts to the resource – the first part is the ADSL availability map, which we are discussing today. We contracted Ken Tsang to help us to prepare this map, which shows the areas which have difficulty accessing ADSL and it also shows the time-frame for nbn rollout in those areas. This is something that consumers have contacted us quite frequently about and also the TIO gets a lot of calls, or inquiries, about what services people can get, because there's no access to services in their areas. So the first part of the project is the ADSL availability map, to try to help consumers understand the issues that they might be facing in their area, such as no ports or they're too far from the exchange to get an ADSL service. The second part of the project is our consumer information, which helps them to take practical steps to get connected. We're hoping that it will help address some of the issues for the many consumers who are facing this problem. So unfortunately Ken wasn't able to make it today – he's travelling overseas – so we've pre-recorded an interview with him, just explaining the map and how it came about and what data sources he used in it. So if I can hand over to the video.

(VIDEO SHOWN)

RACHEL THOMAS: So that information is going to be on our website tomorrow. It's launching tomorrow morning. It's going to be – the website is accan.org.au/get-connected. If you have any inquiries about this, you can contact Luke, who is our media guy at the back of the room, and the email is available on the slides. So there's two parts to our website... the first will just give an overview of the Get Connected site and it has the two parts, so the ADSL availability map which we just saw the video on. It will have the map available. It'll also have a copy of the video so you can watch Ken explain it again, and it will also have the report that underlines the analysis. The second part of our resource, the Get Connected resource, has the helpful steps that we're advised consumers. So there's six of these. The first is getting on a waiting list. We find a lot of consumers, when they're told that they can't get a service, they don't ask to be put on a waiting list, so the number of people and the demand for services is unknown. So we're hoping that we can help consumers get on that waiting list and encourage providers to put in their resources, once they know that the demand is there. There's other options that we're suggesting then, such as fixed providers. When we're contacted, a lot of consumers don't understand that a number of providers have equipment in exchanges, or could have equipment in exchanges, and they don't ring around asking other providers if they might have services available in their area, so we're just pointing

out that maybe a number of providers are in that exchange and they should go and check them. There's also fixed wireless options that aren't nbn fixed wireless. They are in a number of areas. It's quite localised on where they are, so we've listed a number of options that we're aware of that consumers can see if they're available in their area and can service them. There's a number of new home wireless plans that are available from the networks. These are – these can offer quite high data, so that can be an option, if you do have mobile coverage in your area and then mobile broadband, which might also be an option for some consumers. And then we're launching also a Facebook group, so if people are still having trouble or they want to share some of their solutions that they've found, they can go on there and help us to understand what's happening. So I just have a snapshot – or, sorry, a screen shot of what's – what will be available on our website tomorrow. Just some of the options that we're listing and how it looks. So, again, that's the website that will be available tomorrow morning. I would encourage everyone to go online and have a look and if you are having problems, to contact us. Thank you.

TERESA CORBIN: Can we put our hands together and clap Rachel?

(APPLAUSE)

TERESA CORBIN: One of the challenges that we face all the time is accessibility and how we make things accessible. And, you know, something like nearly 20% of our membership is representing people with disabilities and clearly communications can actually play a massive role in enabling people's ability to communicate. But if it's not done the right way, it will actually inhibit people. So one of the areas that we try very hard to be accessible with is our website. Now, this geo-spatial mapping is not very accessible so we'll actually be putting a note up to say if people want to find out more information and they can't access the map, they will be able to contact our office. This actually came about, this map, this whole idea, because we have people contacting our office from time to time saying, "I have this problem" and we would have to go several sources to find information out and so we wanted to make that a quicker process. I also want to acknowledge Xavier O' Halloran who is here, and he now works for CHOICE, but he was a key ideas person behind this project, so thank you very much. Xavier, where are you? At the very back there. So, anyway, now becoming an expert on other things, including insurance. So, yes, say hello to Xavier today. Our next panel is called Ask the Telcos. So I might ask them to come up the front and, while you are doing that – and grab a seat on the panel – and while you are doing that, I also want to say something about the video that we just made with Ken. Some of you might have noticed that there was a description of what was happening on the screen when there was nothing other than music, or just visual cues, and this thing is called audio description, and I just want to highlight that we've actually had a trial of audio description going on ABC iView for some time and it's just recently stopped, so they can do a report about it. And something that we're trying to do at the moment is highlight the need to basically bring those services on board and basically end the pilot and make it permanent. I noted yesterday somebody said, "Death by pilot" and I certainly hope that is not going to be the case for audio description. We will see audio description demonstrated again later in the day. So it is a useful thing for you to all know because sometimes it's switched on automatically when you put a DVD or run a video online, and people don't know what it is. It sounds like you are listening to a radio program. But it's also very useful for all of us to know what it is. Anyway, welcome to our panel. We have Tim from Telstra. Ian from Activ8me, we have Dan from Vodafone, we have David from Optus, and we have Ged from amaysim. So welcome and give them a clap for coming out today.