ACCANect 2018

**Session 2: 9:20 – 9:30am Opening message: Minister for Communications and the Arts, Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield**

**Welcome message: Deputy Leader of the Nationals and the Minister for Sport and decentralisation,**

**Senator Bridget McKenzie**

**ACCAN is very pleased to welcome the Minister for Communications and the Arts, Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield, to deliver a pre-recorded opening message for ACCANect 2018.**

JULIE McCROSSIN: You're at risk of having a strategic plan that people will actually read. Sorry, my job is to bring a certain energy to the room. How do you think I'm going so far? Don't worry, the lucky door prize is coming, if you came late I'll give you a ticket before the draw. Parliament is sitting and what an interesting Parliament we have. A round of applause for anyone who can survive in Canberra. We have two video messages at this stage and Peter will play it in just a moment. Our first video message is from Senator Mitch Fifield, the Minister for Communications and the Arts and he's going to give us an indication of current policies regarding consumers and communication. So Peter, Senator Mitch Fifield.

MITCH FIFIELD: Good morning. It's my great pleasure to welcome you to the 2018 ACCANect conference. I'm sorry I can't be with you in person, but on behalf of the Government I want to congratulate ACCAN for putting on such a terrific program. Technology can be a great equaliser. It can help to eliminate the barrier of distance for those who live in the regions and technology can empower the most vulnerable members of our society. Technology can also promote long-term economic benefits for the whole nation. The technology landscape will continue to change rapidly and so have the expectations and needs of consumers. We need to ensure that we have the right incentives for providers to invest in and upgrade their infrastructure, to develop services and communication products to meet these needs and as we move towards a more connected tomorrow, it's important that consumers feel confident and secure when they get online. No one should be alienated or made to feel unsafe online. We wouldn't accept it offline, so we shouldn't accept it online either. Online safety is more important than ever and our office of the E-Safety Commissioner is doing great work to address cyberbullying and tackle image-based abuse. They're working to support all members of the community and do provide a great range of resources to help them navigate the online world safely and to give consumers confidence. This is particularly timely given the recent global attention on data privacy and cybersecurity. In the last decade we've seen huge transformation of consumer markets driven by e-commerce and it's made our lives easier, but it's also presented a number of serious challenges around data privacy and protection. We understand these concerns and we're committed to protecting what's yours which is your privacy and your safety. We want all Australians to have access to the best technology and its benefits to participate safely online. Can I wish you all the very best for the next two days. Thank you.

JULIE McCROSSIN: A round of applause for the minister, please. (APPLAUSE) Can I say this, I think we do have a number of messages because of Parliament sitting at the moment and I think it's an opportunity for us as people who probably already have done audio visual presentations or should be doing them, because it's such a major way through various social media of communicating to look at what are people doing well so you remember to do it and if I could just say, that gentleman just did a very good media message. I'm not being facetious here, it's an opportunity for us to learn and think warmth, authentic warmth and a capacity to talk to the camera. I didn't even mind the music in the background. I'm not going to be mean to anybody, just highlight positive things, because it's a skill we need to learn. A lot of young people have given up reading of text. It's my great pleasure now to introduce a second video message from the Deputy Leader of the Nationals and the Minister for Sport and decentralisation, I'll be asking Peter to introduce Senator Bridget McKenzie.

BRIDGET MCKENZIE: Good morning, I'd like to welcome you all to the 2018 ACCANect conference. I'm so sorry I can't be there today, but I hope you enjoy the fantastic program they have in store for you and what a program it is. There are inspiring speakers across our sector. The theme of this conference is Confidence in the Connected World and this is a fitting theme as Deputy Leader for the Nationals and regional services who's responsible for regional telecommunications. As I travel across our country, I hear so important access, reliable and affordable communications is in serving regional Australia. Modern communication technology is vital to regional health, communication and Emergency Services. It's not just about downloading Netflix. Businesses need to be confident that they have access to reliable and quality digital communications. Without this, businesses are reluctant to start up or relocate from major capital cities out to our fabulous regions and as the first Federal minister for decentralisation, I know connectivity in the regions is key to this journey being a success. Amongst the great line-up of speakers at today's conference is the chair of the regional telecommunications review, Sean Edwards. Sean will provide an update into how regional communities can maximise the benefits of digital technologies and the issues they raise. It's no secret I'm passionate about telecommunications in rural and regional Australia. The Nationals in government know the importance of access to modern and reliable 21st century communication and it should be available no matter where you live. Our mobile black spot program is one way we're investing in regional communications and I'm proud to say we've got more than 600 actively mobile base stations across regional Australia since we've come to government. These base stations are connecting thousands of households and businesses to new services. It's making easier for people to manage their every day lives and expand their businesses. In June this year as your regional Communications Minister, I was able to announce a further $25 million that will be invested into a fourth round of this fabulous program and we're looking forward to again working closely with stakeholders to target more regional and remote black spot locations than ever before. My target is 1,000. The recent release of NBN Co's corporate plan shows us we're on track to complete the roll-out by 2020 and I'm pleased that 1.7 million families and businesses outside major urban areas are now benefiting from the NBN via fixed line, fixed wireless and satellite connections. More than 10,000 premises a week in regional areas are being connected to the NBN. Residents in these communities now have access to peak wholesale speeds of at least 25 megabits a second, a huge step forward for areas that previously had very limited access. Together, we've achieved so much. We're continuing to deliver 21st century communications to people living and working and investing in regional areas. Communication should no longer be a barrier to make our communities thrive. Congratulations to ACCAN for organising such a wonderful event and I encourage you all to network, learn and share your ideas over the next two days. Thank you.

JULIE McCROSSIN: A round of applause for Senator Bridget McKenzie. Great strength of voice, great punch, great cut-through. Managed to communicate warmth. Have a go down your iPhone or whatever technology you use. It's not easy and it's a great skill to have. So another round of applause for Mitch Fifield and Bridget McKenzie. Good audio visual communicators.