DARLENE MCLENNAN: Hi everybody. Welcome. A very exciting day for us all here. It's great to see so many familiar faces and see so many familiar names. So thank you for joining us today. As many of you know I'm Darlene McLennan and I manage the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training, ADCET for short. I couldn't do this without the fabulous team that's behind me today, and, yeah, so it's very exciting to have you all here to celebrate some great practice across our wonderful sector.

Before we begin, just some housekeeping. This event is being live captioned and also Auslan interpreted. To activate the captions, you can click on the CC button in the tool bar that is located either at the top or bottom of the screen. We also have captions available via browser. Kylie will add that link now. Also, if you are wanting to access the Auslan interpreting, please pin the interpreters.

The captioning is done by Lee by Bradley Reporting, so thank you Lee. The recording will be available on ADCET in the coming days. If you have any technical difficulties, you can email us at admin@adcet.edu.au.

Feel free to keep your camera on or off, up to you. It would be fabulous when you are accepting the award that you could turn your camera on, if possible, but also encourage you all to keep your mics muted until you are asked to talk, just to stop the interference.

Really encourage you to chat with each other in the chat box. If you are wanting to reach out to everybody, make sure you choose the "everybody" or "everyone". The other thing, it's really important that we keep to time today. We have a very short window, we have an hour to do this celebration, and we've had some fabulous people and work to celebrate but, really, it's important we keep to time for our interpreters.

Okay. So now I would like to start by acknowledging that I'm coming to you from Lutruwita, Tasmanian aboriginal land. On the screen we have a map of indigenous Australia. And Gabrielle will now put the link into the chat so that people, if you want to access and experience that map, can access it.

In the spirit of reconciliation, ADCET respectfully acknowledges the Lutruwita nations and also recognises the Aboriginal history and culture of the land, and I want to pay our and my respects to elders past and present and to the many Aboriginal people that did not make elder status. I also acknowledge all the countries participating in this meeting and also acknowledge their elders and ancestors and their legacy to us, and any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in the webinar today. Feel free to add in the chat where you are coming from today. It's another way we can connect and engage.

Okay. This is our second year of our Accessibility in Action Awards. We are really proud to be able to continue the celebrating of the fantastic work that's being done in accessibility within the tertiary education sector. These awards celebrate Global Accessibility in Action Day (GAAD), highlighting the exceptional achievements within our sector in promoting and advancing accessibility and inclusive practice ‑ sorry, we've got a mic on, it's a challenge ‑ promoting accessibility inclusive practices in tertiary education and training. By showcasing some of the great initiatives being undertaken, we can continue to build on shared good practice.

Over the next hour I will announce the winners for each category and invite someone from that group to provide a brief overview and its impact. We really ask people to keep it very succinct because, as I said, we haven't got a lot of time. I also apologise, the impact on me sometimes is I actually can't say things very well, so I probably shouldn't be facilitating, so we are going to try for first names because it's fabulous you all have fabulous names but I would do a bodged job in announcing those. We will use first names. All the lists of the winners will be on the website and more information about them will be there.

Also, for the highly commended we will be sending out a certificate, and for the winners, they will be receiving a lovely glass and wooden award. So on the screen we are showing Accessibility in Actions Award 2023 and winner with our logo. Yeah, it looks pretty speccie. Hopefully when I receive them in the post they will look just as speccie but I will work to get those out to you as quickly as I can.

So, let's go. Firstly, we are wanting to start with a highly commended. It's fabulous. We actually received so many wards and it was really hard to make a decision. The recipients of this certificate is we didn't want to actually let them go without acknowledging the great work they are doing.

So firstly, we have ensuring occupations are responsive to people with disability. And this goes to Karen and Iva, the ACOLA Project. So congratulations for the great work that you've undertaken in that. So thank you.

Developing a student centric accessibility service. Gillian Smith from University of Canterbury, New Zealand. It was really exciting this year to open up to New Zealand and receive some great nominations from them as well.

And then Sustainable Disability Support. Priyanka, Faye and Peter from the Kangan Institute, TAFE Victoria, which is absolutely fabulous as well. Once again, all those awards are on the website, more information about those awards.

Also an Integrated approach to Embedding Open Education, Bill, Patricia, Rachel, Trevor and Tricia from Deakin University.

Okay. Now we are going to go over to the team awards. We are asking one person from each team just to talk a little bit about the awards that ‑ the work that they've undertaken. Once again, I really encourage you to please keep it succinct. We set the awards into four categories, and the first category is Improving Digital Accessibility. I would like to offer my congratulations to Deakin University for the Multi‑Platform Accessibility Audit. Danielle, or Rachel, or Matthew, or Jeshmine, or Michael ‑ anyone able to talk?

DANIELLE: Thanks, Darlene, I'm here. Danielle Johnson. Thanks so much for the award. So Deakin has a vision of enabling a vibrant and rich and inclusive ecosystem to flourish within our university, and core to that is being inclusive. Digital accessibility is a really big way of how Deakin library can make sure that everyone gets to successfully engage with us and have a positive experience. Our library Multi‑platform Accessibility Audit process and toolkit ‑ it's a bit of a mouthful ‑ is a really concrete way that we've been able to bring about some of our inclusive goals. So I'm here today representing Deakin Library's experienced design teach, Rach, Matt, Jeshmine, Mike, and there's a few others in the team as well but that's the core project team. And they really championed and ran this project.

So our team manages the digital content platforms that underpin Deakin Library's discovery, learning and research services, and we're a core player, as a result, in delivering on that accessibility remit. So prior to doing this project, this award‑winning project, we would use operational activities to test new and existing content and platform for accessibility compliance. And we incorporated accessibility testing, we still do, into our project activities to ensure accessibility is embedded into what we do.

We were having challenges, though, and those challenges were around having visibility across a really complex digital ecosystem. Most people who work in libraries understand the complexity of that digital environment. We really didn't have a bird's‑eye view of what was going on across and within those platforms. And we were also very dependent on auto‑generated reports which are quite limited in what they can assess. So we decided to come up with this idea of a Multi‑platform Accessibility Audit process and toolkit. And we were able to apply the same consistent approach across 15 content platforms that we are responsible for and we were able to use those results to identify, implement and advocate for improvements.

So in total we were able to run 63 audits across WCAG 2.1 and we identified 91 verified criteria fails across those 63 audits, which actually represents hundreds, if not thousands, of individual fail instances. And already we've been able to resolve around two‑thirds of those. So this process, this audit process has become part of our operational activity now and it's really making an impact on the accessibility of Deakin Library's content platforms. So thank you very much to my team and thank you so much to ADCET for the award.

DARLENE: Great. Thank you, Danielle. A little bit over too ‑ ‑ ‑

DANIELLE: Sorry.

DARLENE: ‑ ‑ ‑ but you did pretty well. Thank you so much and congratulations. I encourage everybody to use the reaction button to congratulate people or add to the chat as well. It's wonderful to hear about the fabulous work.

Okay. Our next award winners are Digital Accessibility Enhancement, the University of New South Wales. We have Veronica, Seda, Helen and Mohamed, I think. So any of those team here to give us a two‑minute talk?

VERONICA: Yes. Hello everyone. I'm Veronica from UNSW. I'm really glad that our team got the award. I would like to shout out our team members, Seda, Helen and Md. So you make this dream team of dedicated individuals that want to improve digital accessibility. So actually when we start in late 2021, other teaching colleagues considered these accessibility issues minor issues, and only affecting, like, a small number of students. But we care and we know it is vitally important to make our course contents accessible. So in 2022 we audited and improved hundreds of the module sites, learning management system and the course documents. We also published Digital Accessibility Guide for Learning.

So this is a wonderful moment that our hard work gets recognised and celebrated. And now the initiative gets some momentum and this award will accelerate this momentum of change. So we will continue this work, continue the work in this area and make our course more accessible. On behalf of our team, I would like to thank ADCET very much for the award and ADCET's hard work for promoting accessibility all around Australia. I also want to thank colleagues that helped this initiative, Terry Cumming, Charlotte Long, from US.

DARLENE: Brilliant. Thank you so much, Veronica. That was fabulous to hear about that great work, and congratulations to the whole team.

Okay. Across to the next one, which is student‑led or co‑designed awards. So the next winner is Edith Cowan University, Enhancing Digital Accessibility Student Project. Ryan, Philippa, Dale, Maria, Josh, Shaun, the Student Equity Advisers Digital Accessibility. So anybody from that team that is able to join us and share a little bit about the project?

>> Hello. Thank you. Yeah, it was a great privilege to be part of the enhanced digital accessibility project, which involved student perspectives of digital accessibility at university. Our student team took part in a co‑design workshop scripting and filming about our experiences at university. We showed our video at ECU 2020 International Day of Persons with Disability event and spoke of our experiences as a panel. Thank you to ADCET for this award. And thank you to Kay, Stevie, and all the equity team for being so supportive with our project. Thank you very much.

DARLENE: Brilliant. And well under time. I might give another award out. All right. Thank you so much for that. All right. The next winners are University of Sunshine Coast, Disability Inclusion Student Group. Bailey, Jennifer as student leaders, and Belinda, Kiara, UniSC Student Partnerships Office. Anybody here from that team?

JENNY: Yes. Hi. My name is Jenny Watson. I'm co‑Chair of the Disability Inclusion Group at the University of Sunshine Coast. We would like to thank you for this award. And I just want to mention my co‑Chair, Bailey Weymss, who is the driving force behind our Disability Inclusion Group. And also on our team is Bria and Ciara from Student As Partners at the university. Yeah, it's been a really amazing team and we couldn't have done it without the support of the students’ centre and the executive, as well as Accessibilities, which is our disability support organisation on campus.

So basically, what we've been trying to do is make people with disabilities or students with disabilities on campus feel included and to also advocate for them, but as well as educate the greater student population about what it means to have a disability, and what's appropriate and what isn't appropriate behaviour with people in wheelchairs. For example, we've had events where we've had demonstrations with some Paralympians with wheelchairs and talking about wheelchair maintenance and appropriate ways to engage with people in a wheelchair.

So we've had a lot of different events over the course of our existence, which has only been about two and a half years. So, yeah, we want to have equal opportunities for our students and we want them to succeed academically and socially at UniSC. So we are always pushing to make sure we have inclusive learning materials. And we have also social groups. So, yeah, it's been a really great experience and we thank you for your acknowledgement with this award, and that's us from UniSC.

DARLENE: Great. Thank you. And it's lovely to see that you're all celebrating together on the wonderful red couch or orange couch. It's great that you could come together to celebrate. So congratulations. Thank you very much.

JENNY: Thank you.

DARLENE: Okay. The next one is University of New South Wales, Diversified. So students that were involved are Aaron and Josephine and Chantel, and staff were Terry, Ian, Karen, Karin, Alexander, Scott, Veronica, Holli and Charlotte. So a few names there. Is anybody able to speak on their behalf?

TERRY: I can speak, thank you. First of all, thank you so much for this award. We are all very excited. Firstly, of course, I have to thank the students. This was largely ‑ pretty much completely driven by them. It all started when Josi was a student in Ian's course and she pointed out to him that some of his course materials just didn't work for her the way that she learns, and they worked together with one of our Ed developers to fix that, and they created some course materials. And then I was doing work in UDL and we all ended up getting together in a group chat and put Diversified together. So we also held workshops with students to determine what they needed to make campus and learning and teaching here at UNSW more accessible. And we ended up coming up with a set of guidelines that addresses that from an institutional level, a faculty level, and then a course level. And we've been trying to disseminate that and promote that as much as we can. The students also made a video of what it felt like to be neurodivergent on our campus and to do a degree as a neurodivergent student to raise awareness for everybody. I don't want to take over my two minutes.

DARLENE: No. Well, you've done well. You're just under. So thank you so much, Terri. That's brilliant. Okay. And the next one is RMIT Vietnam. A Student Aid Program with Carol, Minh, Anh, Tu and Melanie, and 27 aid staff. So Carol, are you with us? Or anybody from that team?

ANH: Okay. Hello.

DARLENE: Hello.

ANH: Hello, everyone. I am Anh Tran from the Equitable Learning Services Team of RMIT Vietnam University. And it is my great pleasure today to represent my team to accept the award. So our project is called Student Aid Program, and this is established back in 2017 with the goal of ensuring the registered students with a range of circumstances equitable access and participation in academic activities. So our student aids selected from currently enrolled RMIT students and we would train them to work in diverse roles as notetakers, exam scribe readers, participation assistant in lecture and tutorials.

So registered student will receive the support from the student aid from the first year at university until their graduation. And the Student Aid Program will help the student to have a smoother transition into higher education environment and to make sure that the registered student have the same access to learning materials as others.

So as the result of the program, the program aided the student to achieve the most of their potential academically and, in turn, giving them a better outlook for their career prospective. And this is particularly significant in Vietnam because there is lack of awareness and regulation for equitable access to higher education in Vietnam currently.

So, again, thank you very much for the award and we would like to thank ADCET for organising such a meaningful award for us to share our contribution in promoting accessibility. Yeah. Thank you.

DARLENE: Great. Thank you. And I know we invited New Zealand in, but because RMIT is based in Vietnam, can we say the awards are now international? I think we've got the name of national awards but now we've got an international recipient. So fabulous and congratulations, RMIT Vietnam.

ANH: Thank you. Thank you very much.

DARLENE: Okay. The next award we have is in student support area. So yes, we have I think four in this. So the first one is Edith Cowan University, Deb, Kiara, Hannah, Katherine, Stevie, Kay and Dave from different services. So I will hand over to ECU to speak.

>> Thanks so much, Darlene. And thanks for the opportunity. At Edith Cowan University we're really proud to be an institution that's committed to creating an environment where everyone is provided the opportunity to achieve their potential. And, you know, we are continually striving to remove barriers people face in participating and in thriving in education. And our Sensory Spaces on‑campus initiative is ‑ it's a key feature of making universities more accessible to people with sensory needs.

So as we focus on, you know, making our learning spaces more dynamic and more interacted and stimulating environments, it really underscores the importance of these types of spaces where students are empowered to manage their sensory inputs as well. But I think beyond the creation of the physical space, it's really been prompting many conversations across the university on how we can meet the needs of students and staff. And as you mentioned, the creation of these sensory spaces has been a super collaborative effort which has been fantastic to see, and the input from students and staff who are neurodivergent has really underscored our approach. So thanks to everyone at ECU who has been a part of this and also ADCET for putting on these awards. Thank you.

DARLENE: Great. Thank you so much. Yes, we had a conversation about this today, actually, so it's such an important thing. I'm so glad we got to celebrate the inclusive spaces that you have supported and developed on your campuses.

Okay. The next awards Are Teaching & Learning. These are the last of our team awards, and we've got seven in this area. So the first award goes to University of Newcastle, Embedding Disability: Disability Confidence Training, Accessibility Champions Network; Accessible Technology Online Training. So we have Katie and Sam from University of Newcastle. Are one of you available to talk to the award?

KATIE: Sure. It's Katie Butler here and we've got a third recipient who is missing off that list ‑ ‑ ‑

DARLENE: Oh, sorry about that.

KATIE: ‑ ‑ ‑ who is Dr Olivia Whelan. And, actually, also our Disability Champions Network who are also on this nomination ‑ ‑ ‑

DARLENE: We will check the website and make sure we've got the details correct.

KATIE: No worries. So thank you very much for recognising the University of Newcastle under this award. We are very excited to think that this will help us spread awareness of what we're doing and also help bring more people along in the journey of disability inclusion and accessibility championing.

So our activities that we've been doing here involve the Disability Confidence Training Package and also the Accessibility Champions Network. The Disability Confidence Training is all about empowering our staff to be confident in teaching students with disability, and also being great colleagues to staff with disability, and having practical strategies in place. So we look at things like universal design in teaching, talking about disclosure of disability, and all sorts of other things.

And once people finish that training, they go into the Accessibility Champions Network and they become champions of accessibility all around the university, and that is where we see the true magic because these initiatives alone are not ‑ you know, are not really the thing that makes the difference, it's all the people who get involved. So we have 92 members of the Accessibility Champions Network who are spruiking accessibility everywhere they go. And I'm hearing stories all the time of processes and policies being positively impacted by the work they are doing, having people coming to me all the time asking questions about accessibility, and hearing stories about accessibility becoming a key success profile on projects and talking about testing accessibility.

And the third part of this nomination was the Digital Accessibility Training which was developed by Sam Rykers. That, again, is just another example of how we're spreading this message and helping people be able to use accessibility tools, because Microsoft, Zoom, have done such a fantastic job making sure these platforms are accessible. We want to make sure that people know how to use them so that our students and staff benefit. So, again, thanks so much for the award. We're very appreciative.

DARLENE: Great. Thank you so much, Katie. I feel ‑ we had talked about do we provide clapping ‑ the sound of clapping but, yeah, it's just so good to see all the interactions and the comments that are coming through on the chat about each and every project that's won an award today.

Okay, the next one is Accessibility Champions Project from Deakin University. Too many names to read out, so I might leave that to the person who is going to talk, if that's okay, just in case they are wanting to highlight anything, and anybody. So Deakin.

EMILY: That would be me. I'm Emily Partington from Deakin University. I probably won't read through all the names either. Thank you to ADCET for this honour. I'm delighted to accept on behalf of the Accessibility Champions Team listed there. The team is in our third year of this project, and I'm honoured to be part of such an amazing group of passionate people that go above and beyond their normal scope of work to advocate for accessibility in teaching and learning at Deakin through the Everyday Accessibility Basics and frameworks that the team have developed. Our processes have been embedded into the way the unit design is done at Deakin and uplifted the student experience across the whole university.

We've done amazing things, and I hope we can continue this work at Deakin. And awards such as this from ADCET really provide us with the reassurance that we're on the right path, that we're doing good work. So thank you. And congratulations to the rest of the award winners.

DARLENE: Thank you, Emily. That's brilliant.

Okay, the next award is University of Technology Sydney. High‑level Support for Subject Design Project. We've got Katie, Ashley, Elham, Justin and Liz, so from two different teams from UTS. So anybody here from UTS to talk to that work?

KATIE: Yeah, I'm here. So thank you.

DARLENE: Hi, Katie.

KATIE: So I'm Katie and I'm the LX Lab Inclusive Practices Coordinator. And I'm really thrilled to be accepting this award on behalf of a really wonderful collaboration between the LX Lab Inclusive Practices Team, including my amazing colleagues, Ashley and Elham, and the fantastic UTS Accessibility Services, in particular Liz, who is the manager of the Accessibility Service, and Justin who is an Accessibility Consultant.

And I would like everyone to imagine that you are a subject coordinator. You have not come across accessibility before. You are busy and stressed and have over 500 students in your subject. You have inherited a subject that uses a lot of images to convey concepts and drag‑and‑drop questions for assessment tasks. A few weeks into the session you get notified that you have a student in your subject that has vision loss. You want to support the student but you were just so completely overwhelmed and you're not sure where to begin to make your subject accessible.

This is the situation that our new high‑level service was designed for. While we recognise that accessibility is everyone's responsibilities, we recognise that people need to feel supported in order to make these changes, so we are taking a collaborative and proactive approach to providing this support.

The Accessibility Service, who do a fantastic job supporting our students, prioritise subjects where complex accessibility requirements need to be implemented. And the LX Lab team who support academics on using learning technologies review the subject in the learning management system with as much lead time as possible to make recommendations for improvements. We then run a series of consultations with academic staff to upskill them so they can effectively implement the changes with a hope that this will also change their practice into the future. And the success of this service is really by collaboratively working together, sharing knowledge and to building relationships for positive outcomes and creating a culture of kindness to implement accessibility. Thank you.

DARLENE: Thank you, Katie. I love how you used the word "kindness". It's absolutely brilliant. We've been very fortunate also to have a partnership with UTS and the LX Lab and supporting us to develop some of our content. It's been absolutely brilliant to work with you all and we're so glad we can share some of your great work nationally. And congratulations on the award.

The next one goes to Box Hill Institute, Victoria. It's great to see a couple of our TAFE and VET providers as part of this. I must admit in our nominations we didn't receive as many of VET applications as we had hoped but it's great to see that we did get some and that some of them are winners. So we have David, Vivienne, Annie, Dean, Andrew, Samuel, Annemaree and Tania. Anybody here to talk on behalf?

ANNIE: I will.

DARLENE: Hi, Annie.

ANNIE: Hi, Darlene. And thank you very much. It's really a wonderful honour for Box Hill Institute to be a recipient of this award for our Accessibility Hub Project. And the award does validate the work done on this project right across the Institute to support students and staff with disability, whether or not they choose to disclose.

We set out to create a self‑service destination for everyone who might need a little help sometimes. And the hub showcases campus services and technology tools for accessibility. The project was instigated by my manager, Tania Teese. And like all good ideas, it gathered its own momentum. To say that Andy Corbett and I embraced this project enthusiastically would be an understatement. We ran with it and we invited our colleagues and students across the Institute to take part. Some of them are fellow nominees and many more contributed. A heartfelt thank you to everyone involved.

I would say that what we've created, it isn't perfect. It's a starting point. In fact, we welcome suggestions from you on how to improve it. It's available without log‑in on our website. Someone might pop the address in the chat. And there is a link there to a feedback form. So please jump in and give us some feedback. I can offer this with complete equanimity, as we recently handed the hub over to our Student Life Team and I am sure they will take it much further. So thank you to everyone involved.

DARLENE: Thank you, Annie. And that's lovely to seek feedback from the sector. It's one of the things I love most about the work we do in this sector, is that we share and are really happy for peer feedback and support. So fabulous. Well done.

Okay. Another award for Deakin University, their Foundation Maths Program. And there were some staff partners, Kim, Dawn, Tom and Megan, and there were student partners, Eliza and Molly. Is anybody available to talk to that? Nobody?

CORINNA: It's Corinna here.

DARLENE: Hi, Corinna.

CORINNA: I saw Kim there. Kim, are you going to say a few words?

DARLENE: Might have got distracted.

CORINNA: Yes, maybe. I will just ‑ my name is Corinna. Sorry, I'm from Deakin. And I would just like to acknowledge this team, who are part of my team who did a fantastic job in developing these maths resources, and really are focusing on those students who, perhaps, lacked a bit of confidence in maths. And our student partners were just fabulous in making sure that everything we did was accessible. And I think we all learnt a lot along the way, which was an absolute bonus for us. So thank you very much for the award and, yeah, thank you again.

DARLENE: Great. Thank you. STEM and things like maths are things we often get questions about. It was great to see the work that Deakin has done in this space. So congratulations to the team. All right. Kim, sorry, you are there now. Can you talk? No, sorry, your mic must have been ‑ anyway, we will continue to move. Sorry, maybe write in the chat, Kim. Right.

The next award goes to Central Queensland University, CQU Renew Accessible Moodle Template. There is Nadine, Zoe, Faith, Marie, Nicholas, Paul, Rikki, Monique, Sean and Justin from the learning design team, Learning Design Innovation. Is there anybody here to talk to that?

JUSTIN: Yeah, sure, Darlene. I'm Justin Wylie from the Learning Design Team in the Learning Design and Innovation Directory at CQ University. We are very proud to accept this award. And, firstly, thank you to ADCET for the recognition of the hard work and effort it takes to make changes like this, to make our student experience more accessible and inclusive. These awards help to build momentum and improve accessibility and inclusion in education. This was truly a team effort for our learning design team with many, many hours of manual work, first developing and then implementing the CQU template across all the courses in the uni.

Prior to the project, our LMS had no standard structure of the units and required students to learn to navigate each unit or course in different ways increasing their cognitive burden. So students with disability, First Nations, regional, low‑SES students already facing significant disadvantages further had an extra burden when accessing their online resources.

So we identified barriers to learning including inconsistent design, difficulty accessing assessments, time wasting, increased cognitive load and inaccessible content, and to address these issues we made a range of changes to our LMS, such as a responsible and accessible design, a standardised and accessible template, which is what we put in for the award, ensuring clarity and comprehensibility for all learners, creating comfortable and predictable online experiences and using educational neuroscience‑based instructional design.

So CQU University units can now be viewed on any device or operating system in an accessible way making sure that everyone has equal access to learning resources. And the initiatives also raised awareness in other areas, and we've implemented UDL principles and accessibility strategies through some STEM units as well, and we are further developing these ideas.

CQ University strives to be the most accessible university in Australia and this project is a testament to our commitment to providing equitable access to tertiary education for all students, and it demonstrates that by implementing evidence‑based UDL principles and accessibility strategies, universities can create a more inclusive and welcoming learning environment that benefits all students regardless of their backgrounds and abilities. So, yeah, thank you again for the award. We are very proud.

DARLENE: Great. Thank you, Justin. That was great to hear more about that award and thank you. Okay.

Now, we have another one from TAFE. So TAFE NSW, Inclusive Design Standards and that's from the Inclusive Design Team, Educational Quality Enhancement Team and Product and Quality Group. There's a lot of names there. I am happy to let the person who is going to speak to that to acknowledge all those people. So is there somebody here from TAFE NSW?

NAOMI: Yes. Hi Darlene.

DARLENE: Hi Naomi.

NAOMI: Naomi McGrath here. Thank you, and, yes, that was a bit of a mouthful, the name of our team. But thank you so much. It's an honour to accept this award on behalf of the team. This award is recognising the dedication and amazing work that the team has accomplished while striving towards developing a more accessible and inclusive environment for our staff and students at TAFE NSW. So the team are currently working on a project to develop and co‑design inclusive design standards to embed inclusivity as an integral part of the TAFE NSW strategic plan. The primary aim of the standards is to lead a culture of inclusion by outlining the obligations and considerations for all staff when developing learning and assessment materials.

The Inclusive Design Standards are organised by five domains of learner experience. The first domain concentrates on standards around accessibility with a focus on digital platforms and tools, and address mandatory web compliance. The second domain are standards that focus on using clear and concise language across literacy levels to improve digital literacy and inclusion by addressing the underlying foundation skills. The third domain is standards that build on engagement with a focus on the UDL guidelines and our commitment to the UDL plus one approach. The fourth domain concentrates on standards that promote a sense of connection, identity and purpose within learning through appropriate cultural authenticity. And then the fifth domain has a focus on usability standards and how we address student and teacher experience, ensuring products are useable to the broadest possible audience. The team will support these standards through capability uplift and have already created support materials and resources for over 170 staff directly involved in product development. Some of these resources include accessibility checklists, guidelines on creating closed captions and html transcripts, writing appropriate alt text for learning and assessment, an interactive transcript template to support branching scenarios, guidelines for using H5P for Learning resources, quality writing standards for inclusive language and an articulate product development reference guide, just to name a few.

The team also conducts quality reviews on product, as well as other simulated organisations to ensure that diversity and accessibility of materials are maintained including accessibility testing with assistive technologies. So thank you ADCET for this award and recognition. We are so excited to keep working and providing awareness, compassion and togetherness, and to continue building on providing inclusive practices that go beyond a set of standards on paper. So thank you.

DARLENE: Great. Thank you so much, Naomi. That was brilliant. Absolutely brilliant. You went over time, but we won't take the award off you. That's fine.

All right. Now we're very excited ‑ well, firstly, before we start on the individual awards, I wanted to acknowledge all the great work that has happened with the teams around the country, and in Vietnam and New Zealand. It is fabulous. It was such a hard decision for all of us to make on the committee to decide on the winners, because there has been such great work happening, and it is wonderful to see from last year to this year the quality of applications, the quality of work. It's just been wonderful to see that grow.

Now we go on to the individual awards. Winners who have undertaken projects across the same four areas, as well as including student support, digital accessibility and UDL. All those individuals have demonstrated passion and dedication to students with disability.

So the first award goes to Kay Barnard, Equity Projects Coordinator at Edith Cowan University. Kay has worked tirelessly to look at the sensory spaces in ECU, training packages for neurodiverse and mentoring programs for autistic students. The list goes on. All the information is up on the website, more about Kay's work. Kay, are you there just to say a few words?

KAY: Hi, I'm Kay from Edith Cowan University. Firstly, thank you so much to ADCET for running these awards and for giving us an opportunity to celebrate the dedicated staff that we have in our university community. I feel quite honoured to be able to share my lived experience, and I think one of the students involved in our projects really put it nicely, to be able to reframe the narrative around disability at university. For myself especially, as being an autistic and disabled person in tertiary education and experiencing those barriers for myself, and then also having the opportunity to remove those barriers for students, has been really meaningful work and I've really enjoyed being part of it.

I just wanted to say thank you to everyone in Access and Inclusion and the Equity Projects Office for all the support with the work that we do at ECU. I think Edith Cowan really embodies the commitment to disability and the commitment to making sure that our campuses and our services are inclusive for students. So thank you very much to ADCET.

DARLENE: Brilliant. Thank you, Kay. It's fabulous to have been able to award you that. Next award goes to Tracy Jennings from Deakin University, an Inclusive Resource Developer. I will just read a little bit from the website. Tracy and the small team of casual staff working with students and their teaching staff aim to provide inclusive resources in the form of transcription, captioning, audio description and other materials. Despite a huge increase in student numbers over recent years, Tracy and the small team have remained the same size. Despite this, Tracey has continued to improve the process, efficiency, meaning and the students do receive amazing service is what the nominator has said. Tracey, are you with us?

TRACEY: I am, yes. Hi. Thank you so much to ADCET for organising these awards and passing on to me. That's really lovely. It means a lot to me and also the rest of Accessible Materials team. I work with a fantastic team who provide a wonderful service to students, so thank you to Linda and Victoria and the Disability Resource Centre staff and also the teaching staff that we work closely with when we develop accessible materials. And a special thanks to Bridget who has been providing me with statistics during this session so that I could sound impressive as I talk to you all.

We organise the captioning and transcription and audio description materials and live captioning for students. I started working with the Accessible Materials Team in 2015, and at that stage I was the entire team, and we've grown a bit since then. We have casuals working with us. We worked with 20 students back then and we've tripled that number now. We have doubled the resources that we provided from as recently as 2018, and it looks like we will exceed that again this year, and we have worked with over 300 units last year and unit staff, and we will exceed that again this year.

So the service that we're providing is expanding as we have more students enrolling with us, and also as the learning materials, the type of learning materials change. We have been able to provide an expanded service. In 2022, we provided over 150 audio descriptions, whereas in 2015 we didn't provide a service to students who are blind or have low vision in the field of videoing and audioing.

So I think the work that we do to support a growing number of students to have access to all forms of media during their study is something that the accessible materials and Deakin and myself can be proud of. I think we provide a pretty good service. So thank you to ADCET and the Deakin staff who nominated me. Thanks very much.

DARLENE: Wonderful. I think the proof's in the pudding, Tracey. And it's fabulous and it is great that your colleagues nominated you and the work you've undertaken and your dedication over many years. It's brilliant.

Okay. The next award goes to Rae, who is an Educational Designer at Griffith University. I had the pleasure of meeting Rae at an event a couple of weeks ago, which was great, and just meeting her I could understand the passion she showed in the conversation we had. That showed us that we got six nominations from different individuals for her. So I think the staff at Griffith value ‑ well, we know that the staff at Griffith value Rae's work.

So Rae, are you here with us?

RAE: Thanks, Darlene. Yes, hi. I would just like to thank ADCET for holding these awards. It really helps draw attention or put a spotlight within our institutions on what can be achieved in terms of accessibility and inclusion, and also thanks to my colleagues who nominated me. It was quite overwhelming, but their efforts, each of them go that extra mile as well. Thanks. It is so good to hear all of the team projects as well as the efforts of the individual winners. So thanks again.

DARLENE: Thank you, Rae, that's brilliant. The next award goes to Andrew Normand from University of Melbourne, Improving Digital Accessibility: Web Accessibility Lead. Andrew is very generous to us at ADCET. He has shared a lot of his knowledge and expertise with our recent accessible ICT procurement process. He is supporting us in a TAFE session in a couple of weeks, and once again, it shows that we often don't just do our job in our own institution or in our own organisation, we share that knowledge broader to that and Andrew is one of those people that does that so freely. So Andrew, are you here with us?

ANDREW: Yeah, thanks, Darlene. It is an honour to receive this ADCET award, although I do suspect that the nominator might have embellished things somewhat but, obviously, it is not all about me. Like Lionel Messi or Sam Kerr, I'm just part of a team. But I must admit that digital accessibility can be a bit of a lonely job. I used to work in our marketing department and I remembered one of the graphic designers telling me how much he hated it when he saw me walking towards his desk because I always brought bad news. And of course, I pointed out that if he did his job properly in the first place, he wouldn't need to see me. But anyway, it didn't go so well over there, but luckily for me I was eventually moved into the university equivalent of witness protection, the IT Department. And I'm proud of what we've been able to achieve to date because IT is usually seen as part of the problem rather than it's part of the solution. And despite the difficult issues involved in accessible ICT procurement, such as how to purchase products when vendors say "we design with accessibility in mind", which really means that they've heard about accessibility but haven't done anything yet, but at least people here at the university are making a genuine effort to deal with a complex problem rather than just putting it in the too hard basket. And that includes people in learning and teaching, our procurement team, line managers, all the way up to our CIO. But I don't want to overstate things because we've got a long way to go, but the train has definitely left the station. And this award provides us with external validation that we're on the right track.

It was a pleasure to work with Darlene and David on the Accessible ICT Procurement Toolkit, which is now hosted on the CAUDIT website. This is an important resource because systemic discrimination requires systemic solutions, and I believe that the toolkit will be getting a shout‑out from the Australian Human Rights Commission in their new Digital Goods and Services Advisory Notes.

Most of all, I want to thank all of the students who have worked with us as user testers and to provide feedback on IT systems and who have shared their lived experience of disability. As one of them once said to me, "I would do this for free because I don't want another student to have to go through what I have", and that continues to inspire me. Thank you.

DARLENE: Great. Thank you so much, Andrew. That's absolutely brilliant. Excellent. Okay. The last one is Teaching and Learning from Deakin University, Dr Emma Ryan, a lecturer in the Faculty of Arts and Education. Dr Ryan went above and beyond to make her course accessible for a student enrolled in her course who was an assistive technology user. We got some fantastic quotes in the application for Emma about the work that she does. So Emma, I might hand over to you.

EMMA: Thanks, Darlene. Gosh, I'm really honoured to be given this award, and a little bit overwhelmed and a little bit surprised. I have to say thank you to my colleague Danni for nominating me. I have spent 25 years or more, probably, teaching at universities and working with students with various accessibility issues. I've seen lots of changes in the accessibility and inclusion field, which is so fantastic to see. And, obviously, at Deakin there is a whole lot of people around me helping me to do a good job. I actually think that the students that I have worked with over time, and especially most recently, are the ones that should get the award, not me, because they've taught me so much along the way and I really wouldn't have the instinct for accessibility and inclusion if I didn't have the kind and generous information that my students provide to me.

So it really does give me a whole lot of joy to watch students in my discipline, especially those who have accessibility issues. I teach in criminology and I know how much the skills that these students will carry out into the field will have an impact. People with vulnerabilities of all kinds very often don't receive the supports that they need once they get out into the world, and at worst can be criminalised down the track. So the more students with special needs and disabilities, and other different abilities that I can get out into the field of criminal justice the better, in my view. So thanks again, Danni. Thanks also to all the other great people at Deakin, and especially Tracey Jennings who helps out a lot, and most importantly to ADCET for this wonderful award. It has made me feel really honoured. Thank you so much.

DARLENE: Great, thank you, Emma. That's brilliant. Well, what a journey. And my goodness, we're actually running on time. So thank you to all the winners for being succinct in their acceptance speech. It is an amazing thing that we did. We started it last year. We were so chuffed and emotional after that one, and exactly the same this year. It is mind‑blowing to see the work and the dedication from everybody, and not just the winners, but everybody that had nominated and nominated other people, and for everybody attending today to celebrate with us.

There is a reason we do ‑ another reason we do this is it helps us capture some of the great work, so we hope some of the amazing winners we will be able to do some webinars with, some podcasts and write some articles about so we keep the conversation going. Hopefully, I think a lot of people have put links to their work in the chat, and we will put that on the website as well so people can keep engaging with the great work.

Today has been recorded, so you can watch it again. You can share it with friends and colleagues, and I encourage you to celebrate it within your institution. We've provided some information to help you do that. We also will provide you with a badge to put on your email, so we keep the conversations around the importance of accessibility and inclusion in the whole of the tertiary sector.

So thank you to the team for bringing this together. Thank you to the captioner and the Auslan interpreters. We couldn't do this without you all, and thank you to the audience that have come to celebrate. It's been great to see the reactions, the cheers, the love, the claps, the comments in the chat box. It's made the stress of the last couple of weeks putting all this together well worth it. So, also I encourage you if you don't receive our newsletter, please sign up. We celebrate accessibility every week or fortnight there, and we pretty much host a webinar every fortnight. We have podcasts, we have a whole heap of content that supports academics, teachers, disability practitioners and students to ensure that students with disabilities exceed in tertiary education. So go well and thank you for joining us. And I hope to see you at a future webinar.

Take care, everybody.