JULIE McCROSSIN: I'm very excited, we've got a competition just before our last session. I've got to get the candidates. I need Robert, Lauren, Lynda and Julie to come out the front and perhaps sit on this ledge here. Robert is from a company beginning with T, Linda is from a place from Minus Money, Lauren is from the Consumer Policy Research Centre and she said it in words, not letters. I feel affectionate towards her as a result. I've got one more person, I've got Julie Smith... can someone go and ring the bell? She's got to be part of the competition. Julie, quickly, you're on! Nan is sitting in the throne; she is the judge. There is no appeal from Nan. I've just been told there's only three packets of these chocolates left. I've got to save one for tomorrow. Nan, I'm committed to this competition. You can assist Nan with the enthusiasm of your clapping. Essentially, you see up there -I'd like a round of (APPLAUSE) for Rick doing the technicals, I give him instructions every 30 seconds. They are going to have a go for the Year 7 kid who is interested but has no idea what 5G means.

NAN BOSLER: If anyone wants to make a contribution beforehand, just let me know.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Nan is from NSW. You can tell, can't you! Honestly, not the Aldi bag, I've been that loyal, but not an Aldi bag, it's too memorable. Does anyone know what I'm talking about? Are you ready? What is 5G?

>> It is the ability to do what you want on the Internet whenever you want and as fast as you want.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Be a bit giving. Thank you. Quickly come up Lynda. What is 5G?

LYNDA EDWARDS: I think it is the fifth generation of mobile technology and it uses radio waves or radio frequency to send and receive data really, really fast.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Woo! Lauren, who was reluctant, but who said yes anyway, give her a big round of (APPLAUSE). It was all a mistake. What is 5G?

>> I was going the next generation of mobile technology, but I was quite inspired by Daft Punk, so I will go "better, faster stronger".

JULIE McCROSSIN: It means nothing to me, but that's age. I just got my... it's not a senior's card, because I still work. It's a senior-something card. This is Robert from a car company beginning with T, what is 5G?

>> It's mobile having a love affair with real broadband. (APPLAUSE)

JULIE McCROSSIN: Nan, turn on your mic.

NAN BOSLER: Deep breathing.

JULIE McCROSSIN: It's not easy mate, is it? We've got Lynda Minus Money, Julie Smith, we've got Lauren, consumer and we've got Robert, T.

NAN BOSLER: I really like the idea of being able to do whatever you want, the others just got too good, they were telling the real thing, but Robert, could we share these?

>> I knew you were going to say that!

JULIE McCROSSIN: That's amazing. Congratulations, Robert. Thank you so much. You need a photo with Nan. It's all visual these days, could someone take one on a mobile so I can tweet it later? And I just really want to thank Lauren, Lynda and Julie, because I bowled up to them randomly and they agreed. A round of (APPLAUSE) for them and thank you, Nan. Could I invite now Tanya Cameron OAM and Wendy Hick to come and sit in the chat pit of fun. Just as they come up Tanya is the national president of the Country Women's Association, a current Walgett shire council, that's very far north-western NSW -would that be correct? -and she's the partner in a family beef cattle business and Wendy Hick is the immediate past president of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association Australia and she lives on a remote cattle station near the Queensland Northern Territory border and for a period of time taught her two sons through the Mount Isa School of the Air and I did mention that Tanya is a partner in a family beef cattle business. Rick, if I could have the... I'm going to see if anyone gets it right. Who feels like they know the name of this cattle? They'll throw us all in the bin if nobody knows. What is it?

>> They look pretty much like black Angus to me.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Thumbs up, excellent. The next one, Rick. It's a bull, thank you. Who wants to say what that is? Look at the size of it. We've got a Brahman... help me. Put the microphone near your mouths, what is it? If she gets it wrong, her husband will kill you. Can I give you that? Your husband is not here, nobody will tell him.

WENDY HICK: I'm thinking it's a European breed.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Are you prepared to have a say what you think, Tanya, Country Women's Association, I expect you to know this?

TANYA CAMERON: It's not my area of expertise.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Can you help with this one, that's another cow.

WENDY HICK: No, it's a bull.

JULIE McCROSSIN: That was a bit of fun to wake them up and I think they're hot to trot. The topic at hand is reliable communications and I think we've had a taste of the fact that outages can be devastating for a bundle of ways as well as lack of connection. We're here to hear about that. If I could start with Tanya from the Country Women's Association, you've got 17,000 members, how would you sum up the importance of communications to the people you represent?

TANYA CAMERON: I actually -I'm going to preface my comments by saying I don't know that it's any more important to our members than anybody else across the country, there are just some subtle differences in access and reliability, so whether that's running a small business, whether it's education, personal development, accessing banking facilities, there are all of those issues, there are just sometimes a lack of choice if your service is affected, if your mobile coverage is affected. So, it's not just a case of being able to run down to the bank to pay for the Mastercard before you get on-line to do shopping. You great deal have to have the service to pay for the Mastercard. The other issue is around medical issues, if there are problems in relation to some sort of requirement or necessity for medical access. But also, if there's the opportunity to do some on-line support, or phone support in relation to mental health issues, but also then there are some instances where women might be trying to escape domestic or family violence and in isolation. I've heard it recently, in isolation, no one can hear you scream. I don't think our desire to be connected and our desire to be in touch with people, our desire to be socially connected is any different, there are just those differences where sometimes it's a little bit more difficult and the opportunity is not there for an alternative.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Could I stay with the mental health issue for a while. I was recently driving across the Hay Plain and heard a radio program about that.

TANYA CAMERON: I'm a NSW member, but haven't been totally immersed in the thing, but my understanding is CWA has always been associated with scones and for a long time we used to try and battle against that, but there are actually now -it's actually about a strong message around the conversations that can be had and have always been had over a cup of tea and a scone and at the moment, it's particularly important that we recognise that and so CWA of NSW as part of their awareness week have actually been promoting that idea. They're quite heavily involved with lots of mental health programs and initiatives, as are most of the States, but that's their promotion for that week in September.

JULIE McCROSSIN: And the focus on mental health, is that something that is arising from the drought or something the CWA is focusing on? If you could link it to this question of if there's outages or connection

problems, how does that make helping country families cope with mental health stress?

TANYA CAMERON: Look, there's a range of things. It's not something new to CWA. It's something we've always been passionate about in relation to health, but mental health is something that we've been involved in for a long time, as well in various ways. But if you link that then to connectivity or the lack of connectivity there are times and particularly at the moment with the drought, where people need that connectedness. They need to be able to pick up the phone and ring whoever it is that they talk to, whether that's a health professional, whether it's their mother, father, sister, their best friend from school, it doesn't matter. You need to be able to have that access when you want it and so we have some questions later about planned and unplanned outages ­

JULIE McCROSSIN: Tell us about what they are and the differences?

TANYA CAMERON: To me, a planned outage gives you a choice. You know it's coming so you have the opportunity to plan, to make alternative arrangements, to go to town for the day, go and visit a friend, use up their download, whatever.

JULIE McCROSSIN: How do you hear about it?

TANYA CAMERON: In my experience it's usually been either a letter or a text or an email. More often than not, though, I would say we have unplanned outages rather than planned and that then creates a whole other level or layer of complexity. It creates anxiety, which at this particular point in time, but at any point in time it can actually add to people's stress and escalate that anxiety to something more. There are often issues where the service might go out and you might not have access to a car or there might be a medical emergency. If I give you an example, we had our mobile service went out one Friday afternoon about 3 o'clock. Because we had wireless Internet, we had no Internet either. The landline went down, so the local exchange had crashed, the battery back-up crashed. We had to drive 40 kilometres to get enough service to report the phone out. Because it was a weekend it didn't come back on until after the weekend, so probably Monday or Tuesday morning. We had children away at school, it was fire season. We were 60 kilometres from a hospital and no service. Luckily, we still had 2-way radios which was the only communication for the whole district, because the exchange had gone down and even 000 that is supposed to work in an emergency like that. I tried and tested it, I know you're not supposed to, but I did, and it didn't work. We were virtually cut off for that whole weekend and we didn't panic, but I can understand how somebody with young children or somebody with an illness, an elderly person, somebody who's not as mobile might actually be really badly impacted by that and particularly when you're isolated.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Just because I happen to have this bit of land at Wellington, you all might know this, but I didn't know it until I got this bit of land, we have already notices of electricity outages, because our nbn, we plug it in -that's as technical as I can get about it -everything goes down and it's surprisingly frequent. That's just, so that's about 45 minutes from Dubbo, 5.5 hours west of Sydney the way I drive. So, do you think it's urban people and policymakers are aware of how frequent this stuff is?

TANYA CAMERON: Possibly not, there's a fair percentage of NSW covered by only one provider of poles and wires and we had an outage and I can see Sam up there, he'll put his hand up and say the same thing. Before Christmas last year we were out for five days and I think that was only because I was on my mobile every half a day complaining about not having power. It was when we had a whole lot of storms and so the bigger population centres, we were isolated individuals who were off, bigger centres were being put back on first. No matter whether they went off at the same time as us or after. Five days just before Christmas with no power in summer, no water, all sorts of things and no communications other than mobile if you're outside.

JULIE McCROSSIN: I know we have a gentleman from Western Australia who's looking over his shoulder, because he's not a gentleman. I happen to have done a few conferences for ambulance people in Western Australia where a very significant majority of retrievals are done by volunteers, which I wasn't aware of. The reason I mention it, I was thinking earlier when we had our report back from Christine from WA, are there times when someone could have an accident and you can't ring to let the ambos know you're in trouble?

>> In our immediate area in the last few years we've had some kids run over at a party. Unfortunately, it was the kids knew one of the neighbours and they rang up about 10 kilometres away a car roll over. It wasn't until the next morning somebody else came down the road and found the vehicle they got airlifted. Despite the fact we have a St John Ambulance tower I cannot get the mobile blackspot program or any of the phone companies to consider using an existing tower to put a mobile phone on to cover that area.

JULIE McCROSSIN: There's a lot of grey nomads out there, it's not just country people. I'll come to this lady and back to my panel. Can you introduce yourself?

>> Anne Waterford, individual member. There is an emergency number on your mobile. It's 112 and if you dial that, it will go to the satellite and you can get help.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Thank you.

TANYA CAMERON: I tried both and neither worked.

>> Paul. We don't want people to try and call 112 if the other network is out.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Should we go 000.

>> 000, yes, but if you are in an outage and don't have coverage you can only reach 000 if there is coverage from your network or another mobile network that's operating in that area, then you would roam on to that other mobile network.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Is the advice no matter what 000?

>> Yes.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Did you want to say something? No. Can you feel the room is a little bit more serious? Are some people learning something, or did you all know? Let me come to Wendy Hick who is the immediate past president of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association. Tell us about the significance of this telecommunications infrastructure for education? What's your key message to people?

WENDY HICK: Communications is essential. Education really relies on communications nowadays, particularly for geographically isolated students. As technology has, I guess expanded it's gone ahead in leaps and bounds and sometimes we get left behind back out there. Distance education relies on it heavily. A lot of students have quite a significant on-line component now, but it's not just our distance education students. It's also our students at the small rural schools. They quite often have a one-teacher school teaching cohorts, six different cohorts. She relies on it as well as the students to bring them additional resources for learning, because it can be very difficult teaching as you can imagine at six different levels. It's for boarding students who don't have access to school particularly secondary go away for secondary and when they come back, they need to continue assessments and there's a growing number of students who aren't going away to study at the tertiary level. Some are going away and some are trying to study from home. At this stage, communications can determine whether or not they're actually successful in their course. Lectures are going more and more on-line, assessments are going more and more on-line, but these students particularly if they're on a Sky Muster service, the satellite service is better than previously however it still has a data constriction. They're still peaking off peak data. Most people in urban areas don't understand. With Sky Muster we have peak, off-peak. Peak from 7 am until 1 am in the morning, so when you buy your Internet plan, you're actually buying -they may say you're buying an 80-gigabyte plan, but it's broken into peak and off-peak sections. The rest you can use in off-peak which is that 1 am to 7 am gap, so when you live in the bush you've got to learn to do things like set your downloads so they will download in the middle of the night. Particularly if you're doing education, you be students who need to be downloading materials need to learn to do downloads if they've used their peak. Now we have a fantastic tool called The Education Port made available by nbn and the government for students who are in an enrolled distance education school. School of the Air and schools of distance education, we don't have it available yet for students at small rural schools or tertiary students, so we rely very heavily -and we rely on both voice and Internet. It's not just Internet. A lot of lessons, the audio component is still done over the phone. It's critical that we have the best out there that we can have.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Can I ask you, this question of reliability or lack of reliability, do sometimes families make a decision about whether to send children to boarding school or not taking into account reliability if they're keen for their child to get a high-quality education?

WENDY HICK: They do. Reliability, it's essential for the classroom. If the Internet or the phones are down, the teacher's walked out of the classroom. You can imagine if the tools aren't there, a lot of the learning is gone. There are some States now in their distance education programs only offer on-line resources. They have no print material for these students and in those cases if the services are down, the teacher's /WAOUBGTD of the classroom and there basically isn't school that day. The supervisors in the classroom in the home situation quite often are untrained. 80% of the time they're the mother or another relative in the family could also possibly be doing it, sometimes the family has hired a governess, but for the most part not trained educators. If they can't interact with those resources with their teachers, it's difficult to continue lessons and families make that decision. If they struggle with it over and over again, they sometimes make the decision more often they may split the family. Mum and the children might go to town to live in order to access schooling or they may send the children away early to boarding. We have an instance at the moment a family up in the Gulf where I am, they're in a stock camp, so they move around quite continuously mustering cattle for other people. They have small children; they're trying to do distance education. There isn't at this stage a reliable mobile service, "mobile" meaning moveable not as in mobile broadband for them to access learning. At this stage they have a trailer with a huge satellite dish they try to set up. The school bought some several years ago for families in stock camps. Prawn trawlers are another situation where they're moving a bit. That technology is now outdated, it's probably about eight years old and they're trying to find the next thing to do so these children can do schooling. They're missing out on all of those lessons with their classmates.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Can I ask each of you and I'll open to questions or comments, what are the one or two key changes that could really help the issues that you're talking about to bring more reliability, whether it be for health, communication, education, safety? I'm assuming as the national president you lobby politicians and so on. What are you fundamentally telling them that you need?

TANYA CAMERON: Political will, perhaps. Whether the capacity is there or not, I'm not an expert, but capacity probably, cost is probably another issue and also that reliability, that ability to actually access things like telehealth, things like education on-line, the ability to do things where you are. I've spent the last three days in Canberra with the National Royal Health Alliance and one of the things we've been talking about is how to actually get good health services out into rural areas and using telehealth as an adjunct to normal good old-fashioned goods-on delivery of medical and allied health services and one of the things that came up time and time again was that the ability to be able to have good quality Internet access to make good use of that telehealth just isn't available in some areas. But there's also then capacity... not "capacity", but a need for an education for consumers so that they know that they've got the right connection for their area and that they actually have the right plan. Whether that's for mobile or Internet. So, I think there's a few things, but political will to actually get it done. Blackspots rolling them out that's fine, but I've driven down the Pacific Highway between Walgett and Lightning Ridge, you've driven across the Hay Plain. You don't have service.

JULIE McCROSSIN: One of my brothers is a dermatologist and services a huge area of southern NSW and when I ring him, he says "I'll be back in a minute", he pops in and out. "Ring me in 20 minutes when I get past so and so." He knows where he's got coverage. As a doctor he's rung by people all the time. People send pictures on their skin, there's a lot of formal and informal E-Health, isn't there? What's your key message?

WENDY HICK: One of the main ones has been priority for installation and fault repair for students. We have students if they're not connected, they can't be doing school and if it's down they can't be doing school. That's adding to what you've already said. Priority of repair as well as getting them up and going in the first place. The other one is it's got to be appropriate and meet the need. We've got to have the data capacity. It's got to be affordable for these families.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Haven't they both done a fantastic job. Give them a round of (APPLAUSE), please. (APPLAUSE) Any questions or comments for our friends from far away? I don't think those grey nomads in Western Australia realise, I don't think they do. Yes, oh good. I love it when you ask a question.

>> I'm sort of a grey nomad, Bruce from Western Australia. You've touched on a number of very good points. It was Reverend Flynn who created the mantle of safety for the outback, which is not only to save people's lives, but it gave us an ability to communicate when there's issues, when there's drought. We had the AIM missionaries going around and they were the only contact that some had, particularly women.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Australian Inland Mission.

>> What is created now is a new mantle of safety, because we've lost the radio in some respects, but people in urban areas don't realise the importance of what the communication means to a lot of people, where we have nothing else and that's the thing is that if you're sitting at work and lose your mobiles you've probably still got your computer and landline. We lose one of those elements or two or three, we have nothing and that's the key thing. We go from having something we can rely on to nothing and that's the important thing we have to keep reinforcing. We have to keep that reliability and the repair times as a key element.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Could you stand up for a second? We've got younger people here. Just remind them who "Flynn of the outback" was?

>> Reverend Flynn, Australian Land Mission, he came up with the idea of the Royal Flying Doctor Service and with Traeger, the creation of the pedal wireless, because people didn't have electricity, created a pedal wireless you could pedal to generate enough electricity to send a signal out over the radio to be able to communicate with medical facilities and that then became the Flying Doctor and in about 1956 it became a royal anointment, the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Thank you so much. Give him a clap. That's so good. Our whiz over to Lynda who did a tremendous definition of 5G.

>> That was from my granddaughter who actually presented at the Telstra Vantage last week, so I got that last week, so thank you. The speakers were talking about maintenance and one of the things I wanted to talk about in my speech was around there are three elements that I think that would be really beneficial for regional and remote communities and particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and this would be for any community and one is that there is a maintenance plan, that there is proper installation and ongoing tech support, because what we're finding is without these three elements broadband would very quickly be another example of city providers rushing in and out of remote communities with little commitment to maintenance.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Look, thank you so much. That was a very powerful conclusion to our session. Is there anything else either of you wish to say? I don't want to cut you off.

>> Only one thing and I just wanted to follow on from the John Flynn Royal Flying Doctor. CWA NSW raised enough money to build the first radio tower in Broken Hill and we've maintained that relationship in every State.

JULIE McCROSSIN: Ladies and gentlemen, again, I'll ask for one more hooty, stampy clap for Tanya and Wendy for their contribution. I forgot to do the lucky door prize -why didn't someone scream at me? Quickly, get your numbers out. E47, purple E47. Anyone got it. Anyone got it? No. Let me do one more. Purple E59. Look, guys, if you don't mind, I'll save them until tomorrow and we'll have new numbers, is that okay? I'll distribute them, I won't go home and gobble them up. While the photos are taken, I'm going to leave you and hand over to Teresa who's going to do the final section and take you into the networking drinks. For those of you coming tomorrow we'll start promptly at 5 to 9 and can you just thank Rick on my behalf who's been a very great technical support. (APPLAUSE) And I will see you in the morning. I'll hand over now to you.