Ericsson Broadcast and Media Services

Day 1, Wednesday 14th September

2:55-3:05pm: Affordable Access Project Launch

At the beginning of the day, we heard about their needs. We just have one more item before we'll have afternoon tea. Then our final session for this first day of the conference. It's my pleasure to invite Natalie Collins from Media Access Australia to come up to the stage. She'll be introducing the launch of the Affordable Access Project. Please make her welcome.

(APPLAUSE)

Oh, yes, there's just a little bit happening. And so, classically, I would chat as if I was on ABC radio and the little hand is going to the top of the clock just prior to the news, and you learn to sort of chat – it doesn't have to have content.

(LAUGHTER)

Ideally, it has a warm, engaged feeling, a sort of a feeling. I've been thinking, for example, that one of those blue vans should get on that boat, cross the Bass Strait, and go to Tasmania.

(LAUGHTER)

It's something the nbn have probably already thought about. Are we all connected? I think we're triumphing. Ladies and gentlemen, Natalie Collins.

(APPLAUSE)

NATALIE COLLINS: Thank you, Julie. I'd like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we're meeting today, and pay my respects to elders past and present. I would also like to acknowledge the new CEO of Media Access Australia, Manisha Amin, who is up the back up there.

(APPLAUSE)

I would also like to acknowledge Dr Scott Hollier, who is the producer of the Affordable Access Resources and the researcher who, unfortunately, can't join us today, but we will hear from him hopefully in a few moments. So, welcome to the launch of Affordable Access, and the Affordable Access Project and Resources. I'd like to begin by just providing those of you who don't know about media access just a few words. Media Access Australia is an independent, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to ensuring media, the web and digital technology is accessible for people with a disability and all other Australians. Our mission – inclusion through technology – means that, whatever we do, we ensure that people... Sorry, people are empowered to be more independent to gain knowledge, make their own informed choices, and be active and engaged members of our society. Media Access Australia is focused on improving accessibility through our advocacy work. Through education and the provision of digital accessibility services. We demonstrate how media accessibility can be improved in practical ways by providing innovative ideas with everyday web and digital interactions. And the Affordable Access Project is an excellent example of how we develop practical resources, but also fulfil our mission. So the original

idea for the project initially came about six years ago, when I first joined Media Access Australia. Through my introductory conversation with Dr Scott Hollier, where he showed me a netbook that he was using. The net book had everything my computer had on it. It was connected to the internet, it had word processing tools, it ran open-source software, but most importantly, it had accessibility features which enabled Scott – who is legally blind – to invert the colours of his screen. So he was reading white text on a black background. And also magnified the screen to 700%, whereas we normally look at, ah, the screen at 100%.

So I thought that was really fascinating, but when he told me the price of what he purchased it for, it was less than $199. So I was kind of flabbergasted and thought, "Wow, that's pretty incredible. Imagine if everybody could gain access to that information." The problem was that neither the technology nor the fact that there were accessibility features embedded on that device were mainstream or available to anybody in an easy-to-read format. So, over that time, obviously technology has changed a lot, and in many areas it's become even more accessible and more affordable. That's what makes this time an excellent time to make these resources available. So without further ado, and hopefully it works, um, I would like to launch the Affordable Access Project and Resources.

No? That's not... My face is not it. Anyway. So, what I might do is... Is it at all possible to go to the video of Scott Hollier, and maybe we can hear from him as he speaks a little bit more about some of the specific affordable technologies and specifically about the resources?

SCOTT HOLLIER: Hi, I'm Scott Hollier, specialist advisor for digital accessibility. I want to step through a few things with you about the Affordable Access Project. Firstly, my apologies for not being able to make it to the conference this year, but it is wonderful to have a chance to take this opportunity to demonstrate a few of the things that are in the Affordable Access Resource. I'd also like to acknowledge Visibility, our partner in doing research for this project, and big thankyou to ACCAN for making the funding possible. I'd like to talk about the four categories of the project. The website is divided into four parts – what's accessible, looking at the accessibility features in popular products. What's affordable – products under $250. We look at what's suitable – we look at the products best suited for different groups, such as families and children, seniors, looking at people in the workforce, and students. And then we also look at what's possible – these are some of the more cutting-edge things, and great products which maximise accessibility at a budget price. Some of the things I'd like to quickly show you today – I'd like to start with this Android smartphone. This Android phone has a lot of accessibility in it. I've got this and this at the moment – I can move my finger around the screen and it will read things out to me. What's also a great addition to the budget Android smartphone having accessibility features is, for $50, we can use what's called the Google Chromecast. You can see behind me, not only is the information on my phone, but thanks to the Chromecast, I've been able to put it out to my 60-inch TV, and being visually impaired and not being able to see very well, I can now read my SMS in giant text telling me that my mobile phone plan has been renewed. So, for $50, you can make whatever's on your phone on the TV, and that is a great thing to support people with disabilities. A few other things to show you in demonstration – one of the other products that we have in our resource is this, the Intel Compute Stick. This looks a little bit like a USB stick, but it's actually a full Windows 10 desktop computer. Plug this straight into a monitor, and you can connect it with a mouse and keyboard, and have a full computer basically in the palm of your hand. It's fantastic, around the $150 mark, and for that price, you can get a full Windows 10 desktop computer full of accessibility features. The last thing I'd like to show you today is the raspberry pine. In terms of what's possible, this computer is a credit-card-sized computer. Most of what you're seeing here is actually the casing. The actual computer inside is tiny. If you want to maximise accessibility, you can install this as a media player, you can install this as a retro games-playing console, you can have lots of options and lots of access where you can change the interface to be large print or high-contrast. It has full captioned video playback, lots of great accessibility on it. Those are just a few features that we cover in the resource. Again, thank you to ACCAN for funding the Resource, and really excited to see its launch. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

NATALIE COLLINS: Once again, I'd just like to thank ACCAN for funding the project, because without ACCAN's funding, we wouldn't be able to have created these resources, and also the people at Visibility for their research support. So, obviously we know that there are lots of great products and services in the market that have accessibility features and are available at affordable prices. This initiative provides information for everybody, irrespective of their life stage, computer proficiency, ability, and also provides information on popular devices

such as tablets, smartphones, telecommunications plans, TV/media players and desktop computer options, priced below $250. So, um, the website – we've got it up, which is fantastic. As you can see, and as Scott outlined, there are four areas where there's accessible information. What is accessible? What's available? What's suitable for you? And what's possible? The Resources section at the end here actually has some really fantastic resources that can be downloaded, and they're all in accessible formats. So there's a fact sheet and a number of tip sheets there. And the Affordable Access Guide At Work has information there on what technologies are available at work.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Just the Web address?

NATALIE COLLINS: It's affordableaccess.com.au.

There's also information on what products are affordable and accessible. There's information for students, for parents, people at work, and seniors. So, um... Now, with thanks to support from Telstra, at afternoon tea outside, we have a couple of Media Access Australia staff – we've got Matt and Heidi up the back roaming around with some Samsung Galaxy tablets demonstrating their accessibility features, and we'll also be handing out some of the printed versions of the Resource sheets and the tip sheets. They're also available on the table outside, and for any of you that have been doing a little bit of scouting through your delegate pack, or your satchel, there's also a very handy USB stick with all of the accessible tip sheets on the USB stick. So, um, please join me for afternoon tea, and thank you very much.

(APPLAUSE)

JULIE McCROSSIN: Thank you very much, Natalie. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, our final session will start promptly at 3:30, and we have one more lucky door prize to give out today. Enjoy your afternoon tea. Thank you.

(AFTERNOON TEA)