ACCANect 2018

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**Session 12: 2:25 – 3:25pm**

**The Great Debate: ‘Always on’ broadband is essential**

**Adjudicator:**

**Delia Rickard, Deputy Chair of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission**

**Affirmative team:**

**Wayne Hawkins, Director of Inclusion, ACCAN**

**Peter Strong, CEO, Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia**

**Wendy Hick, Federal President, Isolated Children’s and Parents’ Association**

**Negative team:**

**Dr Heron Loban, Senior Lecturer, Griffith Law School, Griffith University**

**Brendan Coady, Sydney Partner in Charge and Sector Leader: Technology, Maddocks Lawyers**

**Helen Campbell, Executive Officer, Women's Legal Service NSW**

**‘Always on’ broadband is here for many Australian consumers but why is this an essential service and what might be some of the exceptions to the rule? We hear from six experts debating the merits of 24/7 broadband access.**

**Closing remarks: 3:25 – 3:30pm**

**Presenter: Teresa Corbin, CEO, ACCAN**

TERESA CORBIN: If we can bring up our debaters and we can begin

DELIA RICKARD: Okay, welcome everyone to the great debate. I was going to go for a few laughs, but it's almost a bit inappropriate now after the last session which was really dealing with serious and important issues. Today's debating topic -"Always on" broadband is essential. I was looking at it and thinking about it and the first thing that flashed in my mind is the new groovy holiday people seem to boast about is their digital detox. They tell the world and then they're back saying how fabulous it was and tweeting the entire time. Those people have a choice. They clearly have access and they can clearly afford access. Parents face this dilemma all the time. They're desperate for their kids to get off their machines, and do their homework. Where do they do their homework? On their machines. You can't escape it. I think one of the more upsetting stories I've heard about access in recent times was at the ACCC's rural and remote forum a little while ago, earlier this year. Was it this year? And one of the people at that forum told a story about her kids and they had no broadband access or satellite access or anything else at their property and they drove four hours each day till they found reception, parked under a tree. The kids did their schoolwork, once all the work was done, they got back in the car, drove home and got up and did it all again the next day and I'm sure Wendy this is going to sound familiar to you. My job now is really the easy bit. I get to introduce everyone and they get to argue their lives away. Starting off we have. Wayne. Wayne Hawkins is currently ACCAN's Director of Inclusion after several years as ACCAN's disability policy officer and I'm going to go in order of the the Australasian Convenience and Petroleum Market Association and was also a member for the Australian council of small business. Finally, we have Wendy Hick and Wendy and her family live on a remote cattle station near the Northern Territory border. She has two sons and began teaching with distance education through Mount Isa school of the air and was their at-home tutor and as a result she's taken a real interest in education issues associated with kids in remote areas. Then, the negative team, down this end... I don't know what order you're going in, we have Ryan Sengara, who is very kindly stepped in to fill in for Heron Loban who unfortunately couldn't be here. Ryan is an ACCAN board member and used to be ACCAN's Director of Policy and research and in 2016 won the UTS human rights award for reconciliation. Well done. And we have Brian Cody a partner at Maddocks Lawyers and he leads Maddock's national technology group and finally, but not least we have an old university colleague of mine, Helen Campbell, OAM who is the executive officer of Women's Legal Service NSW and has done a million good things in her career. I suspect she's known to most of you. Each speaker gets 8 minutes. At 7 minutes someone will ring the bell. You're an efficient timekeeper. She shows no mercy, and then at 8 minutes you need to stop. We'll go affirmative, negative, affirmative, negative and if I am correct, Wayne, you get to start off. The affirmative side's first speaker will tell you why "Always on" broadband is essential.

MARK McKENZIE: Yes, I'm the first speaker for the affirmative and Wendy will carry through the argument through in the second and Wayne debate is broadband is essential as a 24-hour service. We'd add in terms of defining "essential" we mean for everyone and the conversation we've just had means we don't leave anyone behind. Broadband is essential as a 24-hour service for everyone. Well, of course it is. Who can actually argue with that sort of proposition? That's one of the reasons why COSBOA is a broad member of ACCAN in terms of partnering them to drive for things like the Universal Service Obligation. So really when you look at it, no reasonable person can actually argue against this proposition which is why we're right and they're wrong. Thanks very much.

DELIA RICKARD: That was very efficient!

MARK McKENZIE: I'm supposed to say some more, I hear. Luckily I had something pre-prepared earlier that's given me a couple of words. Let's just probe this ridiculous argument for just a little -indulge me for 6.5 minutes, hopefully I've wasted 30 seconds in that proposition. The nbn is here. There are 7.2 billion services ready and about 4.3 million or billion are actually activated. There's no one from ABC Fact Checker in the room, is there? But I suppose the real big issue here is nbn access is actually widespread and so the arguments about FFTC, FTDZ, whatever we come out with in terms of Parliament House, the real message is it's here now and so the question becomes, what do we do with it? I suppose the big thing here when you look at a lot of the grand statements made about the nbn being the biggest infrastructure project we've seen since mind -how come we couldn't develop a simple policy around USO in the entire time that we're actually building the biggest network that we've actually seen in our recent lifetime? I mean, we're building a massive piece of infrastructure, surely we could have worked out a simple policy and that policy would have had to have had completely imbibed the sense that nbn and broadband is an essential service, but why is it essential? Well, we put it to you -our team, the positive and those are always right -that it's necessary for our well-being, as it actually enables fast gaming services and Netflix. We all really need a distraction from politics, the universe and everything and so I have to say politics has been entertaining of late so you probably haven't needed to delve into Netflix. Given its prevalence and the digitisation of the global community, a fact that we cannot stop, the broadband is an essential service that will actually shape the future social and economic well-being of our local communities around the country and not just simply keep us happy as we're gaming and watching Netflix. Today our team's going to discuss two points. We're going to park the argument about gaming and streaming, because that's self-evident. We want to focus on two additional arguments. That is the economic argument in terms of why it is essential and secondly, the equity argument, which Wendy is going to very adeptly probe for us as a great orator coming from the Gulf region in our second address. Let's look at the economic argument for a moment. I put it to you that small business is fast becoming the economic powerhouse of the Australian economy. Now it may surprise a number of you in this room to realise that under the current definition, small 50.8 per cent of the current workforce in the country which is a rise from 20 per cent which is what we saw in the 1960s. We're at a point now that small business is effectively the engine room of the economy that's actually driving growth and that's where all the growth is actually coming from. It's growing fast too and if we listen to the address at the Press Club earlier this year which was very good, because he was making an address as he was leaving the organisation. That's where CEOs become very honest. He talked about parking the argument about how good their performance was. The research he tabled was he showed there was a significant of small businesses growing in the economy and that variation was statistically higher than we had seen in a long time. In fact, in a very interesting finding he found in regional areas we had a lot of businesses that were spawning, like fish in a stream. They're growing up, a lot of startups, most of them enabled in terms of personal services and further introspection of those arguments suggests that they have actually helped mitigate the economic harm that the drought's been doing in some areas by actually allowing the partners of those businesses to utilise the time that they couldn't productively employ in farming activities to actually start up a business and bring some cash into those households and that obviously has a social impact as well as building an economic impact in terms of those local communities. I suppose the real issue here is that small business is important and that's a point we'd like to leave you with. If a small business is important, how important is broadband to small business? Quite contrary to the notion of a bricks and mortar small business, most small businesses these days are growing in personal operator is up doing books at 10 o'clock at night or fighting with the ATOs, PAYG or BAS portal or responding to idiot messages that come from regulators in terms of compliance reports. They're also delivering services over the Web and so it's allowing regional communities to access commerce and capitals in capital cities and around the world using broadband and while we're sleeping, some of those services are actually being delivered to communities around the world that are awake and so we're really working on the basis that for small business it's a 24-7 operation. We're also seeing major changes that are being forced on us and there was a conversation in the earlier panel session. We're seeing things like e-invoicing where the only way a small business gets paid to have entered into an electronic handshake with business. Small businesses have been pushed down the line of digital payroll to rightly ensure everyone is paying the correct wages and money is directed to the staff that have actually earned it, but that digital payroll requires me to have a business that's digitally enabled. No business can operate without banking and you cannot run a small business without actually having an electronic bank account. And the list goes on and on and on, but I suppose the point I want to leave you with is, when broadband stops, business stops and small business in particular stops. And in the recent area-wide outages we've actually seen -this is small business in my local area in the northern Illawarra that actually freight live chickens and they look after those live chickens I should say -they freight them for Inghams into other markets. (Bell rings) Is that 30? I'm not sure that worked that business lost a $200,000 contract, so it goes without saying DELIA RICKARD: No unfair advantages = we gave you slack. Can I check, who is the unfortunate sad person that has to go first?

BRENDAN COADY: I was a little bit of the same view as the affirmative have put forward that we all know that broadband offers a huge range of potential social and economic benefits to all of us, including improved access to services and access to entertainment as we've heard, access to social interaction and more efficient business and financial interactions. So at first glance it would seem like only a fool would argue against the proposition that "Always on" broadband broadband is essential. That may have been the reason for Teresa generously inviting me to participate in this debate. But I think if we look a bit more closely at what does it mean to say "Always on" broadband is essential? A different aspect begins to appear. I think no one is going to argue that broadband is not a useful service and something that's got potential benefits. But I think the proposition that "Always on" broadband is essential sort of carries with it the increasingly prevalent assumption that everyone is connected and available and present in the digital world at all times and the word "essential" suggests that unless we are always connected and always available to the broadband then we're not able to fully participate in society and I think the requirement that it's essential for everyone to be always on and always connected is a very different proposition to the proposition that broadband is a useful tool. I'm sure many of us here feel the sort of relentless demands of the online world that are increasing all the time. Emails, texts, direct messages, everyone demanding an information and entertainment that is running at an ever-quickening cycle and pace. One of the things that struck me when I was thinking about this is I'm sure other people have the same experience, as well. If you're looking at a news website in the morning, you're looking at the 'Sydney Morning Herald' or whatever you happen to be looking at, the 'Guardian' or whatever and you read a news story and you think "That story is so old, what is that still doing on the paper? " Then you think "I saw that on Twitter at lunchtime yesterday" and now it's like everyone has moved on from that story. So there's this sort of increasing pace and quickening cycle which I think is a symptom of this "Always on" broadband experience. I recently attended a conference where the legal industry is sort of well known for having high incidence of anxiety and depression among legal practitioners and we had someone talking about mindfulness and one of the things he was talking about was distraction, something the affirmative has also mentioned, but that people are constantly now with the online world, people are constantly distracted and it leads to a whole bunch of issues including inefficiency in the way that you work and a lack of mindfulness, because people are not focusing on what they are doing and want to be doing, but instead they're being constantly interrupted by online interruptions. I think we start to get this idea that, in fact, what's happening is that rather than broadband and the digital world being a tool that we use, it's becoming something that's increasingly controlling our lives and the way we work in a way that is not necessarily always beneficial. There are a number of other issues with this "always on" environment and my fellow speakers on the negative will speak about like your digital identity. I think we all have the experience where we're constantly in order to access seemingly any news service or product offering or engage with government or service providers, you have to create a new account, create a new identity. You've got dozens of passwords and PIN numbers you've got to track of. It's often difficult for people to actually access those services if they don't have the necessary sort of digital credentials. What that means not only is it very difficult to maintain digital accounts across a range of services, but there are issues such as identity theft become incredibly problematic if you're in a fully digital environment. Obviously we've got a growing number of organisations that are collecting more and more data about each of us. The governments around the world are trying to address some of these issues with privacy breaches and so on in Australia. We've had fairly recently the mandatory data breach notification provisions introduced. There's very strict and potentially ownerous provisions that have been introduced in the EU. The GDPR directive, but even with all the efforts that are being made to improve security and prevent privacy breaches, these are happening all the time. It doesn't matter -people are improving the security of the data that they hold, but people who are trying to access it are also improving their technology and it's a constant battle and there's a constant loss of your private information. It's inevitably being shared, in some cases legitimately, often illegally as well. Again, this is a sort of symptom of this "Always on" broadband requirement and becoming essential. So if I can just -so I think one of the key things -and we've actually heard a lot about it in the conference You have to register because it's more efficient for businesses and for government. Cheaper and more efficient for them to run their services online. People are unable to access face-to-face services often and if people are less digitally literate then it's increasingly difficult for them to access services. So again, it's a symptom of the broadband and the digital environment becoming not a tool, but an essential requirement in fact, whether we want it or not rather than it being something that serves us and something that we can access when we want to, it's something that increasingly people are being forced to adopt and forced to deal with, whether they want to or not. (Bell rings) (APPLAUSE)

DELIA RICKARD: Thanks Brendon for that thoughtful rebuttal. Gave us all pause to think. Wendy, speaker two for the affirmative.

WENDY HICK: I'd like to begin by saying that our interpretation is that "always on" does not mean we have to be using it, it's just that it's there for those of us who wish to use it when we want to use it, but it's available all the time. "Always on" broadband is an essential service that many Australian lives now resolve around. It allows simpler, faster and more convenient access to numerous items including entertainment, business needs and various pathways of socialisation. However, for those residing in geographic isolation across Australia, having broadband available for the most part whenever they need it has become a real game-changer. Families living in the rural and remote areas of Australia have long suffered from the tyranny of distance and so often have missed too far away from available services and resources. With the arrival of 24-7 broadband access things are changing very quickly out in the regions and broadband is undoubtedly an essential service particularly for those living outside of the city centres. Broadband is used in a variety of ways and for numerous tasks in regional, rural and remote areas. In our businesses we can now research products and order things online. Primary producers and other proprietors offer auction and sales pages, do banking, receive the latest weather and news and remotely monitor watering points and paddock conditions, improve cropping techniques, harvesting and trucking with innovative tractors and machinery, utilise drone technology to name a handful of ways broadband has become essential in our lives out there. Broadband is extremely important for rural health. Connectivity is now assisting medical facilities such as the Royal Flying Doctor and rural clinics to access diagnostics and additional assistance and expertise. Telehealth is able to offer those who live far away from specialists, regular consultations without the need for them to repeatedly travel fast distances. The development of broadband has certainly impacted schools and the way students learn in every facet of education. I'd like to focus on one area in particular where the availability of constant broadband has brought about a tremendous metamorphosis, education for students living in rural and remote Australia. Rural schools and in particular, one teacher schools now benefit from broadband as they can offer extra subjects wider learning experiences, access to specialised teachers, mentoring and administrative help for staff and teachers, worldwide resources and they can even take students on virtual have them back in time to go home at the end of the day. Online libraries are being accessed by rural students across the country and offering so much more reading opportunity, especially for those that have had no library, only a small rural library access previously. At the university level, broadband access is important to both students living on campus and those studying online. 3the Federal Government is setting up regional study hubs to offer broadband access and further study for students who live far away from university access. For students, assessments are handed in more quickly. Many assessments are now completed online. Students have access to research and guest speakers from all over the world and lectures can be accessed from anywhere, any time, any place. For those studying tertiary online at home without adequate broadband it can mean they don't --thousands of kilometres in order to study. Broadband allows them to study whenever it suits them and many students are working in the day and studying at night thanks to the constant availability of broadband. Distance education is probably one of the biggest areas where we are seeing changes. For those who study by distance education due to necessity, either because of geographic isolation, medical condition or other specific needs having continual access to broadband has seen tremendous leaps in what can now be offered in school for these children. My husband was a distance education student. He studied in the early '70s. His learning experience was far different than what is offered today. Growing up on a rural property, his local school was about an hour out of town and so his schooling was conducted through the school of correspondence from teachers, other students or his school and his mother oversaw his and his brother's lessons completely, all the weight was borne by her shoulders. Schoolwork entirely in paper form was received, completed and returned back to the school by post and often saw a turn-around time of between three to four months before a reply or any comment on the schoolwork was received. Fast forward about 30 years and our sons were doing distance education. The closest local school for them was more than two hours away. Distance education had come a long way since those correspondence days. Our sons studied through a School of the Air and had certain lessons each day done over the HF radio and yes I said "HF radio". This was a vast improvement over the paper-only learning, but still problematic. We moved to telephone lessons and dabbling in computer and Internet work. But impossibly slow speed and limited data was a hindrance and schoolwork was sent out and sent out by post. Turnaround time was about four to six weeks. With the arrival of more reliable, accessible and affordable broadband, distance education has undergone immense changes. Today's distance education students study in a very different learning environment to those that studied the same way not that long ago. Thanks to the availability of broadband, distance education lessons are fun and interactive. Students can see their teacher and classmates even if they are hundreds of kilometres away. It's much easier to take turns and comment, ask questions. They can see each other's work and this really helps with collaboration and building ideas. Something they couldn't do before. Sink nous screens, interactive white boards all help with making lessons far more effective for students and geographically isolated children, distance education is their first school experience. It is so important that it is engaging and offers them a contemporary education. There are now more direct teaching models being employed and teaching concepts are being done directly by the teachers themselves. It's not all just left up to the mums anymore. Students get instant feedback. No more waiting weeks or months to have edits looked at or to find out how they did on quizzes or assignments. They can be Google drived into the school quickly and comment returned. So what broadband has brought to education is exciting and it's opening up the world for geographically isolated students. In summary, broadband is an essential service and has been recognised as such by the inclusion in the government's planned universal service guarantee for telecommunications, a clear indication of the importance and how much we now rely on broadband services can be seen in the frustration and chaos that is created when these services falter or are unreliable. Being connected is now an essential part of every day life. What broadband has brought to education is exciting and it is opening up the world for geographically isolated students. Having continual access to reliable broadband services assists many Australians to conduct their businesses, keep up with a rapidly changing world and further their education. Particularly for families who have limited access to resources by other means, broadband rather than excluding them let's them come into the conversations of today. (APPLAUSE)

DELIA RICKARD: Thanks Wendy, that was terrific. You have a second

HELEN CAMPBELL: I'm on -always! (LAUGHTER) I don't think there's any doubt that having access to broadband for isolated schools is a good thing. It is, but it doesn't mean I want to be at school 24-7. There's still going to be times and places where I want to not be at school and that's where we need to make sure that we have a service that is available to us, but is not oppressing us. It's a long time since I was a school, but when I was about 7 I came home one afternoon and I told my mother that I had decided that I was going to marry Bradley May. His mother ran the cake shop. Well, there was much heartless laughter at this announcement, but it hasn't followed me round for the rest of my life. I haven't needed to exercise either mine or Bradley's right to be forgotten for this unfortunate incident. Thank goodness for that. I'm also rather glad that I was a teenager before the Internet. Certainly much anxious outpourings of the deepest thoughts of the soul were committed to the pages of my diary. But you can't read them, and you never will and I don't even need a password to protect them. (LAUGHTER) So we now come to the ubiquity of the broadband invading the homes where we live. Now I've told you a bit earlier on the serious side about this can be most unfortunate when you are being pursued by a bitter ex-spouse. But it can also be a threat to your comfort in your home for less evil reasons. Did you hear just earlier this afternoon, somebody could be remotely monitoring how much water my washing machine is using. Just imagine some misplaced do-gooder looking after my affordability issues by switching it off remotely. Mid-cycle, leaving the suds to stick together. and that we can restrict other's access to and "Always on" broadband is not meeting our needs in this respect. But let's go larger than just your individual households. Let's think about big data. Now we get told a lot about how terrifically good for us all this big data collection is, as if none of us have noticed how bloody leaky the sieves are that you're collecting it in. MyHealth record, for example, is a mega disaster just waiting to happen. For one thing, it's not necessarily going to be a complete record. For another thing, I can't necessarily presume that every health professional I'm in contact with has got nice things to say about me in my MyHealth record. And that it won't be stolen by somebody who's not satisfied with having already gotten household of my Medicare number for the purpose of identity fraud, but can now smear my reputation by leaking information that is sensitive and private to me. Oh no, we don't want a broadband that's always on, we want a broadband that's always under control. Think about it, just because you have electricity in your house doesn't mean you want the lights on all night, does it? You want to be able to switch off the switch and go to sleep. Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

DELIA RICKARD: I think this is shaping up to be a very even competition. Wayne, to you for the closing.

WAYNE HAWKINS: Brendan, count me in. 5, 6, 7, 8. No, there's not going to be any singing. I promised Brendan I wouldn't sing this year. So what do you say to that? Like Mark said at the beginning, I think we have this wrapped up, I'm not sure there's any point in continuing, but reliable broadband is she could find out what happened to Brian Mayfield. Maybe it's not such a bad idea. Maybe she made a mistake when she was 7. But let's talk about this seriously. Clearly my affirmative colleagues have sung the praises of always on reliable broadband, Mark's prosecuted a very strong evidence base for the criticality and essential nature of "Always on" broadband for small business, the lifeblood of Australia. Wendy's just given us a really compelling argument about the essential nature of always on reliable broadband for our new, young leaders growing up in the bush. I've got to say, it's not a personal thing, but the arguments of those opposite are really stretching to reach a high note with their... let's see, out of tune and perhaps off-key arguments against "Always on" broadband, reminding me a little of what we heard yesterday with the discussion with our former Communications Minister in his short-sighted inability to see a future that was more than emails and low-grade movie downloads. You know, perhaps a little disingenuous given that when he was our former Prime Minister he leapfrogged everybody else in the electorate getting his FTTWM connection... those of you who don't know what that acronym is, it's fibre to the waterside mansion connection while the rest of us in the electorate are still waiting for HFC to be connected. But you know, the affirmative team have really reinforced what the minister said yesterday. "Always on" broadband is an essential enabling service that is going to provide the future that we all positively and hopefully look forward to. What I wanted to talk to today is about what does that mean for people with disability? People with disability have a lot of the same needs around broadband as everybody small business, people with disability live in regional and rural Australia. But there are some specific needs that people with disability have with regards to broadband and the need for it to be always on and reliable. We heard earlier today from Dean Barton-Smith talking about the needs of people who are deaf and use Auslan as their first and preferred language. They need reliable always on video to communicate with each other. To say that that's not essential is akin to saying for the rest of us that an always on telephone network is not essential. We wouldn't put up with that, so why should people with disability put up with that when it comes to their communications? Other issues around disability access are with regards to, similar to what Wendy was talking about, remote education, telework, people with disability who don't have the capacity to commute, always on reliable broadband gives them the ability to work from home, or to educate themselves from home and being able to work from home can provide that financial independence. Work gives people a sense of self-esteem and self-sufficiency. It gives people their capacity to engage with their colleagues. I'm not sure that paying taxes is a benefit of working, but it does give people the opportunity to contribute. There's also societal aspects of "Always on" broadband for people with disability, those people who are home-bound, they have the capacity to engage on social networks like Second Life and participate in ways where their impairment and the way society is constructed is not a barrier for them. They're able to participate and contribute and Second Life and other social online communities in a way where their disability is not a part of what defines them. So I think we've got to think of the bigger violence was an issue, but we also heard from Helen about the fantastic program that Telstra provides with their provision of hand sets and credit for online services for the phone. That "Always on" broadband provides those people who are victims of family violence with the ability to connect and contact support services and help. We don't want that to not be available for those people. (Bell rings) so I think, you know, always on reliable broadband is definitely an essential critical service that we all need to be able to participate in and I'd just like to finish, give you something to think about, is this really where those opposite want us to go? Take us home, Peter. (Sound of modem dialling) It's all yours, Ryan.

DELIA RICKARD: Very good, very good. Ryan, you get the last word.

RYAN SENGARA: Hello? I have no audio visual spectacular to end with, but I would like to take up Wayne's offer of painting the bigger picture and I think the affirmative has admirably won a debate about broadband being essential, but alas that's not what this debate is about. It's about "Always on" broadband being essential and I think I would like to just caution patience, because I do not believe we can actually answer this question at this point in time. So I'd like to just give a perspective based on a few different bits of my background. One - lapsed social researcher, two - day job in health and three - as a new parent. So first, just a bit of perspective and I'd like to just try to situate people's minds around the measured in millions of years and I would like to make a quick argument that we are at the beginning of a very distinct social age or social era which I think the world probably hasn't seen a lot of before and that will have a tremendous different ramifications. I think as humans we're only beginning to scratch the surface of our understanding about entering this new era. So just a little bit of perspective on the era that we're in and might be entering and as a reason why we can't answer this question. It also raises big questions about two things -health and about our humanness. So from a health perspective, there's this concept of the social determinants of health. The World Health Organisation described these as "the conditions in which people are born, grow, live and age and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life" and I would like to argue that broadband and all that it brings changes that equation so fundamentally in lots of different ways that I don't believe we as a society have even begun to grapple with how this world affects our social determinants of health and it's certainly something I feel day-to-day I'm just sort of encouraged in my circle of friends and others, maybe you in the audience feel from time to time that something isn't quite right about how the "Always on" broadband world is affecting our health. I don't want to draw any direct parallels, but there are significantly worrying trends in mental health and other aspects of our health and well-being which I don't believe we've drawn and connected all the dots to. So I just want to say that. I think the "Always on" broadband world asks some serious questions about the social determinants of health that I don't believe we have begun to understand I think it asks some very serious questions about our humanness and I believe my colleagues in the negative have started to address some of these, but I think it really questions our inner condition. So our intent in our day-to-day life, our ability to reflect, our ability to find a bit of peace, to really grapple with really essential human issues and social issues in life. I think it drastically affects our relationships and I mean that in the broader sense, in our family, with our communities, with the environment and with other beings and I think it fundamentally is starting to change our culture. Our culture is defined as a collection of how we do things and it's seriously changing all of how we do our cultural elements of society. So I don't believe we've begun to even grapple with how "Always on" broadband is affecting our humanness and so, therefore, I don't think we can say it's essential. Finally, I don't think, I think the "Always on" broadband world really challenges some of our frailties and vulnerabilities as humans. I think it really challenges our ability to set boundaries and provide guidance in society. So I think I'd probably draw the closest parallel to my own life to an 18-month-old child. I'm on the phone in front of him all of the time. I don't have any control to set any boundaries for myself about setting a particular example around that and I do find myself severely at a lack of wisdom about when I can have more detailed conversations about what kind of wisdom I can provide about how to navigate an "Always on" broadband world. Because I do believe it affects health and I do believe it challenges our humanness. So I don't believe that the affirmative can actually win this debate, because I don't believe we can actually answer the question about if "Always on"

DELIA RICKARD: Thank you, thanks terrific, Ryan. Now we get to the judging. I should have said this at the beginning. We're judging by how loud your applause is. First for the affirmative and then for the negative and I get to judge. You can feel free to disagree with my conclusion. First of all, who feels that the case has been made that "Always on" broadband is essential? Can you show your applause for the affirmative team?

(APPLAUSE)

It's looking pretty good. You guys did a fantastic job on the negative team. It wasn't an easy brief and I think you nailed it. Who's on the side of the negative team?

(APPLAUSE)

I think it's very, very close. I think you tipped it with all that noise so I think the affirmative team has won, but by such a small amount.

So thank you everyone, that was a great debate and really lots of food for thought.

(APPLAUSE)

TERESA CORBIN: I'll just get you to stay there, please sit down Delia. Thank you to the teams, that was really fantastic, a bit of fun but a serious topic of course and I agree, I think you judged it well. I think you're right. We've come to the end of a couple of big days and the feedback's been good. The sessions obviously have been riveting, the networking has been furious in all the breaks. There hasn't been a word lost, but obviously this is just the beginning of making lots more connections and continuing the conversation. Interestingly today -and I've got a little slide to show, because I got a photo sent to me from Parliament House today -Wendy you'll be pleased to hear this and stopped the nation today. Obviously they're struggling for positive stories in Canberra at the moment and there was a press conference held by Bridget McKenzie in one of the courtyards in Parliament about mobile coverage and the blackspots. There's been a media release that's gone out from her office and also from the rural regional and remote Coalition who's put a response at ACCAN, ICPA, NFF and nearly 21, 22 different other organisations are part of that group and so you can find out if you've got a blackspot you want to report before the mobile blackspots round four opens, another $25 million being poured into that. Still not enough. We have to keep the pressure on for ongoing funding there. Another thing I want to point out is our theme of Greek gods. One of the suggestions from ACCAN's chair, who obviously has a classical education was that perhaps we should be looking at the god Sisyphus, who pushed the same rock up the same hill every day as a punishment and I do feel like that's sometimes my life. Let's try and make sure it's not our lives. Let's go forward from this conference and let's just make sure we can get some of those rocks up to the top of the hill to actually stay. So a final thank you to all of you for coming, to all of the speakers, all of the presenters and most of all, to the ACCAN staff. Now the most important people are the admin team that are actually out of the room right now so as you go by and perhaps leave your tag behind, because we'll reuse it. Say a thank you to Yuriko and Kate and Kelly who've worked absolutely extraordinarily hard to pull today and yesterday off in a smooth way. Thank you very much and we'll have our annual general meeting in half an hour after afternoon tea so ACCAN members will be staying to go through that process, but one last thought. Ryan, you thought you were going to escape entirely, didn't you? So Ryan's been on our board for six years and he's finishing up his term at this annual general meeting and before that, he actually worked in lots of different capacities at ACCAN and CTN and last night he actually reminded me that I met him when he was 21 and didn't give him a job. I'm grateful I corrected that travesty soon afterwards. We gave you chocolates last night, but we have more than that, we have a weighty trophy which basically acknowledges your huge contribution to consumers and consumer representation in Australia. (APPLAUSE) You're going to be missed. Okay, safe travels everyone. Hopefully see you next year.

(End of transcript)