DARLENE MCLENNAN: Welcome, everybody, and thank you for joining us today for our Accessibility in Action Awards. For those that don't me, my name is Darlene McLennan and I'm the Manager of Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training, ADCET for short. Today we are captioning and Auslan interpreting this event. To activate the captions please click on the CC button in the toolbar that is located either at the top or bottom of the screen. We also have captions available via a browser. Hopefully, one of the team can put that URL into the chat now. There you go. Magic. This event is actually being recorded, and will be made available on ADCET in the coming days. It's up to you to choose - hopefully our presenters, our speakers, will put their camera on and their mic on when we call them, but if you're wanting to - if you don't mind, we'd like to have everybody's faces around, but it's up to you if you want to have your camera on or off, if you're just here to celebrate with us. Okay. Today I'm on Lutruwita, Tasmanian Aboriginal lands and waterways, and in the spirit of reconciliation I want to offer ADCET respectfully acknowledges the Lutruwita nation and also recognises the Aboriginal history and culture of the land, and pay my respects to Elders past and present and the many Aboriginal people that did not make Elders status. I also want to acknowledge all the countries on which you are today and also acknowledge their Elders and ancestors, and their legacies to us, and any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are participating in today's event. Well, what a delight. It's been an absolute whirlwind of a couple of weeks receiving all the wonderful nominations for today, and working with our judges to choose amongst the many hundreds of applications we got. Absolutely fabulous. To take time to celebrate and hear about the wonderful work that everybody is doing has just been a magical time for us as a team and for the judges. We've got a really tight schedule. So, I have got a really mean thing to do. I've got a bell that I'll be ringing if you're going over time. We've given each of the awards two minutes, so that's the nominee and the accepter. We will be putting information on ADCET, because the nominees provided us a lot of wonderful information around why they nominated the people, the team or the project. We'll put that on our website so you can read more details, but hopefully - we've made this a meeting because we really want you to collaborate as a sector as well in the chat and congratulate each other. I encourage you to use the Cheers’ reaction and so forth as much as you can as well. Finally, I may drop out; I'm having internet trouble. Tasmania is renowned for wonderful NBN but mine's not really working. Darren is going to pick up the reins and I will join on my phone if that happens, but hopefully it won't. Also, if you want to play along at home way from, as well, we are tweeting this event and that will be the hashtag for the Global Accessibility Awareness Day. So, that is #GAAD. So, please join the Twitter conversation as well, because we hope ADCET will pick up a few more engagements from people who actually don't know about us, because the GAAD hashtag has being used throughout the week. I've done enough. I want to give you enough time to hear from the people. Up first, we're really excited to hear - so, Darren, the first winner of our award, Accessibility through Transition. This is La Trobe University, and now I'd like to ask Anthony if he'd like to just say a quick - about why he nominated his team and a little bit about the work they've done. Thanks, Anthony.

ANTHONY GARTNER: Thanks, Darlene. Congratulations, ADCET, for this great conversation today. Thank you. I nominated the team because over the last two years they have undertaken extraordinary work during a time of significant transition for the university. We went through two change proposals. The whole team didn't know whether they had a job at the end of that. And they maintained their commitment to students and implemented a radical transformation for the way we deliver service by putting the control into the hands of the students, passing on digital literacy and other skills that they needed to ensure the students the develop digital literacy and employability skills they will benefit from after graduation. The team did an incredible job. I’m just delighted to nominate them today. Thank you for the award. DARLENE: Brilliant. Thank you, Anthony. That's fabulous. Well done. Congratulations. What I didn't actually show is what you're getting for today. You're getting a million-dollar cheque - no, sorry! Sorry, I didn't have that. I did show you on the screen. We do have a brilliant 'bespoke' coaster, drinks coaster, that actually is mounted in a mount so that you can actually have it standing up and it says, 'ADCET: supporting you, supporting students. Accessibility in Action Award 2022 winner, in celebration of Global Accessibility Awareness Day'. So, we'll be sending those out to teams and individuals who win today. So, yes, very bespoke. Made by one of our team members. So, very exciting to be able to send those in the mail soon. Once again, thank you, Anthony, congratulations to you and your team. Okay. Now, we're very excited - the next award is Embedding Accessibility. Deakin University. We have Puva to speak about that. Over to you, Puva.

PUVA P ARUMUGAM: Thank you. Hi, everyone. I'm Dr Puva P Arumugam from the Learning Design Team, which is also the Cloud First Team at Deakin. I'm really honoured to be here to receive this award on behalf of the team, and a special shout-out to our colleague Fabrice Bernard, who initiated the CloudFirst template design. In order to facilitate the CloudFirst project's goads, our team created the CloudFirst HTML template, which is now available university-wide for staff to build their unit sites and other resources in our elements. The CloudFirst template is designed with accessibility front of mind while adhering to Deakin's brand visual style guide, with 14 templates as per Deakin's brand identity. The template meets WCAG2.1 AA conformance, and will assess using web accessibility in mind and TPGI colour contrast checker as recommended by Vision Australia. It exhibits appropriate use of fonts, line spacing, text alignment, identifiable hyperlinks and file types, with an understanding of header hierarchies, alignments for screen readers, keyboard focus indicators and navigation orders for template features such as accordions. It is also part of our practice and content design to focus on inclusivity, accessibility and usability by including video and audio transcripts together with image descriptions and text alternatives. The CloudFirst templates are now used as the basis of the OneDeakin template currently being designed and developed to help lift the minimum standards of unit sites across the whole of Deakin.

Thank you.

DARLENE: Wonderful. Thank you, Puva. It's absolutely brilliant to hear about that initiative. Fabulous. Okay. Our next award - and, sorry, I feel like it's a little bit inhouse, ADCET, but we're actually awarding the presenters of this webinar. We've got Tali here from University of Sunshine Coast, and Doug McGinn. Tali, I might hand it over to you to talk about why you actually nominated this webinar.

TALI FAIRHOLM: Hi, everyone. As Darlene said, I'm from the University of the Sunshine Coast. I nominated the screen reader webinar purely because I don't think there's been a webinar out there like this to explain what screen readers are, how students use them from a lived experience, how staff use them as well. I understand - I think Doug is a staff member who is using a screen reader. And Andrew Downie as well. I think this is brilliant. It's fantastic. I've been working in this space for a little while now, and I have been able to use this webinar to explain to staff something I've been trying to explain for about five years. So, I think this is fantastic. Thank you for creating this resource and please create more 101s.

DARLENE: We'll take on that challenge, thank you, Tali. Doug, you're here just on behalf of - Doug McGinn, Andrew Downie, Kiah Buhler and Darren that put webinar together. It's on the website, ADCET website. So, I encourage you all to have a look. Doug, do you want to have a quick just thank you?

DOUG MCGINN: Thanks, Darlene and thanks, Tali. This is really important. Practitioners like myself who have been in the business for a long time, there are still lots of situations where we still need to go back to basics and just check, do we really know, for example, what a screen reader does and, thank you, Tali. Also, it was great having Kiah onboard as a student with lived experience. It made a huge difference for some of the oldies like Andrew and myself to actually have Kiah onboard. Thanks for that feedback, Tali. Thanks, Darlene.

DARLENE: Brilliant. Great. I might encourage one of the ADCET team that’s not too busy to put a link into the webinar, into the chat, so people can access it. Okay. Our next award winner is Improving Academic Life through Peer Support, which is wonderful, and we have Isabelle Vertucci to speak on the nomination and the program.

ISABELLE VERTUCCI: Hi, everyone. Thank you so much for having me today. I'm so pleased to be here and hear about all of the different projects that are happening, and amazing things that are happening in the space. My name is Isabelle. I'm the Senior Peer Connections Officer at UNSW. Once upon a time as well I was also a student at UNSW, and I have a disability, and I never got the chance to meet other people who also have a disability. It wasn't until I left uni and started working in the disability sector that I started to meet other people like me in social spaces, and it was something that I feel really passionate about. I wondered if students were feeling passionate about that, too, and they wanted to link up and share thoughts and have a mentor who understands some of the unique challenges they might face when they start uni. So, I put out some feelers. Got a whole bunch of feedback from students and we piloted this program a couple of years ago to see how it would go. It's just moving and growing, and students are really appreciating connecting with each other. The program runs with co-mentors who have lived experience, supporting a group of new students, and these new students all come from some kind of background of disability and lived experience and are looking for that specific guidance and social support. So, this is hopefully an opportunity for them to make friends, learn about the university, be guided by a senior mentor who is going to be able to show them around and help them with their unique challenges. So, thank you so much and I hope that, if anyone has any questions, you can feel free to reach out to me.

DARLENE: Brilliant. Excellent. Thank you, Isabelle. We will ask for permission to provide details of people, if people want to get in contact, but also encourage you to do that through the chat as well for each - if you wanted to connect with each other or you want people to reach out to you. The next one is First Impressions Matter. The titles of these are great, I think. This is another award for Deakin University, their Orientation Team. Danni, did you want to say a quick word before we ask Ren and Angie if they would like to talk?

DANNI MCCARTHY: Yes. I nominated - I'm so proud of the work that they did. I think it's so overwhelming for new students when they come to university and particularly challenging, you know, in the last couple of years, and so I really applaud this team, which did Accessible O Week. I think the impact of this was felt and rippled across the university. I'm so proud of them. So, I hope they can speak for themselves.

DARLENE: Excellent. OK, Ren or Angie, did you want to talk to us a little about what you did?

REN ATKINS: Thank you yes, I would love to. Thank you so much. It's great to be here, and thank you for that, Danni. This recognition definitely means a lot to the Orientation Team. We obviously needed to make really big, swift changes at the start of 2020, moving the orientation program from a face-to-face located program to an online program, and we actually identified that as a really good opportunity to take some important actions to reduce barriers to engagement and to enable all students to experience that sense of belonging that we wanted them to have in their first experience with Deakin as a Deakin student through orientation. So, the objective as we were rebuilding this orientation program was to build something that was really inclusive, that really took into consideration the diversity of our student cohort and the different ways that they might be engaging with the content, and technology they might be using and learning preferences. So, beginning from registration, we now advise students through this online process of the different ways that they can engage with orientation, and we're offering - so, core of orientation is online now, and we're looking to keep that online because of the accessibility we've been able to build into it. So, this is about 100 to 150 sessions that are being offered three times a year, because we're operating on a trimester basis. Students can now attend an online session which has closed captioning. We're recording every session as well. All of those we then do a review of the closed captioning, make sure those are accessible, have speed variability to them, and we provide documentation and supporting slide decks for every session as well. All of those are accessible and correctly structured. So, even though orientation is centralised at Deakin, we do work with dozens of stakeholders. Across all of the different faculties and areas of the university. I really need to recognise that, in working with these stakeholders to rebuild orientation as an inclusive experience, everyone was immediately and completely onboard and very supportive of every action that was taken to develop this experience, which of course is important because we're continually reviewing and inviting feedback and continuing to build upon that.

DARLENE: Brilliant. Thank you so much for that, Ren. It sounds like a brilliant program. It's going to also be so exciting to come back to these and read more about them on the website when we put them on, because I feel we're not being able to do you all justice only giving you two minutes, but I do appreciate that you actually are able to talk to your projects. The next one is Championing Accessibility. That's another Deakin one and, Danni, you've got a great - Deakin has a great team over there doing some brilliant things. Danni, do you want to talk about why you nominated this project?

DANNI: The Accessibility Champions Project is really grassroots. Its people embedded in the faculties and in different areas of Deakin University that come together above and beyond. This is above and beyond kind of work that these people do, and I really wanted to make sure that they got the acknowledgment for all of the underground work that gets done around accessibility. We're set to do some great work going forward, but I'm really proud of all the work that they do, just embedding accessibility in the language and the culture and the thousand tiny conversations we're having at Deakin in our uplifts. I'll hand over to Ismail.

DARLENE: Excellent. Issy, are you there?

ISMAIL ZENGIN: Thank you. I'm honoured to receive this award on behalf of the Accessibility Champions. Especially I'd like to thank Danni for creating this team and inviting me to join. This team has stayed strong and focused throughout the pandemic, and a major workplace restructure, when morale was really low, and it's with Danni's infectious positivity and encouragement we were able to pull through and form a foundation that allows everybody to be treated equal, and for all students and staff to be given a fair go. This is something that we are all passionate about. I have learnt so much being part of this team, and I've got so much more to give as well. I joined this team because I was asked by a staff member who I helped with an accessibility issue, 'Where can I go for help like this in the future?' At the time I didn't have an answer. Now I'm part of the answer. So, thank you again, Danni, and thank you, Darren and everybody in the accessibility team. Thanks.

DARLENE: That's great, and I love that quote that you've given, that you didn't have the answer but now you're a part of the answer, so well done. Thank you. I'm getting all teary about all this great work already. I promised myself I wouldn't cry with happiness through this, I'll keep that to the end. The next award is Accessibility: Fix, Flag and Future. This award is for TAFE South Australia. Now I'll hand over to Marika, who will speak on behalf of this. MARIKA LEOPOLD: Thank you, Darlene. I think you're very welcome to cry with happiness. I'd especially like to thank Jen Cousins for establishing the nomination, and I'm very honoured to be accepting on behalf of the Teaching and Learning Team here at TAFE SA. The premise for the nomination - it was really a recognition of the journey the Teaching and Learning Team have been on over the last two years. As a reasonably new team two years ago, they wanted to look at the organisational structure and strategy, and key documents like our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and how we can embed that within our practice. So, really do more and take the words off the page and put them into action which is quite meaningful. Quite early we recognised that it was a big task, and for some people it was going to be quite potentially stressful or a little bit unnerving because of the enormity of it, especially if it's not something they were quite comfortable with or had a lot of skills or knowledge around. And part of that was we really wanted to make sure that we hit all the different touchstones across the organisation. So, not just supporting our educators to support students; but we wanted to look at the design and delivery of our learning resources, all the way through to executive and our marketing team. So, as part of that we sort of sat down and actually came up with a couple of mottos. The fix, flag and future was the first one. Part of our strategy was to get people to start identifying, what can we fix now? What are some of the small things? For example, I might have an image without alt text. I can have a look at that and create - rectify that quite quickly. What's some of those things we can fix in the future - sorry, flag for fixing in the future? I might need a bit more information or a bit of additional support. Then what's some of those future fixes? So, by doing this it just helped to reduce some of the anxiety, make things achievable, but it really put the power back into our educator's hands to have some control around what they're going to do and when they're going to do it. The other thing we looked at around this was 1%. We started saying to people, 'Just consider if we could make 1% change what impact that could have. Because 1% change now exponentially grows across the year.' If I just think about, say, colour contrast. I know I can do that, just a small change I can make to all my documents now. But because it's raising that to my awareness, I'm upskilling and I'm learning new information so that's going to flow through. So, I'm always going to be very cognisant in all my development that I'm not repeating that same sort of error. So, exponentially we wanted to start changing people's attitudes and perceptions and really giving people power and - I think that was my bell - power and confidence to make some of those changes within the organisation. So, that's our fix, flag, future.

DARLENE: Thank you, Marika. That's brilliant. It wasn't your bell, because I'm not very good at doing the bell. I feel nervous now. Here I was confidently ringing it but, yeah, you went for 48 seconds over, but I'll allow you for - everybody is just doing some great work. Okay. The next one. Congratulations TAFE SA. The next one is Turning Experience into Accessible Action, which is from the University of Technology. Lucy Arthur nominated this team, and Katie's here to speak. So, I might go to you, Lucy, to talk quickly about why you nominated and then ...

LUCY ARTHUR: Thank you ADCET for this wonderful initiative. I'm just so proud of the Inclusive Practices Team, and that's Katie Duncan and Ashley Willcox. I think it's fantastic to have this recognition for them. Katie describes their work best so I'm going to hand straight over to Katie to talk it through.

DARLENE: Thanks.

KATIE: Thanks, Lucy. Firstly, I just wanted to say how proud I am to be part of the Inclusive Practices team, with my colleague Ashley Willcox. Thank you for this opportunity. I suppose the work we do is recognising that, even if you procure the most accessible tool, staff who are using it still need to have that advice and support for how to use it in an accessible way. That is why we've developed what we call the Inclusive Practice Review. This review includes an empathy exercise and technical testing to determine whether a student experiencing the impacts of a disability would be disadvantaged by the tool. So, the review also determines whether it's easy for an academic to meet our 10 accessible content practices, and these are essentially our minimum accessibility requirements for subject sites. So, during the review process, if we determine an academic can easily meet the content practices, our recommendations are then turned into practical resources, and if they can't then we actually provide feedback back to the vendors and hopefully try to advocate for some changes there. I just want to acknowledge that our work is only possible because of the other teams and the people that we work with. We really couldn't do what we do unless - we only can do it because we are situated within the LX Lab. The LX Lab, or the Learner Experience Lab, provides learning and teaching support across all faculties in the university, and really specialises in learning technologies and learning design. So, by working in this team we can actually embed our inclusive practice recommendations where academics are looking for support. We kind of sneak it in there right where they're after help. We also work closely with our IT unit's Digital Accessibility Stream, who champion human centred design approaches. We work really closely with the Accessibility Service, who are like that frontline support for students. So, as they're supporting the students, we support the academics. And then the Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion who really advocate across the university for all or our work. Essentially what I really believe is that it's everyone's responsibility to ensure access and inclusion, but we're just there to make sure people know what that looks like and how to do it. So that's us.

DARLENE: Thank you, Katie. I'm very excited that ADCET has partnered with Katie and her team and UTS to bring what they're achieving and doing in UTS to a broader audience through ADCET. We really value that partnership and value your work, so thank you, a worthy recipient of this award. Yes. Okay. The next one is Sharing and Advocating Accessibility. This is for the Students with Assistive Technology team. Deakin are trialling this and we hope that our SWAT Team will be with you all very soon. This is an initiative of the National Assistive Technology Officer. Deakin is the first one off the … thing, and hopefully we'll roll this out to other universities and TAFEs across the country. Layla, I think you're here to talk about the SWAT Team or Nicole to talk about the … or to talk about why. Layla, I'll let you go.

LAYLA CLARKSON-EATHER: Hello, can you hear me?

DARLENE: Yes, we can.

LAYLA: Perfect. Firstly, I'd like to thank Renee and Nicole for nominating the Deakin SWAT Team for the award, and also, I want to thank Darren for establishing the Deakin SWAT team and giving me the opportunity to participate in it. So, to me at least the Deakin SWAT Team provides staff and other students at Deakin with the lived experiences of what students with disabilities experience. So, in my case, that would be as a student with a screen reader. Some of the activities that we've done - we've reviewed unit site accessibility and provided feedback in order to ensure that unit sites are made accessible. I and Kiah Buhler, we have also created a podcast for students with disabilities, and learning from their experiences, as well as what you can improve upon.

DARLENE: That's brilliant.

LAYLA: I'm really excited to see where the Deakin SWAT Team goes and I really hope that in the future we get to collaborate with more students and more universities.

DARLENE: That's great. Thank you. Also, we have a fabulous image - in my mind, I have a fabulous image of you all wearing black T-shirts with S.W.A.T on the front, because that's how Darren sold me with the idea. So, Nicole, I was unsure if you wanted to say a couple of quick words on the SWAT Team?

NICOLE DOWNES: I'd just like to reiterate what Layla has said. It's been great working with the students and with Darren to get this going. The podcasts are terrific, and having that lived experience - there's nothing better than it. It informs our practices and what we do. We're not just here to do things; we're here to be responsive and listen to and be guided by students, because we're there for them. So, thank you.

DARLENE: Brilliant. Well said. Thank you very much. It's great also seeing all the comments in the chat. Well done. I feel like clapping after each of you. The next one is Setting a High Standard. This is the Active Reading Resource Guide from Deakin University. Alyce Greenwood is here and she'll talk a little bit about that program.

ALYCE GREENWOOD: Thanks so much Darlene. On behalf of the developer team of the Active Reading Guide, colleagues from the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Built Environment, Learning Innovation Team and the Library from Deakin University - I'd like to say thank you and acknowledge this great initiative to celebrate accessibility in action. Ensuring everyone has access to education is vital, and to do this we must proactively eliminate barriers. Active reading is a core skill for both study and for future professional roles. Therefore, we developed interactive guides that are accessible and, where needed, provided text versions. The purpose of our resource is to give students agency to utilise their readings, to help them find an approach that works for them. The guide acts as an induction for students, particularly in their first year, by orienting them to discover how to organise their readings, the different types of papers, ways to read, notetake and reference. It seeks to make clear the purpose of readings and how students can use them to aid their learning through a range of flexible approaches and strategies. This may include utilising technology to hear readings orally, visually note-taking or utilising digital tools such as voice to text or reading in sections. Information is chunked into discrete sections to help make it manageable for all students. Important information is prioritised. Explicit and plain language was used, and support contacts were integrated into the guide to help students know who they can contact for additional help. A positive experience using the guide and a successful outcome for each student was the driving force for the guide. I can pop a link in the chat. Thank you.

DARLENE: Thank you Alyce. That's absolutely fabulous. Our next award is for La Trobe University, Transitioning to Curriculum. I don't think the nominator or the accepters are here. Bojana, are you here?

RICHARD ANDERSON: Unfortunately, Bojana is unable to make it today, but she's asked me to step in in her place.

DARLENE: Brilliant. Not a problem. Thank you, Richard. I'll hand over to you to talk a little bit about the project. Thank you.

RICHARD: Fantastic. Firstly, I would just like to thank ADCET for the great work they're doing. I'd like to accept this award on behalf of the entire Discipline of Audiology here at La Trobe University, which comprises of Bojana Sarkic, Alicja Malicka, Renee Garuccio, Michelle Loeliger and myself, Richard Anderson. So, here we teach in an allied health clinical - a master of clinical audiology course. As audiologists, we are very much aware the impact hearing loss has on an individual's ability to communicate effectively, and as university educators we also are very much aware how this can impact students' academic progression. In our course we have a number of students who have significant hearing loss. With the onset of COVID-19 in 2020, like many courses, we transitioned to online learning. However, we realised that this mode of learning was disadvantaging students with a hearing loss, resulting in reduced accessibility and engagement to the course content. At the time the platform that was being used did not have features such as live transcript options which allowed them to engage in the content in realtime. In order to make the learning environment more inclusive, we then transitioned the entire course to a new platform, in this case Microsoft Teams, which has additional features that were not available previously, such as live transcription and closed captioning options, as well as whiteboard features and shared content files that the students could all access in realtime. And the aim of this was to improve student inclusivity and engagement of those students with a hearing loss. To date, the overall experience using this platform has been very positive, by all the students, not only for those with a hearing loss but from all the students who have been enrolled in the course.

DARLENE: Brilliant. Thank you so much, Richard and congratulations to your whole team. Please pass on our congratulations. That's absolutely brilliant. The next one is Meaningful Access to Employment, which is University of Southern Queensland, Vision Australia and TAFE Digital Partnership. I think Melissa, who did the nomination, is also here. Are you happy to quickly explain a little bit about the project? Thank you, Melissa.

MELISSA FANSHAWE: Thank you. Vision Australia, TAFE Digital and the University of Southern Queensland are so excited to receive an ADCET Accessibility in Action Award, alongside all of these wonderful awards that we've been hearing about today. The Certificates in Access Technology are vocation, education and training certificates I, II, III and IV that are designed to ensure people with blindness and low vision have the skills to access information and the physical environment to have success in the workplace. VET certificates are able to be undertaken by students in schools, and count towards their ATAR, as well as provide a qualification in access technology. The certificates were created because 24% of Australian people who are blind or have low vision are employed full time in Australia. This recent survey presents strong evidence that people with vision impairment who have successfully gained employment have good compensatory skills, and have the technology and social skills to interact in the workforce. Creating a nationally accredited certificate course recognises an industry gap in preparing people with blindness and low vision with the skills required to be successful in employment, and these are knowledge and skills to access information in the environment, increase social participation and personal wellbeing, and gain meaningful employment. This award also belongs to 96 stakeholders who were involved in mapping the skills for people with blindness and low vision desired by Year 12, and developing, writing and creating units of competency and reviewing them. Also, to Microsoft, who have supported us with content. The four certificates have all been approved for delivery by the Australian Skills Quality Authority and sit on the Australian Training Register, and the certificates are being added to the scope of TAFE Digital to be available nationally to all students. The lines of the 2020 review of disability standards of education recommendation 8, to strengthen the delivery of vocational education and training for students with disability. The certificates are designed for people who are blind or have low vision in schools but they could also be done by people who have completed secondary school or who have lost their vision as a young person or adult or who want to do the course alongside their tertiary or TAFE. It is also envisaged that the students with print disabilities or other disabilities would be able to access the units of competency. So, the study by the University of Southern Queensland of the trial of the certificates identified the main benefits are: recognition of the additional work in a student's workload, student confidence by increasing their skills and capability identified as being required for the work space, and employer confidence. So, we're very excited about the impact of the VET certificates, as one of the students said to us, 'You're going to help blind people get jobs.'

DARLENE: Great. Thank you, Melissa. That's a great thing to end on. Well done to your team. I don't think we'll be sending 96 things out to you for all stakeholders.

MELISSA: But we want to acknowledge their input.

DARLENE: That's fantastic to have heard that number as well to see how many people are involved. OK, our last one for our team and project award is improving information access, which is Deakin University Student Association. This award was nominated by Darren Britten, who works for us at ADCET as well as with Deakin. I think, Kat, you're here to talk a little about the project? DARREN BRITTEN: No, Kat just sent something, she had an emergency and had to run, unfortunately.

But she did leave a message, so I will read on her behalf. Kat put through: 'Unfortunately I'm not able to stay until the end of this awards presentation, but wanted to say thank you for the nomination of the award. I'm very proud to have been involved in improving accessibility for students accessing information on the Deakin University Student Association website and on their newsletter. I nominated the team because I saw this is as direct in-action. Accessibility in action. This was raised on behalf of a student at Deakin that brought up that the newsletter was inaccessible to their screen reader technology, and they were having some issues with the website trying to get hold of some student information and feeling a bit excluded. I have the student's feedback here: 'Making your digital content accessible benefits not only blind and vision impaired people, but also people with cognitive and learning disabilities and those with minor disabilities. It makes us feel valued and included and paves the way towards full and equal participation along with everybody else. I want to sincerely thank you for making the effort to resolve this important issue. Inclusion really matters.' And that kind of says it all. These were simple tasks that they went about - some not so simple. And they went and changed everything within a very short time span. The website was then accessible, the newsletter was accessible, and it was a game-changer. There were some other students that then noticed this as well. So, kudos to Kat and to Sue at the DUSA team there for the work that they did in transforming that from not accessible to accessible in just a matter of weeks. It was fantastic to see.

DARLENE: Brilliant, excellent. Thank you, Darren, and well done to the team at Deakin. Okay. So now we're up to our individual awards. Just taking a breath. Thank you so much for all the team and projects that were awarded. It's absolutely brilliant to see the great work that's been out there across the sector and, you know, the stakeholders and everybody else that's been involved to improve accessibility across our sector. So, now we're moving on to the individual awards. We're really excited to announce that we've got three receivers of our individual awards. The first one is Making Accessible Accessible, which is RMIT, which is Ronny, who was nominated by Maria from the University of Melbourne. I might hand over to you, Maria, just to talk a little bit about why you nominated Ronny.

MARIA MATHEAS: Hi. I'm really happy to do this. The reason I nominated Ronny is because the title of the awards, Accessibility in Action, is actually what Ronny is all about always. Accessibility and action. So, Ronny - I'm at the Uni of Melbourne now, but I was at RMIT until about a month ago. Ronny started about two months after me. Honestly, when he started it was like a whirlwind had hit us. It was 'Hurricane' Ronny, but not like a trail of destruction that he left behind him, but honestly, like, a trail of people, more and more people, who have become more interested in accessibility, more aware about accessibility, and who are beginning to develop the skills that they need to embed accessibility into their own teams across the university. So, honestly, he has just absolutely spread his tentacles everywhere in the university. He's run training sessions for staff at all levels, making sure that he’s scaffolded the learning so that people at different levels are able to understand and –

DARLENE: Maria, we might, I know you're excited, but we might ask you to slow down a little bit.

MARIA: OK, sorry, I am very excited. Sorry. So, he's done that. He's helped embed accessibility by providing training to everybody at all levels. He's reached out to the STEM College and he's helping to embed accessibility in computer science education so that, you know, the students who are responsible for creating digital content in the future, they have the skills to ensure that that content is accessible. He uses every opportunity possible to educate people. So, for example, when we in the STEM College approached him for help to make our LMS templates more accessible, Ronny obviously helped with that and made it more accessible. But he also ran a little mini training session for me and my colleagues to show us how we could make things accessible ourselves in the future. That's Ronny in a nutshell. He's all about educating people, getting people interested and really creating this culture across the university.

DARLENE: Thank you, Maria. That's great. Brilliant. I'll hand over to you. I think we've got 'Typhoon' Ronny, ‘Hurricane' Ronny - we've got a few names for you now, Ronny, so I might just ask you to speak for a minute about accepting this award.

RONNY ANDRADE PARRA: Thank you. Thank you, everyone, and thank you so much Maria for the nomination and lovely words. Really appreciate it. Thank you ADCET for organising these awards. I'm just so happy to be part of this. To see all the work being done in the sector, and as a few people have already mentioned, it is about sharing accessibility with everyone, making sure that everyone is aware of it and that everyone is responsible for it. And what we do, is to just try to help facilitate that process. So, thank you, and congratulations to all the other winners.

DARLENE: Thank you, Ronny. That's absolutely brilliant. I won't ever be talking to you any more now without thinking of 'Typhoon' or 'Hurricane' Ronny. I love it. I'll enjoy the session tomorrow that we've got. Okay. The next award winner is Francois Jacobs. I'm very excited that I'm actually working with Francois on a project as well. His tentacles are going far across the country, not just with Deakin but with national work. The title of this is Leading by Example. Jo Watson nominated Francois. Jo, are you there to…?

JO: I want to leave our two minutes mainly to Francois, but if Ronny is a hurricane, then Francois is a tsunami maybe. Not being competitive! My role is the course director of our disability inclusion courses. Francois has so generously in his own time, he's mentored our students. He's been instrumental in making sure that our units are accessible, visually accessible, and he does this so quietly and kindly and for me nonjudgmentally, which is really important because it's something that I really want but I'm not always getting right. I can't thank you enough, Francois. Over to you.

DARLENE: Hi, Francois.

FRANCOIS JACOBS: Thank you very much. I just wanted to say I was so pleased to hear Issy talk earlier, because about two years ago as a casual marker I was supposed to mark the student rubric, and suddenly it was not accessible. I use a screen reader. Issy left no stone unturned until I got to be able to do my work again. I was just going to say that maybe the work that you do might seem very siloed or small, but you never know how many people it reaches. So, good on you for that. So, for me, I'm still a bit shocked that I even received this award. I mean, I still consider myself as being quite in the early stage of my accessibility journey. Still building my network. Still knowing who to talk to when I encounter barriers, and how to explain it in a way that would make people want to make the change and really very important, why it matters. I always used to think that being an advocate takes an extrovert or somebody in a leadership position, and I'm really none of the above. But during my time as a student last year at Deakin I quickly learnt that self-advocacy is not about being an extrovert at all. For me, it literally was a choice between either sink or swim. I didn't want to sink. What I found while I was learning how to swim is that there are a lot of coaches and lifesavers out there to teach you. So, I would really strongly encourage all students and staff that, when you are encountering a barrier, to speak up. You might ask yourself, why does it have to be me? But I would say a better question to ask yourself is, why not me? When you see something improve, maybe because something that you've had involvement with, it's really personally rewarding, because you've helped make the place a bit better than when you found it. It's not only that; making the university environment more accessible and inclusive can literally make the difference between a student either passing your course or dropping out, and ultimately whether they can actually get meaningful employment. So, I really would like to dedicate this award to everyone at Deakin who came to the party when they were invited and who helped me, empowered me to graduate and also paved the way for students going forward. Thank you very much.

DARLENE: Thank you so much, Francois. That was wonderfully and eloquently said - brilliant. There's so many catch-cries and statements that have been said today that I want to make sure we get out on Twitter and share on the networks. That's great. Also, the chat has been absolutely brilliant, and hopefully people get a chance to read back through that and the great comments people have said. Okay. Last but not least is Creating Accessible Change. This is for Jessica Seage from Curtin University. Jessica was nominated by Jacqui Kelly, and I might hand over to you, Jacqui, just to talk a little bit about why you nominated Jessica.

JACQUI KELLY: We were really pleased to nominate Jess for this award. And I'm delighted to hear that she has been successful. However, I do realise I'm the last of the award nominees here. I won't embarrass her too much, and keep this short. My name is Jacqui Kelly. I manage the Digital Learning Team here at Curtin University. Jess and I are located at Bentley Campus in Perth, Western Australia. Curtin operates out of four countries, including Dubai, Malaysia, Singapore and Mauritius. In terms of size, Curtin has over 50,000 students and around 3,000 staff. But to give you a bit of background about Jess - she's worked as a learning designer within the Learning Design Team since 2019, and in this role she provides guidance and support to faculty staff around learning design, curriculum design, technology enhanced learning, assessment approaches, and she's always had a keen interest in universal design and digital accessibility. She sits on working parties, contributes to the university's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, but she was nominated for the rollout of Blackboard Ally at the university. For those who don't know, Ally is a tool that integrates with our LMS. We use Blackboard. It identifies accessibility issues, it provides alternative formats and suggests possible fixes so that staff can improve the accessibility of the learning content they upload. Jess was heavily involved in testing, rolling out this tool and did an amazing job providing PD to staff explaining how the tools work and how best to use it. In addition to this, one of the other reasons we nominated her was because she recently organised a month-long series of events focusing on accessibility in a digital world, where Jess has organised for both internal experts from the university and external industry speakers to come in and share their experience with staff. I think as some of you may know, sometimes it's great to hear what other people at your institutions are doing, but it's also amazing to hear what industry reps are doing as well. To finish up, I just want to say, Jess is just a really sweet person to know, and is a delight to work with. All of the Digital Learning Team are very proud. We want to wish her congratulations on receiving this award today.

DARLENE: Thank you so much, Jacqui, and Jess, if you'd like to join us.

JESSICA SEAGE: I don't want to say too much. Jacqui said enough, I think. But it's really … the support of the team that gives me the time to do all these things and, yes, I'm very passionate about UDL and accessibility, and I jumped at the chance to support the Blackboard Ally rollout and supporting staff to support their students. That's the real big thing. I think it was mentioned earlier that sometimes you don't quite know what to do. There's no judgment there. It's just showing people how to do things. If you have to show them a few times, that's okay. I really like what I do. I want to thank ADCET so much for this award and the recognition. It's a little bit embarrassing but also kind of cool.

DARLENE: Thank you so much, Jess. I've also had the pleasure of working with you on a UDL project. It was an absolute delight. Jess is one of our video stars in the course. If you've undertaken that course, you'll get to see Jessica at work, which is absolutely brilliant. Well, that is the end. I want to thank you all for joining us and celebrating the great work and initiatives that have gone on around the country in regard to accessibility. When the team came up with this idea, we kind of thought, will we get one or two nominations, and we were blown out of the water with the nominations. This is an inaugural event. It will be back next year, because it's actually been such a delight to stop, and reflect and celebrate with you all. Thank you, everybody, for sharing your stories, for nominating people and for joining the celebrations with us. My goodness, we're actually on time as well. I also appreciate all the speakers for keeping to a very tight time schedule but also to our Auslan interpreters and our captioners for keeping up with the rush as people were trying to keep to the time. All right. Have a good rest of your Wednesday and thank you, and please join us again for our webinars, keep connected with us on our socials, sign up to our newsletter if you haven't, and visit ADCET if you're ever looking for information around accessibility or how to support students with disability across the tertiary sector. Take care and thank you to the team in the back end as well - Jane, Kylie, Darren and Justin have been doing - I sometimes forget Jane because she does such a great job, but hopefully I've remembered you all, and thank you all for all your great work. Take care. Bye. See you all.