JULIE McCROSSIN: Our next speaker is Wayne Hawkins, he's ACCAN's director of inclusion and he'll be talking about the accessible Telecoms and he's just coming forward now. Wayne previously worked with blind citizens Australia in a whole range of systemic advocacy campaigns and Wayne is a great man for study, he has qualifications in public policy and business administration and is currently studying at Sydney University for a doctor of arts in Australian telecommunications and disability policy. I'd ask you to please welcome Wayne Hawkins. (APPLAUSE)

WAYNE HAWKINS: Good morning everybody. Thank you for that introduction. Just, this will just be a short presentation on ACCAN's accessible Telecoms project, just do a short introduction of the what the why and the how and then we'll do a demonstration of how the service works. A couple of disclaimers -I won't be singing, and I've not been to this point a Telstra engineer! Never say never. What is the accessible Telecoms project? It was originally called the nation-wide disability telecommunications information and referral service, the acronym for that was NTDRIS so we've changed it to accessible Telecoms and it is a service that provides up to date independent, independently verified and easy to access and use information about both mainstream and assisted telecommunications products suitable for people with disabilities. It's delivered through multiple channels. We have a website with a data base resource, it's available through for consumers to contact there a 1800 number web chat, SMS fact and if you happen to be in Tumut you can also pop into the ideas office and get the information person to person, we deliver the service -to consumers with ideas, ideas is the information on disability education and awareness service. Ideas has been provided essential information about disability service to people with disability, their carers and families since the early 1980s so it's a very well placed organisation for us to work with to get this information into the hands of people who can benefit from it. The project has been funded by the NDIA as a two year grant under their information linkage and capacity building project. So we started the project last year in June of 2018 and the grant runs through June of 2020. Why do we have it? We have it because there has been a constant refrain from our membership, ACCAN's membership, made up of people with disabilities, their representative organisations and consumer groups, that information for consumers be with disability about telecommunications products and services is very difficult if not impossible to find. Whilst we were promoting this service like the accessible Telecoms for many years, we didn't anticipate doing it ourselves but saw the opportunity with the National Disability Insurance Scheme and with the support of ACCAN's board, and the great guidance from Teresa Corbin as the CEO we put in an application for that and were successful, the goal of the project is to fill that gap of information and as we have heard both yesterday and this morning the benefits and opportunities that Australia's telecommunications industry and sector provide for consumers are really, really important. What we hope through this project is that we're able to give people with disabilities the information about the products and services that will give them the capability to then be able to benefit from those same opportunities as everybody else. I'm just a couple of stats about the project -we launched it last year, December third on the international day for people with disabilities, we've had in that time over 5,000 unique individual consumer contacts through the service on the website, we've had over 19,000 unique views of the information resources, we've worked really and I got to say that the support that we've had from the community, the disability community, consumer groups, from the telecommunications industry, from Government, have been really, really positive. Everybody has been supporting this. We've got organisations like Be Connected and the Australian seniors computer clubs association who have been taking the information putting it available to their member organisations and their websites, all of the telco industry have been really supportive, Comms alliance and AMTA have been really engaged in promoting this. Many telecommunications companies have put the information on their websites and also the department of Comms, has been promoting it, it's been a really great response from the sector to this project and that is making the success of the project all the more important. Just getting to how does it work -we're going to do a little short demonstration and I'm not doing this by magic, I have my trusty colleague Andre sitting in the back who is driving the computer. So hopefully on the screen you'll see the landing for accessible Telecoms and as you can see on that page, there's a lot of useful information about what the service is, what its intent is and how we hope it will help people. There are Auslan videos on the that give the information on what the service is, how to use it, and whoa else do we have there? There's a number of category, we have three categories of -there's devices, training and national relay service, both the devices and the training categories are categories that can be searchable based on a consumer's needs, the national relay service one is a category that provides information about how to use and access the national relay service. Andre if you could select devices we can show what that brings up. As you can see there's a number of different device options, we have landlines, mobile, tablets, accessories apps, if we were to select the mobiles, it will show you that there's a number of mobiles available, mobile hand set available in the Australian market place, there's over 240 that we have on the resource and all those 240 hand sets have accessibility features suitable for people with disabilities. In total, we have across the project, we have over 400 individual resources providing information about products and services and training opportunities, so let's have a look at how it works. We'll do a search for a mobile phone that would be suitable for somebody with significant physical impairment. If you could go to the home again and then select devices, we select mobile, we have access needs so what that is what are the capabilities that you're looking to have access features for, we've categorised it into those five major area, hearing, vision, cognitive, speech and physical. If we select the physical, tab from the access needs and now you can see that there's a number of access features that will be made available, suitable for people with physical impairment. First we'll select the voice recognition automatic dialling. Then we'll set automatic answering, now we're going to select automatic redialling, really hope this is all working as planned! As you can see, for each of these options there's a plain English description so if someone is unsure of what that feature does it describes the feature to them so they can understand, that that might be something that they want or that's not something that they need. Andre, if we can now search on these selections that we have made. Now we have a results which shows the number of phones and the data base so we have gone from over 240 possible selections to 24 that have those features we have selected. If we look at the Apple iPhone 6S that shows us all the feature of that phone, accessible, also tells us that it's a smartphone, that it's Internet connective, tells us that it has a touch screen and towards further down the page, it provides information about where the most -the most -this is confusing -the most widely available places that you can obtain the phone. So this one has been a bit of a difficulty for us because we're really keen to not be seen to be recommending but making the information just available so people can make their own choices so with where it's available we've tried to make these options where are the most common places that you can find it? And then it also tells us further down, there's some links about more information about the phone, links to user manuals and more information from the manufacturer's website. This stuff can also be printed if someone wants to print it out and show it to a carer or a family worker or somebody that can assist them in obtaining that phone, it's also something that could be used to take to an NDIS planner and is say, "This is the phone I need for my plan, these are the access features it has that will give me the unit to connect to the benefits and opportunities of the Australian telecommunications market." That shows us how the service works, I've got a quick minute to have a look at the accessories, the phone that we selected was something that someone possibly would not be able to hold or to operate manually so some of the accessories that we have listed here enable people who are unable for whatever reason to use a phone in a standard or traditional way to use it with the accessories so in this instance we're going to look at blue tooth switch buttons which are boutons or switches that somebody who can't hold or press the -can't manually operate the phone, can use the switch to do that for them. That shows us a list of the available most commonly available blue tooth switches in the Australian market, it also shows that information shows how they can be used with the hand set. I think that's all we have time for showing to thank you Andres for that. That has hopefully worked out well. So you have an idea of how it works now. One of the future things, we're actually working right now on developing phase two of the website, what will that offer when you get the results, it will give you the capability to further refine those result, be able to refine a bit category such as price, operating system, screen size, if it's a smartphone or a tablet, so watch this space, for that, that's hopefully coming in the next month or so. Make -it will make it much more useable. One of the things that we have noticed is that a lot of phones today have similar functionality so unless it's very specific, the results can sometimes be quite overwhelming, you know, if I was to do one for a Braille phone that supported Braille I could possibly get 130 results and whilst that is about half of what's available it's still quite difficult to navigate through 130 results to work out which one is the one for me. That extra functionality being able to refine should make that much more useable for people. So I think it's pretty much it. Thanks for that. There's one thing that I do need to talk about outside of the accessible Telecoms and it was brought up in this morning's video message from Michelle Rowland, that's about the national relay service and some people will be aware that the CapTel relay service is not going to be offered in the new contract beginning in February of next year and for people who rely on the CapTel phone, that has created quite a lot of confusion and fear. ACCAN is working really closely with the department of communications, working closely with the new relay provider and we're ensuring to make sure that whatever the result of this is because there's been some calls for the service to continue for an extension of the transition period, so we're talk with Government and keeping abreast of what those changes are and what the opportunities are there, doing our best to ensure that no consumer will be worse off as a result of this new NRS contract service and also to ensure that whatever the transition is that people will need to go, they will have the training and the capability to make that transition in the most seamless way possible. We're working really hard to do -make sure that people aren't left worse off, but at the moment it's still again it's a bit of a watch this space, I just wanted to bring that up because it's not something that's been addressed specifically in many of the topics today but it has been something that was raised in Michelle Rowland's video message and it's something that ACCAN is very keenly aware of and we're working hard to ensure that people are not left worse off. Thanks. (APPLAUSE)

JULIE McCROSSIN: Thank you so much Wayne. My only wish was that you had told us about Andres!

WAYNE HAWKINS: If it went wrong I had to have someone to blame!

JULIE McCROSSIN: Thank you so much.