>>. Are we good? Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the for 20256789 my name

>> I’m very nervous, my name is Donna Austin, the chair of the auGIF multistakeholder steering committee. An amazing group of people, mostly responsible for organizing this annual event. On behalf of the MSCC it is our privilege to have you all with us, in person or on the line. It’s my great pleasure to welcome Uncle Mickey from the Garner people. Uncle Mickey is a senior Aboriginal man descended from the Adelaide Plane people. And the Yorke Peninsula peoples for the Welcome to Country.

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>> (SINGS AND SPEAKS IN LANGUAGE)

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>> It is wonderful to welcome you to the lands of the traditional people on the Dreaming Place of the Red Canning its spirit not just embedded in the landscape of the city itself, but into the state itself, but also we meet alongside the Red Gum Forest River. As a des dents born on the nose of the peninsula, it is wonderful to welcome all people to a place to call upon the spirit of my ancestors to bring you great blessings to send away interest old that sometimes follows us. When we come to places, we bring many things, our spirit, our emotion, our physical self. My Aboriginal name is that of the "impatient one". I was a child that apparently couldn’t sit still. Though it means "quick" as well, but I’m also the sixth born of seven children. My father, The Old Man of the Sea is the oldest living person of our people 95, still doing this thing of practising culture. My mom is 90. The oldest living person of her people. It’s the relationships we make, understanding that we take what we need, not what we want, and when we make friendships we become obviously connected. When we are connected, therefore we have no enemies. South Australia or Adelaide itself was a special place, not only is it the free colony, not like the rest of the Continent was populated by criminal bastards, you have come to the free colony. The King of the day was a special King. He wanted to do something different. There was social conscience changing the world. Slavery was stopping. He wanted the Aboriginal people to own and occupy the land. Unfortunately that did not happen, largely because his leather did not reach the shores of South Australia until after federation but also he died. Therefore, the governors didn’t do his wishes. Adelaide sits centrally to our current construct of our wonderful continent when you talk about states and territories. It was always a gathering, meeting place, for our people and that word was recorded, by the German missionaries who recorded our language, so that we are able to speak it, because they wanted to teach us in our own language. So we’ve had people to exchange language here. That’s why we are the conference state, the education state age and this gathering, place of festivals, because it is that place, because when we talk about culture, we don’t come to name places, we come to know places. You have come mere because obviously you are here about this technology, this internet, this web that is now, I suppose connected to all of us in many different ways. It is not a word that is familiar to the Aboriginal people because obviously we lived off, connected with the land. The only story that I have that has I suppose the computer in it, is an interesting story, I hope that in some ways it - can I make it relevant to how you are connected. We call the mokondu, the "lightning brain" the computer, because when you think of it it’s a brain with electricity, isn’t it? I find it fascinating how language describes people and call the internet "trukawika", meaning a net and then internal, so it’s internal net. This story goes where the old man is sitting in front of the lightning brain and on the other side is this government man. He’s telling him about the changes the world has seen, particularly for Aboriginal people, telling him when the people came, they took our language, our culture, our land, and that we have witnessed wars, we have witnessed obviously the death of our people, whether it be through diseases or through these massacres. And that we have been transformed to learn, to write, English because we are an oral people and so he went on about all these things that changed the world and he then proposed a question to the old man. He said, "Where did we go wrong?" The old man sat there and he pondered as he looked at the mokundu. He said, "Before you came, the land, it was free." "The animals themselves roam free". He said, "The food, it was free, the medicines were free". He said, "Our women would bring life to our children and care and teach. The men would hunt and gather and provide and protect for our families and at night-time we’d make love." He said, "What idiot would destroy a system like that?" So, today we are in a world where sometimes we are not in harmony with the world, we serve the world, rather than in some ways we are in partnership with the world. Our people understood that for tens of thousands of years, understood if you put all things before you, all things exist. So today we live in a different world that not only gives us global connections but also in a way that demands of us and so, the story is telling us that we sometimes create things that sometimes makes more work for ourselves and it is a channel in life. So it’s wonderful to have you here in this place and you have these challenges of obviously understanding how to protect this beautiful internet that we are now so connected to. So, I say to you. Let us continue to walk. Let cultures bring us together, not divide us. Our people never had a word for "divide", which is quite interesting, because we believed in welcoming all people to a place. So, we say nakada, which is "see you later". We don’t just believe we see you in the physical, we see you in the spiritual because it’s the things we leave with each other. We say "thank you, thank you for coming here". Welcome to this place, may the spirit people be with you not only whilst you are here because all the days you walk across this land and I look forward to seeing you again. So, welcome. Thank you. (Applause).

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>> DONNA: Thank you, Uncle Mickey. It’s interesting that this is a knowledge place and I think that’s what we are here to do, to share a lot of knowledge amongst ourselves, in a world where technology is out-pacing our normal thought processes and we’re trying to keep up all interest time. OK. So, I’m going to do a run-through of some admin stuff, some opening remarks, a little bit about our program and then we will have our first panel. So, if folks could keep their phones on silent in the sessions, that would be greatly appreciated. I think I have turned mine off. The location of the bathrooms, hopefully you have found those, but they are out, around the corner. And in case of an emergency, I don’t know what that would be, but we will turn to Rachel and she can help us out. We encourage people to log into the Zoom room. So hopefully most of you have the links associated with this event, so not only you can engage with what is going on in here but we have people online and usually there’s a fair amount of chat that goes on with these events. We’re also recording this I vent and providing Ausla, that captioning. If there is anything you miss in the two days you can go back and see what you’ve missed. So, a few opening remarks. As we know, the internet has provided many social and economic benefits and has virtually brought the world closer together. As many people and economies thrive as a result, there are still significant digital inequalities. The online environment has also created some new policy challenges for us, surrounding things like cyber security, privacy and harmful content. Multistakeholder forums like the aulGF

>> And I would note we’re one of many that happen around the world. There’s the big one, the IGF, and then there’s a series of regional events that are held throughout a 12-month cycle. So multistakeholder forums like the a aulGF allow for diverse stakeholders from government, private sector, civil society, academia and the technical community to come together on an equal footing to discuss these issues and share ideas about how to create policy that will address the harms because as we know, there are many, but hopefully not in a way that will undermine the utility of the internet that we use today. There’s still some great stuff that is happening on the internet It has brought the world closer so it’s not all about the harm, it’s ensuring we can still use the internet for the good that it’s created. Our theme for this year is Global

Visions: Local Impact - the Future of Australia’s Internet Governance. Internet governance in Australia has been talked about for the last 20 years as it has throughout the world. Many of us in this room have been associated with an organization called ICANN which was the first set-up of a multistakeholder environment and it was with the intent that interest US Government would at some point release control of the internet to a multistakeholder environment and that’s why ICANN was set up. In Australia, we’ve punched above our weight in those conversations around the world and I think we continue to do so. So, this forum is really important to continue those conversations but also bring more people into those conversations. I’ve got Ian Sheldon from the Department of Communications who is nodding, but he and his team were doing a lot of work particularly with stakeholder engagement that probably hasn’t been done, you know, up until a few years ago. They really are trying to get input from as many stakeholders as they can into this conversation because it is a really important one. We take for granted, I think a lot of the time - we just turn this thing on and it works for us, but the reason it works so well is because of the way that it’s been administered and governed to this date. So that’s a potential harm that we are kind of fighting against, is to ensure that everybody still has access to the internet, that it is free and open for people to use but at the crux is how do we deal with the harms that we see, like cyber bullying and scams and things that we see? So, how do we manage to keep the environment open but also contain the harm that’s being done and how do we do that in a policy environment that is aware of that? I think a lot of the - we all know how to use this thing called the internet but I think we need a lot of education to help people out there understand how it works and that there are pitfalls but ultimately it is a wonderful global resource that we all share and benefit from every day. So, a little bit about our program. So, this year, the MSSC sought expressions of interest for session proposals addressing our three subthemes. That’s the future of internet governance, digital trust and resilience and sustainable digital inclusion. We received 22 proposals, which was great, session proposals, from people that haven’t been involved in 24 conversation to date. So really happy about that. We have had to cram a few of the sessions into lunch-time sessions and hopefully people can attend that as well. So it’s a really packed program. Unfortunately, your time to eat and drink is a little bit short, because of that. I want to draw attention to the town hall session that we have tomorrow morning at 9:00am, so, prior to this event, the MSCC published two papers that will be subject to discussion tomorrow morning and hopefully the intent is that with paper around the social contract for digital wellbeing in Australia, that will be a conversation that continue into the next 12 months, so, if we can get consensus on the idea that this is a good thing to do, then what we hope to do is in the ensuing 12 months we will get more people involved in that conversation and see if we can fill out a little bit what we mean by that. The second one is an update on our 2024 paper on the 20-year review for the World Summit on the Information Society. What we hope is if we can get consensus on that update and people are comfortable with it, then we can deliver that as input and I can’t remember input to what, but I know that the deadline is 26 September, so we are hoping to round that out as well. At 3:00pm tomorrow, in the closing plenary, we will test community consensus on those two documents. So, a couple of acknowledgements. I would like to acknowledge participation from the Pacific region, including our colleagues at Internet NZ and those joining our event remotely, whether it is locally or further afield. I would like to welcome back our 2024 Indigenous Fellows, Jen and Susan. I don’t see them in the room. OK. Jen and Susan will return this year as mentors to our 2025 First Peoples Internet Governance Policy Fellows, Astrid and Simon. I guess they are out there having a follow-up with Uncle Mickey. I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Neral Clarke for the Internet Association of Australia for her induction into the Comsafe Hall of Fame. Narel has done a lot of work in this environment in Australia and obviously well recognized. Thank you. Also, I would like to recognize Identity Digital, for the induction into the Hall of Fame. Same thing, well recognized. So, we’re really fortunate to have those types of people in the room here today to contribute to the conversation. Code of contact, this is a welcoming space, but zero tolerance towards harassment. If you are feeling like something is untoward, then please let myself or Cheryl, Pat, Sofia, Jordan or Rickey know, and Annalies. Thank you to the members of the MSSC for volunteering your time to put this program together. Hopefully folk also get a lot out of it and special than the chair to Michael, Rohan, Rachel and Jordan who provided the secretariat and most importantly our sponsors. Many thanks to Identity Digital, Verisign, auDA, Internet Australia, the Australian Government, Internet Society Foundation, Internet Governance Forum Support, ICANN, APNIC, Internet Association of Australia, Godaddy and Media partner Comstay. This event would not be possible without your generous support. Thank you very much for that. OK, we now have, hopefully, on the line, our keynote speaker, Chris Buckridge. Chris is an independent consultant, adviser and analyst working with organizations such as Centa, Sira, Oxford Internet Labs and the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise, currently a member of the ICANN Board of Directors, a member of the Euurodig Support Board and the United Nations Internet Governance Forum, multistakeholder advisory group. Rerecently he appointed to informal multistakeholder sounding board assembled by the WSIS+20 facilitators. Chris has worked for more than two decades in the internet technical community and engaging with community in government, stakeholders, law enforcement, private sector and civil society. He spent 17 years working with RIRE and the Middle East and central Asia. Prior to that APNIC, the Regional Internet Registry for Asia-Pacific region. So hopefully we have Chris lined up ready to go welcome, Chris, I will hand it to you.

>> CHRIS BUCKRIDGE: Thank you. Hopefully everyone can hear me.

>> DONNA: Yes, we are good to go, thank you.

>> CHRIS BUCKRIDGE: share ,Ly some slides. I don’t have many but I will share the ones I do have. So, OK. Hopefully that is working for everyone. So, it’s a real honor to be asked to deliver a keynote to kick off this year’s aulGF and particularly when looking at the folks who will be speaking in the next day or so, it’s not a little daunting. I guess, at the very least, a keynote of this kind should engage with some of the big questions, questions like, why are we here? To be a little more specific, why are we here at the Australian IGF? What do we hope to, what can we achieve and why is an Australian IGF so important? So, I want to talk a little bit about why I see the aulGF as important, not only in terms just of the Australian community but also in terms of the larger global internet governance discussion going on. So, if you are following that global discussion at all, you would be well aware that this year is the 20-year review of the United Nations World Summit on Information Society. I will talk a little bit more about that later. What strikes me initially is that our colleagues in the ITU back in the late 1990s actually framed the challenge of internet governance really quite elegantly when they coined the term "the information society". While it was still very early stages, there was a recognition that internet technologies would radically change our relationship with information, so, how we share it, create it, store it, analyse it, exploit it, misuse it. There’s probably a few I’m forgetting. A global public network of networks. That’s the internet. Unavoidably it changes us as it changes the fundamental role of information in our lives. If you throw in smartphones, data encryption, technologies, Large Language Models, that change can be and has been profound. It affects our social interactions, our professional lives, it affects how we educate our children, our relationship to our governments, it serves to bridge or deepen the divides in our society, and it creates an ever growing catalog of risks as we share our personal information intentionally or otherwise. So, the World Summit on the Information Society was one of our first collective efforts, at least in the UN government type space, to think about how we manage those changes and the way that they affect different communities around the world. Hopefully come out with something that is on balance positive. People-centred, rights-respecting, equitable. Those are worthy goals. I think most would argue as yet unrealised and the continuing evolution of technology and explosion in its use has only made those questions more urgent and more complicated. So, solutions to the stickiest issues, some of which I see on the program in the coming days, require tradeoffs, compromise and no small amount of inspiration an and innovation, all of which requires the dedication, insight and expertise from right across the spectrum of internet stakeholders. And of course, that recognition of the need to include those stakeholders, the multistakeholder approach, was perhaps the definingout come of the original summits, illuminating a new path of how to organize ourselves and our efforts, while sparking a thousand debates on just how to do multistareholderism right or at least better. So, now we find ourselves at the 20-year review of the WSIS. This has been a relatively lengthy process. I think it started a little over a year ago, but it’s been building ahead of steam and will culminate in the UN General Assembly event that takes place in December. I think it’s probably fair to say, not too controversial to say, that so far it’s been quite a positive process. We’ve seen two co-facilitators, Albania and Kenya, who have been ready to engage in a very inclusive, multistakeholder way. They’ve established the informal multistakeholder sounds board that I’m a member of, to assist them in integrating perspectives from non-governmental stakeholders. They’ve hosted joint government and non-governmental consultation sessions and they’ve traveled themselves to events like the IGF, the WSIS forum and next month to an ICANN meeting to hear from and engage with stakeholders. They’ve also produced a zero draft of the WSIS+20 outcome document that has been received very positively. It’s reflecting the importance of the IGF, the need to renew that Internet Governance Forum, a commitment to multistakeholder approach and generally grounding the WSIS in the important aspect of development, human rights, etc. But also we have to acknowledge and reflect on the fact that this has happenend at a time when global governance, particularly in the UN, is struggling to maintain its effectiveness, its legitimacy and really to extricate that idea of operational governance from an increasingly divisive political conflict. What that means for the WSIS outcome, we probably need to wait until December to see, but the more general shifts are already evident, whether it be in relation to the decreased availability of funding for bridging digital divides, or deepening disagreements over the significance of issues like gender and environmental impact for digital policy. So, this is one reason that I think we should be very grateful and energized by the fact that internet governance has not simply stayed roaming the halls of New York and Geneva. In fact, over the last two decades, we’ve seen, I think the remarkable emergence of a global ecosystem of now more than 175 national, regional, subregional, and youth focused internet governance initiatives. A distributed approach which echoes the internet itself, creating resilience, efficiency, diversity and granularity in how different communities deal withner net governance issues. You can see from the maps here and it is a very even distribution of these, these NRIs around the world. And that map is obviously for development purposes only. At their best, these NRIs provide new spaces to bring together different stakeholders from a single community to discuss and address issues of specific importance to that community. And in doing so they’ve served as engine rooms for innovation in how multi-stakeholder, non-decision making structures can still positively engage with and influence public policy making. European dialogue on internet governance has been publishing messages documents after each annual meeting and begun doing so in 2008. That practice was picked up by the local IGF in 2017. The Asia-Pacific Regional IGF has been producing community developed synthesis documents since 2015 each year. So the auIGF position paper is in good position in that regard. It’s pushing the invelope. The call to create an Australian social contract for digital wellbeing, even though it notes the efforts of Brazil and the EU, would I think represent a novel approach with interesting possibilities for defining and seeking commitments on key principles and goals. So I’d really encourage everyone at or following the auIGF to contribute to that process and to help bring that experience to the global stage. More broadly I think there’s a salient point that’s worth keeping in mind, namely that this is all work in progress. So I don’t mean that simply for the auIGF or at least not only the auIGF, but internet governance itself is a work in progress. A defining characteristic of internet governance or digital governance is the challenge it faces to keep up, not just with technological development, as and game changing they may be, but the ways in which those technologies are being adopted, twisted, used and abused. And the ways in which they’re interacting with each other to create new unanticipated opportunities and risks. Internet governance is not unique in having to deal with complex or technical matters but the sheer sustained rate of change over recent decades sets it apart from some of the more traditional governance areas. That means from this we require agility by operators, by law enforcement, by researchers, it requires we have responsive policy-makers and policymaking meth dologies and the governance structures themselves are constantly evolving, building on what works, identifying gaps as they become apparent. An NRI like the auIGF is a chance to brain storm and hopefully move the needle on how we do internet guvenance, not only in Australia but also beyond. Bottom-up progress in the best traditions of the internet. I’ll leave you with one last observation and again, it fits very nicely with the welcome to country and the speech we heard from Uncle Mickey, events like the auIGF are melting pots and places we come together to share knowledge. Whether you’re here to discuss digital sovereignty or children’s rights online or digital platform ownership, watch out for the intersections or abilities to build bridges. With the changing information society, the potential of putting a diverse bunch of stakeholders together in a room can be immense. I encourage you all to take advantage of that. And I wish you all a very productive, successful and enjoyable auIGF. Thank you.

>> thank you very much, Chris. So we’re going to move into the opening plenary now and I’ll call on Jordan Carter to come to the stage and bring his panel together. Thank you, Jordan.

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>> JORDAN CARTER: Hello. Good morning. Sorry, I had my headbers hind the lectern for a view of you. name is Jordan Carter, it is my delight to be leading, organising, wrangling this morning’s opening panel. And we have about 50 minutes or so. down one of our panellists but that will give everyone who is here a bit more time to speak with you today. A quick round of introductions. Starting at the far end of the table for me. We have got Michael Brown MP. He is the assistant Minister for artificial intelligence and the digital economy in the South Australian Government. And a member north-east of here according to my quick Googling this morning. Thank you for joining us today to bring a governmental perspective to the panel. Next to him is Zoe Hawkins, one of the co-founders of the tech policy design institute. A real thought leader in how to do tech policy better here in Australia among many other things. Welcome, Zoe. Next is Rohan Sachdeva, who is one of my colleagues. A student of cyber security and a vice chancellor’s scholar at La Trobe University in Melbourne. And he has been a participant at the regional Asia-Pacific internet governance academy where he was a youth leader this year. Welcome to bring us a youth perspective. And sitting next to me, a voice of the internet, Christine Runnegar, a principal of internet trust at the Global Internet Society. Thank you for being here in Australia for this event after a very successful series of engagements in Canberra last week. So the point of today’s panel is to just give a few teasers and a thought provoke or two to you all, as we set in to this year’s auIGF. The idea is to do a bit of reflection on the theme and hopefully to be a bit interesting. Maybe a little bit provocative, dare I say potentially, with each other. Perhaps with all the participants in the room and online, depending on people’s appetites for such provocations or not being just after 10:00am in the morning on a Tuesday. We’re going to do reflection on the theme and that’s important because as Donna mentioned, we’re allpert of this conversation -- all part of this conversation and dialogue. In our day to day lives we get into tracks and one of the huge advantages of a diverse crowd like this is you might be exposed to a perspective that hadn’t hit you before and that then might spin you into some new ideas and thoughts of your own in the work that you do. So don’t holdback. Don’t worry about offending anyone in an ideas sense. And we look forward to hearing your thoughts. For a first question which is reflecting on the theme - what needs to happen to secure the future of Australia’s internet governance? Is it dealing better with specific problems or topics? Is it dealing with the governance architecture? The behaviour of stakeholders? New legislation? What do you think we need to do to secure the future of Australia’s digital internet governance? Christine, what are your thoughts?

>> CHRISTINE RUNNEGAR: Since I’m the first person, I decided not to take the controversial ask but we’ll see. First I’d like to say thank you to Jordan and thank you to the auIGF secretariat. It really is an honour and a privilege for the Internet Society to be able to participate and on this panel. And as an Australian who is currently overseas, it’s really nice to come home. So, thank you. Also, the location is very special. Not only are we in this beautiful city of Adelaide but we’re very close to the Flinders Ranges. I don’t know if you’ve been there, but if you have time I recommend you go. I was very fortunate to spend quoit a bit of time there -- quite a bit of time there growing up. I mention it not just for sentimental reasons, but also because as I understand it means meeting place and here we are at the Internet Governance Forum. So let’s make the most of it. To answer your question, I’ll start with the present. One of the things I was thinking about, what does set Australia apart? And really it is the Australian Government. And it is the commitment and the leadership that the Australian Government has shown not only in Australia, but on the international internet governance space. And a really beautiful example which you can get from the booth outside - see I’m doing advertising - is the work Ian and his team and Will did on this wonderful non-paper for the WSIS+20 review. Now you might say what’s the big deal? Well, the big deal is that we can be confident that the Australian Government is going to both strongly and effectively advocate for multistakeholder internet governance, not only locally but also internationally at the WSIS+20 review and elsewhere. And that’s certainly not true of every country. Then the second thing I was reflecting upon is we’re a relatively small country, at least in terms of population. And yet we have a very big and loud voice in the international government space. And that’s not the government. That is the whole Australian internet community. So with Jordan’s permission, I’m going to pause for a moment and note that many, many, many of those people are volunteers. So I’d like to pause and have a round of applause for all of these volunteers. Thank you so much. OK. So going to the future - well, let’s start with multistakeholder internet governance. We all know it’s more than just making sure that all stakeholders have a say. It is so much more than that. And it includes the ability to bring in diverse opinions, diverse interests and very importantly diverse expertacy to make sure that we work together on a common goal. So my ask for you over the next couple of days is what is it that we are actually trying to achieve? What are we going to use our multi-stakeholder internet governance for? In that vain, when I look around the -- vein, when I look around the room, I imagine we’re at the 20th edition of the Australian Internet Governance Forum. Who will be here? Spoiler alert, it won’t be me. So my point is that we need new people. We need new ideas. We need to figure out how can we make internet governance relevant and useful for the next generations? I’m hoping my fellow panellists will have a great answer for that one. And then really just to emphasise what I’m talking about here is people, sustainability, how do we achieve that? And what I’d also like to note is that in the 20 years since the TUNIS agenda, conversations at internet governance forums have real shifted from being a discussion about the internet, to being a discussion about what happens on the internet? The applications, the services and how people use the internet? That’s a good thing because it’s an example of how adaptable the multi-stakeholder internet governance has been. It brings in new stakeholders who haven’t participated in internet governance before. They bring new issues and new ideas. And lastly, I want to make sure that we can turn dialogue into action. And use the Australian Internet Governance Forum to make sure that we do provide internet access for everyone. We ensure the internet is open, globally connected, secure and trustworthy. And that we commit to share responsibility and to work together to govern the internet for all Australians and make sure that no-one is left behind.

>> JORDAN CARTER: Thank you for those opening comments. Always fun to be the first speaker on the panel. I’ll go to you, Minister Brown. What are your thoughts on this theme?

>> MICHAEL BROWN: That’s tough to follow but I’ll try. I want to welcome all our interstate and overseas visitors. Overseas visitors to Adelaide on behalf of the South Australian Government. Tried to put on better weather for you but it’s not too bad for this time of year. Interestingly enough, my perspective on what to do in the future, you probably expect me to say there needs to be more legislation as a member of Parliament, when you’re holding a hammer and it’s like a nail. There’s probably not much that we think can’t be fixed by more legislation. But there’s particular respect. I’m not sure it’s the answer. But you want to make sure that we have enough regulation to make sure that we control things and need to be controlled and don’t want to overly restribute the private sector and also even government innovation. I actually think the real key to ensuring proper internet governance going forward is capacity building to make sure people locally here in Australia who understand all the issues and there’s a diversity of views on topics. If we adopt some sort of install mono culture or become entirely dependent on foreign sources of information or foreign opinions even, I think we’ll be in real trouble. One of the reasons why Australia has an overicised ability to be heard in this space on a global level is because of that capacity that we have locally and that expertise. That’s something we need to foster more. Something governments in particular need to do more to foster. We don’t do enough I think. Particularly in the research field. We’re trying here in South Australia. We have got a number of very prestigious, not just the universities, but institutes as well that do a lot of good research in the area. But I think as a country it’s important that we spend more money on research and also spend more money on internet and IT research as well.

>> JORDAN CARTER: Thank you very much and thank you for the kind welcome. Zoe, I’ll turn to you. What needs to happen to secure the future of Australia’s digital governance?

>> It’s so grit to be here with everyone. I have the benefit of neither going first nor being -- great to be here with everyone. I have the benefit of neither going first or being a minister. Listening to Uncle Mickey’s point about the lithening brain, what Australians are thinking is their technology interface is changing all the time. And I think the internet, yes, remains a really important part of that. But I actually think you speak to the average Australian and a lot of those tools and the places in which they’re interacting in their mind is shifting. To secure that internet governance, it’s very -- important multi-stakeholder reflection in the future, to keep evolving what Australians are experiencing. I have already noticed both in the theme for this year, the future of Australia’s digital governance and we’ve had the keynote speaker and Jordan switching between the two, I think without wanting to sound semantic, I actually think the issue auIGF needs to grapple with is the breadth. The evolution of these technologies and the questions we can see on the program for us today that look fascinating and everything from digital competition, and talking about AI and see which of the minister’s portfolio as well. How can we make sure that we’re really reconciling with the role that the auIGF needs to have? Christine, you made the point about how that brings in different stakeholders. It brings complexity at times but I think it will really help secure the relevance as well. I think that’s a lot of the attention for a lot of Australians is going. And I think that there’s a massive gap for really constructive and inclusive type of multi-stakeholder conversation. People I think need that. And I really appreciate the sentiment behind the position paper that’s been put out for discussion, this idea of the social contract for digital wellbeing. For me the thing that I think is the most valuable is the idea of having a dialogue of what does good look like? People who are in government and so often you’re grappling with trying to achieve a certain end with policy. What we’re struggling with at the moment and the conversations I’m having with people across government, industry and civil society is maybe a lack of a shared vision of we’re trying -- what we’re trying to achieve. I see a real opportunity for auIGF to plia role through the process of engaging and activating the multi-stakeholder community across Australia, even though it’s a broader church. So that as a community everybody has a shared vision of what good looks like to work back from. I think that would really help set us up for success.

>> JORDAN CARTER: Nice. Thank you very much, Zoe. Rohan, I’ll turn to you to secure the future of digital governance, particularly from the youth point of view, what are your thoughts?

>> ROHAN SACHDEVA: Thank you for bringing me here. It’s a privilege to be seated with everyone here and all the speakers have greatly covered what needs to be done. Multi-stakeholder, perspective, capacity building, but what I can say today is from a youth perspective, my friends at schools and universities, what we are thinking. A bit about me. I grew up in a very rural town in the north of India where internet access was very limited. When I got internet access it was a bridge to connect with the world. That’s what brought me here, getting a scholarship, starting here and indeed as said, Australia is solid. We have capacity building programs for the youth, for the people who want to achieve something they’ve got the opportunities. Which is in Australia is a really big thing. But from, I’ve had the privilege of attending fellowships and builds capacity among youth and internet governance but what more required is how we can sustain it. If we come together we train. But I’m thinking of more in the launch of development. How we can actually contribute? For the youth perspective, if I’ve been trained in internet governance, how can I actually contribute working in working groups or submitting position papers or giving some feedback. That’s really meaningful from a youth perspective. At the same time this is a generation that has benefited from the internet and living with the harms. So that kind of perspective is very unique to my generation. And when we come to platforms like auIGF, it is meaningful. I think the opportunities are there and the youth is highly motivated today. Indeed, I would not be incorrect to say that we are on the right track. But there’s still some improvements we need to do at every front.

>> JORDAN CARTER: Great. Thank you to all. A nice set of gently offered provocations in those comments. Two things I want to pick up and restate, there’s this idea of capacity building broadly expressed. There are all sorts of initiatives of varying scale that will add for local internet governance academy, and applications for it close at the end of the month. If anyone is under 35 and interested in deep diving into it. It’s not at scale. 40 people a year is good but we may be able to benefit as a country from a much broader set of capacity building which will connect better. And this concept of a shared vision, it’s the bane of my life having worked in this field for a long time, whenever you say internet governance you have to start to explain what it is because most people don’t know. And it’s quite a relief to them and a lot of other people. Digital governance as a label and makes much more sense to people in the day to day lives that they have. Is there a framing challenge? Zoe’s point around actually using these dialogues to form a shared vision. So that’s where I want to go into the second question, if you like, and what is going to be the hardest to achieve do you think in driving the change that we need to see? And particularly do you think the auIGF can help? If so, how can it help to drive that change? Is it changing a law? Is it helping bring services to Australia? Is it changing the ways that the auIGF itself works? Is it some other topic? I’m going to start with the minister this time. What do you think a conversation like this can do to solve the hardest problems?

>> MICHAEL BROWN: An like this one has a real role to organisation like this one has a real role to play in providing policy-makers, I hate that term, but how else would you describe people like myself? A real role in helping us to understand the issues. This may come as a surprise to you all but we don’t think we have all the answers. And we look to people like you to actually help us understand the problem and then understand the sort of menu of responses that are available to us. That’s where I think organisations such as this one can really play an important role because there are a number of challenges coming down the pipe at us in internet governance and other parts of the area. And some of them are really complex. I just, my own portfolio areas of responsibility, I know there’s a number of issues regarding AI for example that depending on who you speak to, you get a completely different opinion as to what should be done. You’ll hear from someone like the particular issue, it’s a disaster and this is what you have to do, and two seconds later you’ll talk to someone of equal weight. A complete different view and doing exactly the opposite what the other person suggested. It can be overwhelming for myself and my colleagues to try and grapple with some of these issues. And it’s always good to be able to talk to a as this, not only understand the issues and have the weight behind them, but importantly also have Australia’s national interests at heart. And I was saying before there’s plenty of people overseas who are prepared to give us their views and tell us why we should adopt this and that, but having local Australians understand the issues is very important as well.

>> JORDAN CARTER: If I could play back to you one angle to test it. Today you get all these ideas and they might be totally conflicting and then people are saying, "You decide." Is it the absence of...

>> MICHAEL BROWN: What they mean by that is you adopt what I said.

>> JORDAN CARTER: Is it potential helpful to argue and then a consensus first?

>>

MICHAEL BROWN: It’s good to have organisations that have a robust and internal so we can be aware of the various issues that have arisen during the debate, so that we can try to understand the landscape. I won’t say understand because a lot of the stuff is a bit beyond people like me and my colleagues but we do try and understand. And also to work with your organisation to help us to understand the issues and what responses we can put in place.

>> JORDAN CARTER: Thank you. Zoe, what’s your take on this? The hardest to achieve in driving the changes we need to see?

>> I couldn’t agree more with where you’re going with that, minister. What I’d build on that to say is I think often people have just completely opposing views but sometimes it’s even to break it down as an example, if you’re looking at AI policy, there’s various policy portfolio elements to that. You could be looking at it from an economic or social perspective, and even if say we, the auIGF progresses with the social contract for digital wellbeing, I can imagine some of the principles and intentions that would be written, everyone would nod. Environmentally sustainable. Inclusion and choice and all these different things. What’s hidden and what would have to be dug through in that process is the trade-offs that sit behind that. We could all sit there and nod and agree to this compelling list. For ministers and people in government, the hard part is how do you view those things altogether because the trade-offs are implicit. How much of this at what cost against this? It’s really, the tech policy design institute we tried to grapple with some of these questions, particularly on the question of AI policy and made a report and the analogy we’ve used and the point of that anology is to recognise you can’t really it by looking at these pieces separately because they all interplay with each other. Sometimes they’re reinforcing feedback loops and intention. It’s only if you zoom out enough to see how the pieces play nat you can make the strategic decisions about how they fit together. The more that the community in a multi-stakeholder way can step in and get a bit nitty-gritty about saying it’s not just yes I support a sustainable AI infrastructure, but I also want everybody to have, everyone has access but also the right to refuse and all these different tensions that play it’s incumbent upon the community to wrestle with those trade-offs a little bit. That’s the hard part I think. The hard part is saying ought what cost and which one is the priority? You can’t have everyone to 100%.

>> JORDAN CARTER: So the way a forum like this can help is by explicitly tabling the tradeoffs and arguing about them and recording what the balance is or what different balances, different stakeholder groups come to and then maybe settling that down and I’m putting words in your mouth.

>> JOHANNA WEAVER: Get more articulate.or

>> Building on your excellence. Next to answer the question is Rohan. What do you any needs to be driven with change and how can the aulGF help?

>> ROHAN SACHDEVA: I think the hardest thing, the compelling thing for youth is the idea of trust, what is happening in the media. We must remember the biggest source of information for youth is social media. What is happening around the social media bands, it’s really making us question the idea of trust in our systems, institutions and leadership. When we convene in forums like the aulGF it is multistakeholder where we come together with different perspectives but when it goes out in the real world, what happens, that may not be transparent, so what youth may want is more transparency and we have discussed Minister A has pointed out having the difficult conversations and being transparent. Another issue I would probably praise is the equity of participation. When we only talked about capacity building, what I have noticed is when we go to programs like international events, most of the youth come from the beg capital cities. That that is not a true representation of our real world. That is a big challenge for every young person to be involved but how can we make it more inclusive in maybe having one or two coming from from different backgrounds can add to capacity building programs.

>> JORDAN CARTER: Thank you, a call for a more diverse set of realities on the table is important, regional, age, gender, economic situation and so on. It turns it from being an abstract, elite policy argument about something that may not matter to a whole bunch of people, thank you. Christine, what are your thoughts on this angle of the topic?

>> CHRISTINE RUNNEGAR: Well, first of all, I’m very excited. I hope, Rhohan you will lead the efforts in Australia to bring youth presentation to internet governance here. I think the hardest thing is that it isn’t one thing which is not is not really answering the question. But bear with me. If I have to pick one, probably it’s people. People are complicated. I think where we really need to put a lot of focus is on capacity building but not just capacity building in internet governance but in all the aspects with need as a country, including the research the minister talked about, to ensure Australians are part of building the future internet and the way that it’s governed. So, that’s where I think we should focus. The interfaces, the interfaces between policy and technology, so policy makers understand how the internet works, what the technologies are involved and the people in the technology space have an appreciation of how policy is developed and the tensions that people like the minister have to deal with on a day-to-day basis.

>> JORDAN CARTER: Let me tease out how the aulGF may help. Is there a role this community could play in doing a better job at - capacity building is a term that has has a con tation, but providing safe spaces for people to argue, places where you don’t think you are preached at are there things we can do in this community?

>> CHRISTINE RUNNEGAR: Absolutely. And, you know, perhaps you are doing this already, I apologize. But more outreach in, during the year, to difference communities who may never have heard of internet governance, maybe, you go to High Schools, maybe go to universities, maybe go to libraries, to community centers, maybe you go to local government, maybe you go to start-up Saturdays or the Chamber of Commerce, those places. I think it’s time to think outside the usual community.

>> JORDAN CARTER: So out of the bubble of internet governance, as it were. So, I’m going to play back, we’re doing well on time, so I’m going to invite you all to have a little argue or poke at something said. First I will play it back. I think some of the things I have heard there are around exposing the debates. Having the discussions on these topics and being explicit and open about revealing the tradeoffs and perhaps trying to characterise them from the points of views of various community, because the big tech industry will have different perspectives on the different tradeoffs to a citizen’s group in the outback, so trying to do that. I was quite struck by the minister’s point of view about trying to take not a national interest so much but a national point of view, like, what is an Australian take, what serves our interests. We’re not just a component in some broader western, quote unquote "community" or some alliances of political alignment and we’re not just regionally aligned through the geography we’ve got. So, I think, you know, what is a distinctly Australian point of view. That itself should be, is far from among other threats, so that will have a different set of interesting tradeoffs. And expanded engagement is another thing that came through in many of what you’ve said. Now, I guess, one of the challenges that, certainly from my point of view and I’m deep in the bubble, so this could be wrong - that is a list of thing that is discult to disagree with. So, in that list, or in anything you have heard, like, do any of you want to put a finger on what you any would be the hardest to do and say why? Saying something you see as hard may unlock ideas about what we might do about it. Anyone has anything on that?

>> JOHANNA WEAVER: Happy to jump in. I think that your point there, Jordan, about the competing voices and if we are thinking about, if it is partly about bringing more people across the multistakeholder community into this tent it’s one thing and then it’s also the supporting government and policy makers to make informed decisions based on the insights from that kind of whole of Australian community view. To me they’re two different things with two different audiences. The first one, we’re trying to bring more diverse groups in. You have to flesh out that complexity and really sit in that nitty gritty. The second part is then trying to, having done that work, distil that down into something that can be presented to policy makers and decision makers that is almost simplified. I think they are two very important phases. Obviously ideally it happens at one time. In some senses it is kind of sequential because I think that in order to avoid that overwhelm, the minister was talking about, someone doing that leg work to bring the people into the tent, have those hard conversations, grapple with what does an Australian take on this look like and then do the second phase to disseminate and elevate that voice and view to the key decision makers that need to understand it because I think that, you know, as you say, if you are talking about the voice of big tech in this, you know, they have a lot of resources, a lot of access, and so I think that you are not necessarily going to be able to beat that on resources and so clarity is one of the strengths that this community can strife for and how can this forum help reduce the noise that I think sometimes creates the friction in terms of decision makers engaging with the complexity. To answer your specific question about which is the hardest part -I think with the right framing, getting more people involved in this forum is not as hard as then, grappling with the tensions that community would bring because I think particularly with the broader framing - I think someone mentioned it - whether it is digital governance or technology - I’m guilty of working in an organization called the Tech Policy Design Institute. Tech policy is everything in my opinion, because there’s an section to every part of policy, but I think as much as there is a breadth that comes with that, maybe ambiguity, it is a broad tent, that I understand my role, in respect to digital governance, to bring more people in and by doing that we can get a bigger cross-section of views and the hard part will be distilling them down.

>> JORDAN CARTER: It is hard work to distil a complex conversation. That comes to capacity building and volunteer building. Most of the work if it will be done here will be done by highly skilled professionals acting in a volunteer way. If any of you want to volunteer to be involved in the ongoing work of the aulGF you can do so by noting it on the website, send in an email, chat to any of the organizers in the room today and tomorrow. By the way, for a quick one for the room, if you are part of the organizing group, the multistakeholder steering committee, the MSSC, can you put your hand up and wave it? Chat to any of those people if you want to have more to go. Now, I see Narel Clarke. What do you think? I don’t know, do we need to physically switch it on? There may be a switch on the mic.

>> FLOOR: I wanted to make the quick comment. A few years ago in the AGF debate a number of people wanted to bring in the robodebt issue and felt quite strongly at the time while robodebt was and has been proved incredibly serious and an appalling situation, that was a technology algorithm implementation and while it is definitely a digital issue, if we broaden the discussion and bring in lots of other topics and issues and try to sex things up a bit, make things more sexy and more attractive, we run the risk of getting out of the areas that we need to discuss and grapple with and that is - how does the internet work, how does it work better, how do we get the right systems in place to manage the internet effectiveness and availability? Getting on to these topics of, you know, algorithms and digital questions, and even AI, they are important issues, but do they really belong in an IGF space? You know? I want to debate them too, they are upsetting and importanting but we run the risk of them getting derail if we have them in this forum. That’s something I want to throw in here.

>> MICHAEL BROWN MP: I agree. There are big issues a forum like this should discuss. One of the important ones I think is what are Australia’s interests in internet governance given we are digsly as a nation very heavily invested in multilateral agreements. Australia does almost always does extremely well when there are multilateral agreements, but we have a government in the United States at the moment that doesn’t believe in multilateral agreements at all. They only believe in bilateral agreements where that involves a transaction that advantages them. So, in this brave new world we find ourselves in in that particular space, it’s very difficult for a country like Australia to balance our commitment to multilateralism and at the same time saying, we need to protect our national interests at the same time. We need to weigh those up. If you introduce something of the nature of the internet as well, which is harder to govern, it makes things even more complicated. That is where somewhere like this particular group has the opportunity to really give us guidance and information about the issue west, we are facing. I can’t pretent to speak on behalf of the Trump administration but... I can imagine they’ve got so-called tech bros in the area saying, no, this is how you do it, trust me, this will be great for us, if it’s great for us, it’s great for you. So, they’re getting that from their sectors. So, as an Australian - I can’t speak for the Australian Government either - but for governments in general - we would like to see the Australian interest preserved but traditionally that means a commitment to multilateralism which means it’s very complicated in the current environment. We would like some advice from you guys about how we navigate that, I think.

>> JORDAN CARTER: Thank you for that, Minister. It does summon up a whole underlying foundation of this way of doing internet governance, that did all emerge in an area where one country was predominant in the world system and if we’re in a shifting situation to a more multipolar world, where does that leave governance institutions or approaches like this built in that different era? Is it a zombie governance system for want of a better term? I want to come back to Narel’s point. The struggle about the definition of what is and isn’t in internet governance is perpetual. 20 years ago a group of wise hands deliberated for years and the Working Group on Internet Governance said it is the development and application by governments, private sector, etc, this in their respective roles of shared principles, norms, rules, decision making procedures and programs that the evolution of the internet and the use of the internet. And it’s exactly in that end use that the scope gets complicated because if it was just the tech and how to shape it, that very easy and I some of you in the room I predict would possibly not be here. The internet lens is vital in retaining a focus meaningful to a forum of this name. That demand wouldn’t go away. If you were to define digital governance it would probably have the same definition with the words swapped because it’s the technology and what we do with it that counts. Pan panellists, any other observations before a quick-fire round?

>> JOHANNA WEAVER: I agree, Narelle. I think that has happenend in terms of the panel, as in the subject matter the aulGF is already grappling with. Your point of how to grapple the risk of dilution I think my point is that it’s already engaging with some of those adjacent shoes that -- issues that sit around it. How does it bring it back in or own that additional space. Maybe it’s clarity that saying the work you pointed to is obviously the core business of the aulGF and we need to protect the efficacy of that.

>> CHRISTINE RUNNEGAR: I would like to follow up. Narelle, thank you for keeping us on task and in scope. It’s a really important question. As Jordan said, something that the Australian internet community has been grappling with for a long time. I will frame it differently and say that, wouldn’t it be great as a legacy if other fields could see what was happening here at the Internet Governance Forum and replicate that approach for different issues that are really important in South Australia, in Australia generally. So, rather than trying to bring everything here, maybe we should be thinking about how can we spread internet governance, multistakeholder internet governance, throughout all Australian policy making.

>> JORDAN CARTER: There is a challenge. Now we need a federal minister in the room or two to listen to that one. We have got a moment for each panelist to either continue to respond to something they have said or try a wrap. The wrap I proposed to them was to ask them from their stakeholder groups’ perspective, because each you have a perfect avatar from all the groups you you are from, or not, you can say what you like - what do you want to see come from this year’s aulGF? That is one invitation. You may want to say something else and we’ve got around two minutes. And we will start with Zoe on this one.

>> I think I would be reluctantly speak on academic perspective. I think I’d be interested on the application of the work proposed for digital wellbeing. This is a core point in the road. The point that Christine mades the strategy from here it is disseminating the mindset of aulGF into forums so we can equip them to do it well or bringing them in in this digital governance and wellbeing. I think you could make an argument for either option. I think getting that clarity from the community about what this forum is for and not and how it supports the broader community I think is the most important thing to come out of this aulGF.

>> JORDAN CARTER: Thank you. Next up is Rohan.

>> ROHAN SACHDEVA: Thank you. Again, pointing out to Narelle, thank you for raising that point. From a youth perspective, if we are concerning about internet governance through a limited focus only, it may be not appealing so much. When we have intersections going through, at least in my personal thinking, it makes it more appealing. You have these different issue west can come together at the aulGF to discuss, maybe that can bring more people to come together. And also touching on the fellowship program. It’s really fantastic program and from youth, maybe continuation of course, the continuation and potential expansion of the program can be a good way forward, to have more young people coming in who may not have the capacity otherwise to do so, and opening a pathway for you to work with MSSC and it’s a fantastic community looking for volunteers, so working with the working groups and committees, obviously on volunteer basis and more thinking of like for me, coming to here, it’s opportunity for me to connect with a lot of people, which potentially might lead me to other interests in this internet governance space. So, I think when we have young people coming in person, they get to know people, who are working in the field and that is really important, thank you.

>> JORDAN CARTER: Thank you. We need to get away from the era of everyone only at home behind the Zoom, right? The joy of actual in-person forums. Sorry to the people on Zoom! Christine, and then the minister will have the last word.

>> CHRISTINE RUNNEGAR: I think I want to say three things. First of all, I really don’t think I can speak on behalf of the internet technical community, but what I would like to see is more Australians involved in that community, so more Australians developing internet protocols and standards, more Australians involved in managing the critical internet resources that we depend on every day, and that means we go back to the beginning, capacity building, making sure that people have the right skillset. The other piece that I would like to say is, you know, we’ve got to continue practising multistakeholder internet governance at home, but also make sure that we are providing a leadership role, that we’re filling that gap, that we talked about earlier, that is happening in the international space. And back to the hard. What is the hard problem? To reflect on something that Uncle Mickey shared with us, I think what we need to focus on is what we need, not what we want and I think that feeds in very well to discussion that is happening tomorrow about the social contract, because the social contract as I understand it is what is for the benefit of all society, not just what’s the benefit for me.

>> JORDAN CARTER: Thank you, Christine. Minister?

>> MICHAEL BROWN MP: I would say - speak since we are speaking on behalf of our relative groups - on behalf of my group I belong, to I want to say, please give up on us. I know we don’t do, not only do we not do what you want us to, do but most of the time we do things that you think are completely nonsensical and make you mad. I understand that. We do try and we actually are a lot more approachable and do actually engage a lot more that you’d think on these particular issues, because we acknowledge that we are in unchartered territory. The new technology that raises questions and we don’t have the answers. We want to engage with groups like this understand the issues going on, but yes, I have to tell you at the front, we won’t just say yes no, problems, let’s tick off on what you guys have come up with, there are lots of considerations to deal with. Yes, it’s Tetrus! So, I would say to you, if we do things that you don’t understand, or we do things that make you angry, please don’t give up on us. We will keep listening to you, but not always doing what it is you suggest, I’m afraid but we will keep listening.

>> JORDAN CARTER: Thank you very much. Thank you to all of you on the panel. I think there’s been hopefully a few things to whet the appetite as we head into the morning tea-break. There’s this clarity of role for our forum and what it stands for. There’s improving the engagement that comes with it. There’s a call for more ways to help decision makers be informed and across these issues. There’s this angle of how you keep the discussion internet enough without boring the youth or anyone who isn’t already close to the issues. And a range of other insights shared. So, as I await Donna appearing on the stage to send us off to morning tea, you’re not going to do that? I’m going to do that very shortly, then. We’re not. Morning tea is canceled. Alright.

>> JOHANNA WEAVER: Lots of hard work, no time for coffee!

>>

JORDAN CARTER: Morning tea is not the next session. If I got anyone’s hopes up I apologize. On my behalf as moderator, thanks to our panelists for a great opening discussion. I hope you have a lovely morning. Thank you very much.

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>> DONNA: Thank you, after each session we will have a QR code on the screen to get immediate feedback on what you nought of the session, so, if you can find a way - what you thought of the session, if you can provide feedback. We have a short break, just eight minutes, as we have an audio change over and then we will move to the next session. The reason we are not having morning tea is because we didn’t start until 10:00am. We had a lot happen since then, but lunch will follow after this next session. Thank you, everyone.

>> (Short Break).

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>> Do we have a bell to ring to get people to come in from outside? Is that how it works? (LAUGHTER) Who is in control?

>> Nobody at the moment.

>> There you go. Kurt will go and save me and make come on in noises. Well done, Kurt.

>>

>> I should have one of my Zoom backgrounds up. And a dragon. Everyone who counts is here.

>> Donna, you have silence outside and they’re closing a door.

>> There you go. Welcome back, everybody. So this next session is Commonwealth in Conversation WSIS+2020 reflections. It is sponsored by the department of infrastructure, transport, regional development, communication, sports and the arts. I’d hate to be on the switchboard at the department trying to say that one. I’d like to introduce our moderator, Will Lee. And he’s going to have a little chat with our dear friend, Cheryl. I’ll hand over to you, Will.

>> WILLIAM LEE: Thank you. We thought we’d have an opportunity to have a bit of a chat, Cheryl and I. I’ll hand over to Cheryl. A little bit about me. My name is William Lee. I’m Australia’s lead negotiator for the WSIS+20 process in the United Nations General Assembly this year. Chris has done a great job. If you haven’t heard the acronym, hopefully you will have. We thought it was a good opportunity to simply open up the conversation to the community. I’m very much in Cheryl’s hands. This feels a little bit like an oral exam for me. In the sense that I don’t know where the conversation is going to go but hopefully over the course of the hour, between Cheryl and your questions, and there is interest. We can offer a little bit of an insight into this WSIS+20 process, what’s going on and how Australia is preparing? Over to you, Cheryl.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Thank you. I’m the current chair of the Internet Society of Australia which actually trades under the name of Internet Australia. Should you wish to look us up, that’s us. Pretty sittal. Most people can probably remember it. We’re very proud and privileged to be part of the auIGF process and perhaps even more delighted to be I think a robust partner in the conversations that go on with the Commonwealth, particularly we do it in a lot of policy areas and get roped into making comment on an awful lot of things. I see Keith over there who spends far too much of his retired time putting input into pall aacy into a department he -- policy into a department he used to run. Anyway, we do-a particularly important role we believe as a peak body but we are delighted to be part of what’s happening with this world summit on information society, because not everyone will know what WSIS stands for. 20 years on, while I’m waiting the Internet Society flag - I can, so I will - I thought I’d mention that we had our CEO back then. We could afford a CEO back then, part time but we don’t do it those days, we had someone there as part of the Australian delegation. We’ve had a very long interest in this. Rather keen to find out from you and more importantly as Will speaks, if you’ve got any questions just stand up at the mic. If you’re in the Zom room, please feel -- Zoom room, please feel free to pop your comment as a question and one of the team, fabulous AV support team over there in the secretarial staff, will come and stand and read your question out for you. If you’ve got a burning question that you really want Will to answer, then or just in general, a new conversation that way, please put it into the Zoom room. It will get to the microphone via proxy if you want to stand up at the microphone, just do it. There’s no time to do it. Just do it when the urge takes you, and we will have the conversation go perhaps where your question will take it. But let’s start off by what on earth is all this WSIS stuff about and 20 years on why do we care?

>> WILLIAM LEE: Really good question, Cheryl. And so I think it’s probably best to start as to the why do we care part of that question? Because I think it helps frame what it is and why it’s important. So obviously we have been talking already today and we’ll be continuing to talk about this multi-stakeholder model of internet governance. And I think it’s fair to say this is a fairly novel idea for governments. The idea that different stakeholder groups participate on an equal footing in internet governance. And so the WSIS first and foremost, one of the things to think about, is that recognition from governments that this multi-stakeholder model is important, that these national and these regional initiatives such as auIGF, the Global IGF, the role of the technical community, the role of civil society and academia, all plian important part in keep part in keeping the internet working. For this community the key focus is the WSIS protects or guarantees the status quo as the way the internet should run as opposed to attempting to try and run the internet ourselves. And I’m sure many in the room will have views about whether governments could or could not do that. I’ll leave that question open. But I think the other key element of the WSIS is a digital development and digital transformation agenda, it really started its genesis was as this information society was being born, as the internet was being rolled out to the global population, and more and more people started to connect online. And so the WSIS as the 11 WSIS action lines. These use language that probably reflects early 2000s optimism in the way that the internet would work. But really at their heart is about how do we benefit from this digital revolution? And how do we make sure that everyone has the opportunity to use these digital tools to develop their economies, to develop their communications, infrastructure, to develop their societies. So in this respect, it’s very much a compact. It’s kind of a trade. We worked to get the global community on the internet and in exchange governments have accepted the idea that the global community runs the internet. And so this is I guess at the heart of what WSIS is about. It was last reviewed 10 years ago and it’s up for review this year as well. So like any good fine wine, we like to taste it occasionally and make sure it’s still going strong. And the WSIS 20-year review is happening this year. As Chris mentioned, it’s happening in an environment where there’s a lot going on in the global digital ecosystem and the global ecosystem at large. This year is particularly important and that’s why woe as Australia are taking a particular interest in the review this year.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: You mentioned WSIS is somehow safeguarding this model of getting the governance of what goes on in the internet in broader hands, not just limited to a set of controls of member states. But all of us, everyone who has interest in it. How is the WSIS process going to actually protect that? Isn’t there all sorts of different views? Governments are not of one voice. There’s a bunch of different schools of thought out there. Doesn’t somebody have a blocking vote? Doesn’t someone have the ability to not vote and everything falls into a screaming heap?

>> WILLIAM LEE: Look, I think that’s a really interesting prospect. The WSIS does a couple of things. One is it picks up on what internet governance means? There’s something called a working definition of internet governance which was developed tortuously perhaps over many years by the community and governments and that is incorporated into the text of the WSIS framework. It also defines the roles and the responsibilities for each of these different stakeholder groups. So it’s the only document I think that you can go and find that, "Government, your job is this. Technical community, your job is that." Those things, yes, are probably fairly antiquated and old but nonetheless they’re starting points on which to build other conversations and to build other structures. So it’s very much like those foundation stones. You don’t see them very often. You don’t talk about them very often. But if you tried to hold up the building without them, then you might find that the building is on pretty shaky ground. So that’s really what WSIS is doing. As for the question of how different governments or different stakeholders are interacting with this, I think there is still, once you strip away all the geopolitics and understanding that the internet, that digital technologies are fundamental to every member state of the UN’s economy, every citizen’s experience, every citizen’s ability to access information, education, health, social connectivity, government services, so we can have an argument about kind of at a superficial level in a sense how these things should work. How we address harms? How we address externalities negatively. But fundamentally at the WSIS is the global consensus that the internet should benefit everyone and everyone wants access to it. Everyone wants to be able to enjoy it. So there will be a lot of argy-bargy over the next now months as these things are negotiated but I think that core, the consensus is something that still remains 20 years on which is a pretty remarkable feat.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Let’s hope. Yet to be seen. We have until the end of the year to see whether that is actually the case. I’ll cross my fingers. OK. Talk to me a little bit more... I have a question. I’ll pause my thought and go to you, Simon, please.

>> FLOOR: On the previous panel, there was a mention of I guess the global community participating more in around development of things like protocols. You spoke about the working definition of internet governance. I imagine the possibilities and I guess the boundaries of responsibilities in terms of government is shifting, given the advent of distributed tech. Where do you think that we will see those boundaries being redefined going forward?

>> WILLIAM LEE: Really good question. Governments have always been responsible for internet related public policy. Whereas, the technical community has largely been responsible for the protocols, standards and structures. There’s probably an argument to say those thins have never necessarily operated in unison. It’s not like governments pass a proclamation that says public policy is this and then the technical community works out the standards to them, right? I think they’re always in some level of tension but also in some level of balance and harmony. In terms of where we might see those divergences popping up increasingly, I think building on the last panel it seems like AI, new and emerging technology, where at a technical level, the internet as a general purpose network probably does most of those things already. And the protocols and standards will develop over time to accommodate those new use cases. But I think for governments, many governments around the world have a slightly different philosophy which is more both how do we the benefits but minimise the harms? Harm minimisation and a focus on deep fakes and other things are really at the fore of people’s minds. Where we see this dichotomy is governments far more focused on the content liar of issues and looking towards technical solutions to solve those problems which may not necessarily match up with kind of what is most technically logical and most technically feasible and technically practical to keep the kind of digital ecosystem working. There’s an area of tension and one that WSIS is trying toblance in the sense of not interfering with that technical independence, while trying to show that solutions can be found in a consensus manner or a shared manner to some of those content or other issues that are focusing on government’s attention.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Some of those solutions are not just technically questionable, they’re downright dangerous in terms of the security, stability and resilience of the internet and indeed your personal privacy but let’s not quite know down that rabbit hole yet. Keith, over to you.

>> FLOOR: Thank you. With prior US administrations, you could have expected that the US Government would be a strong advocate of sustaining the WSIS, at least as much as anything else as part of an alternative to multi-lateral proponderance in decision-making with respect to the internet. The current US government seems to hate multilateralism. I wonder if you could give us some insights to the extent that you can as to what the American approach as to this whole review process will be and whether they have foreshadowed any insights into what they might see as desirable outcomes to the extent that anyone in the US government may have worked that out which is probably a very good question. And it’s a 2-headed question because I’m also intrigued by the attitude of the BRIC group of countries.

>> WILLIAM LEE: Thank you. To take the first part of your question first about the US, as you mentioned there, they’re very much going through a state of change in terms of some of their policy positioning. I think what we have seen so far is actually continued support for the WSIS as a concept, as an idea. In particular, the multi-stakeholder model of internet governance as been something that’s been recognised as being important. They perhaps had different motivations now than they might have in the past for wanting to support multi-stakeholderism. But nonetheless the idea that multi-stakeholderism is important and the way the internet works should be preserved and should not be subject to interference by governments who some UN process or body I think is something that is still fundamentally strong. I think for this community, you will potentially see differences in the US approach than you might have seen in the past, particularly those that have been through previous WSIS processes, whether it is in 2003 and 2005. To share an example - in April, a Geneva-based organisation, a commission on science and technology for development, which is responsible for reviewing the WSIS each year, held its first-ever vote on the WSIS resolution called by the US. But what I will say is that vote wasn’t called because the US disagreed with multi-stakeholdfism or the WSIS, it disagreed with particular language that we described particularly the digital transformation and digital development agenda. So I do think we are in a position where priorities for the US had potentially shifted a little bit. But at its core WSIS continues to be a really important framework for them. And I think we will, I don’t want to speak for them but my expectation is that they will continue to support the framework as a whole and it will just bow a question of making sure for them that their priorities are reflected in the negotiation text itself. On your question...

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Can you define that?

>> WILLIAM LEE: I will try. Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Tick.

>> WILLIAM LEE: I passed!

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: You don’t that one.

>> WILLIAM LEE: These are a group of developing country states that have this organization called the BRIS. I think what we have seen is, I think their position is still a little bit unclear. They have a divergence of views on many, many topics. What I will say is that for Africa and South America, digital transformation, digital development is really, really important. They reason of the cusp of I adopting some emerging technologies, grappling with challenges like we are, connecting rural communities, whether in the Amazon or in remote parts of Africa. We share these similar challenges. I think for Africa and South America it is making sure that they come along with the journey along with countries like Europe, the United States, Canada, and others. So that, I think, is their top priority. India as well, and China. I think still see the benefits of the value the internet can bring, but perhaps have a slightly different model as to what they may wish to see the role of government as compared to other stakeholders as well. I think to summarize, I think everyone is pointing in the right direction. We haven’t heard anyone say that WSIS is bad and we should get rid of it. The question is the detail and there will be different areas of emphasis for each, but broadly speaking everyone is positive.

>> FLOOR: Christine, Internet Society. Feel free to put this for later. How the internet community help the Australian government prepare for negotiations on the WSIS+20?

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Perfect question.

>> WILLIAM LEE: Great question. I will say firstly, you already have been. That’s been great. For almost nine months now, we’ve had an informal multistakeholder working group that has been supporting us with ideas, reviewing materials, with sharing documents. I think that hack valuable and I think Cheryl you’ve been a part as has others. What I think as we go to the next phase and perhaps take a half a step back and explain what that next phase might be - this will all go, this WSIS conversation is going to New York. It’s going in a sense behind closed doors for governments to argue over the text and spend a lot of time discussing what the text of this resolution should be. I think what will be really valuable for the Australian community is to continue to articulate your priorities in the conversation, just because governments are in the room, doesn’t mean the conversation outside the room has stopped. We will come out and share the progress of this as it goes forward. So, in so far as you have an opinion, we are very much open to hearing it. And feeding it into the process directly but making sure that as a community your voice is being heard, we can only do that in the room if the voice is said outside the room. I think continuing to be engaged in this would be really useful and you can certainly find more information about this process and how to get involved on our website.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Thank you for that Will. You mention that, you describe the activity that’s been going on. I certainly won’t deny it. I believe it is a successful tool and I think it is a great model and I would like to see it continue. You describe it as a multistakeholder model and as a working group it’s not a big group. Is that a real multistakeholder model? Aren’t there barriers of ability to engage with it? I mean... My aunt May can’t just make her opinion directly to you, can she?

>> WILLIAM LEE: Look, if she wants to. You only have to ring the switchboard and get through our enormously long name and then you can get in touch with me, right? Look, I think we very much, in terms of, there is barriers to participation. I won’t sit here and deny that. I think that’s barriers in terms of time, ability to participate but I don’t think we have not tried to Ben -- to be exclusionary but inclusionary and so far as we can make it easy to participate. So, you know, one of the opportunities for coming here is to make sure we get other voices, other than just the community. We know that those that do participate in that working group have your own networks and voices and are bringing a range of voices to the table and if we have missed someone, and someone wants to share something, as I said, we will be around for the next couple of days. Feel free to get in touch. We have had material on our website for those whole of the nine months, so, I think we are trying to be as accessible as possible but unfortunately, I don’t know what I don’t know. I can’t invite people I don’t know exist. If you are interested, we want to hear from you, because what we aim to do in 2, the conversation, is bring a whole-Australia perspective, rather than just of me and my team.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: I have an image now of this mass number of people in Australia waking up first thing, picking up their device and the first thing they check is the department of many names website to see what the opportunities are for engagement with you.

>> WILLIAM LEE: I take that point.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: It is undoubtedly top of mind on every Australian’s wake-up. I think you might have to do outreach to get some of us interested, but anyway, that is for another day, Will. OK. Again, back to this multistakeholder model story. There’s different concepts of what that means in different parts of this international view. I think we understand and we probably agree almost on what a healthy, robust, multistakeholder model is in Australia. It is those individuals who wish to be engaged in the progress of discussion, particularly on policy but not limited to policy, about the internet because they are internet end users or someway involved in it. It doesn’t matter if you are a State Government, a local government, mom and pop group - if you have an interest we think that is where it fits. That is not where everyone does. I want to go over here to you, thank you.

>> FLOOR: I can’t stop myself of making a comment around incentives. You mentioned barriers for participation. I guess, it’s probably very overwhelming for people to try to figure it out - okay, in all of these layers and layers and layers, not only on the technical aspects, where can I make a contribution and for companies or organizations to put the budget to be able to fund that participation - collaboration is not in the budget, participation is not in the beening - the budget, people think it’s like a travel agency to sort out to follow these processes and unfortunately we have not managed to move Australia closer in terms of time zones, which means people from Australia and New Zealand have to participate at ridiculous hours of the night where we don’t have our brains with us, of our contributions might be a bit more clouded, I would say, if we were participating in a more Hugh manly friendly time zone. The barriers are many. So, I guess, I think it will be really important to try to figure out what is the incentives that companies in the private sector, and start-ups, in Australia, researchers, universities, have to maintain the processes. In our case, unfortunately we had the sad news that the Australian National University decided not to continue the chapter for us in Australia. I mean, that is an implication for my own organization that works in open web, but if we consider only five organizations in Australia are members of the standards organization that does standards for the web, and the slow, small number of Australians that participate in the IGF or ISO or others, then you think how, you know, in my little part of the internet, which is one of those layers that you were talking about, how do we get more Australian views and participations? I honestly don’t see the incentives. It’s very difficult for people to do that. So, if the Australian Government can do anything to promote and generate incentives in that space, I would encourage you to figure that one out and happy to work on how to make it happen. I think the standards and domains and anything else, needs clear incentives approach and strategy.

>> WILLIAM LEE: Really good question and I think it’s not a unique question. I think every country around the world is asking that same question. While we have the challenge of distance, to some of these processes, and ofry sources m other countries have the similar challenges, whether it is resources, experts, whether it is levels of interest in their communities or a host of other barriers and gaps. So I think this has been one of the things that has been happening across the WSIS conversation this year, is how do we increase participation and representations of all groups, not just those that are WSIS veterans, I will call them that, but how do we support more involvement in all of the processes, all of the standards-making, all of the ICANN work, all of the work in WSIS at the UN, at the IGF, at the WSIS forum, at other places? I don’t know we have the answer but I think the first step to finding an answer is to recognize that perhaps this is a gap that we need to fill and I think it is as clear here in Australia as around the world and I think one of the things that we are really keen to do is to find innovative solutions to this problem. So, if anyone in the room has an innovative solution, please come and have a chat with us, because we will happily take on board your homework. Clear

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: It’s not just a matter of money resources and there’s a time resource issue here, but I think one of the points Sylvia was making was the time zone issue as well and I am looking to see if our New Zealand compatriates and someone like Andrew from Pasifiker would agree that perhaps we could do more as a subregional region in slight more con due tive circumstances, providing it’s done in advance of critical points in a time-line. What often happens is we need a comment and it is a fortnight. That’s not all that conducive to free and open engagement.

>> WILLIAM LEE: No, look, fully agree. I think there’s been steps in the right direction with that. The UN co-facilitators, Kenya and Albania for this WSIS+20 process have made a deliberate job of getting up in the middle of the night in New York to have a conversation with our region as a whole. It is still probably quite early in the morning for some. I think it’s about 6:00am or 7:00am in the morning for our Pacific and New Zealand colleagues. I think they are trying, which is, I think a step in the right direction. I fully agree with you Cheryl. There is more that can be done. It’s a little bit of a chicken and egg problem, right? We want more people to get involved and therefore we want to find the right times and the right opportunities to make that happen but often you need the people interested to then force that change, right? So, but, those people can only get interested if the change happens, so it is a little bit of a complex question, but I think one of the things that we’ve been trying to do domestically at least is at least make sure we capture as many views as we can so that when we are up at 2:00am in the morning we have at least got the notes, but the more we can do in that space, I think, is really, really important.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: We might have to contemplate what aulGF might be able to do in finding some of those mutually useful exercises as we go forward to improve not just Australia’s focus, but perhaps, some slightly more wide ranging than that. By the way, I see him at 2:00am in the morning and he does perform perfectly well and he does have his brain in gear. He’s even very diplomatically, astonishingly so. I’m almost concerned. While I talk about diplomats, who is behind the closed doors doing these negotiations of all of these pieces of moving part that is in this WSIS document?

>> WILLIAM LEE: I think this is where we are now. The WSIS, the WSIS+20 process resulted so far in a zero draft and for those that are not up with UN processes, the zero draft means a first cut, a set of words on a page that we will now spend three months discussing. So, this document is available online and the co-facilitators have invited comments, all of which will go into this closed door discussion among governments and most of those officials will probably be diplomats from New York who cover many, many different things, including digital issues, but also cyber security, also disarmament, also humanitarian assistance and you can imagine there is a wide divergence between the technical elements of some of these conversations we’re having in the digital space and, for example, humanitarian issues in the UN. So, these diplomats will be in the room and we will be discussing the text as we go forward to try to find an outcome that works. So, I think it comes back to my earlier point about the conversation outside the room, supporting the conversation inside the room and the more that the community is able to present really good ideas, really good proposals, really good things that can be copied and pasted, the easier the conversation will be inside the room. From an Australian perspective, I will be in New York doing those negotiations, which is, I think, a real positive for us as Team Australia, in the sense that we’ve got a little bit more of the pool of the community’s voice to take with us, but as we go through those conversations, not just supporting us as Team Australia, I think it’s really, really important we get all of the New York system engaged. I would encourage everyone here to think about how your networks might help in that regard, to engage in other countries, to get other countries’ governments, to get the advice they need to meaningfully participate in this process, whether it is from our Pacific family or whether it is from our broader Asia-Pacific region or even further afield. I think every government I have spoken to is looking for advice and expertise on which to build upon for these negotiations.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: OK. I can’t resist this one. You beautifully and appropriate geographically and I would have thought sociopolitically, pigeoned us as Australia as part of Asia-Pacific and Oceana. Where are we in the UN model?

>> So, the UN has a different classification as you are rightly pointing out. We end up in a really odd region called Western Europe and Others. We’re in the "others" box. So, take that way you will. I will say for these negotiations the different UN regions don’t necessarily play too much of a role in the sense that there’s another grouping in the UN called The Group of 77, or G77 for short. You can google them, I think there’s 120-something members.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Makes perfect sense!

>> WILLIAM LEE: In all good UN logic! There will be different groupings involved in these conversations, based on geography, on socioeconomic status, based on traditional partnerships or even new non-traditional partnerships.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Tell me more about those, please.

>> WILLIAM LEE: About non-traditional partnerships?

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: And traditional. Who are we be partnering with?

>> WILLIAM LEE: Australia will negotiate with Canada. With Canada. We will load share with Canada. So our Canadian colleagues and us will be working together and that’s a traditional partnership in the UN context. There will be non-traditional partnerships as well. For us in our region, working with South-East Asia, ASEAN, others, really important. Working with the GRULAX, another one, the Group of Latin America and Crib Countries and with the Pacific. I think we will work closely with them as well and traditional partners and the UK and France and Europe and others. As I said, in relation to Keith’s question earlier, we are all starting from a base that the WSIS is a good thing, which is a great starting point and the question is, where do we take it from here and that’s the question that we will be working through over the next coming months and hopefully by December, we will have a consensus outcome.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Fingers crossed. Donna.

>> DONNA: You said, Will, you negotiate on behalf of Team Australia. I’m sorry if I missed part of the conversation. Does that mean that the Australian Government of the day has to approve whatever you your talking points are or position and my understanding is the Australian Government for many years has been very supportive of the internet governance space, but how does that work in practice?

>> WILLIAM LEE: Yeah, look, and this is the dark arts of government and being a public servant, but ultimately, I work on behalf of what the government of the day wishes to see occur. We have a thing called a negotiating mandate. It’s a fairly lengthy document, but it covers a range of issues and provides, I guess a strategic direction for where Australia would like to see the conversation to go and that’s agreed by government at the ministerial level. That guides us in those conversations. It’s very much a strategic framework. For example, I think my government would be very surprised if we were to agree to hand over the internet to and individual, for example and be like, Cheryl is now the internet tzar! It prevents me from doing that, even if I think that is a good idea. I think what it does is provide those guard rails. The public manifestation of the negotiating principles is the zero draft that, the non-paper, that Christine talked about in her opening plenary. This document here. You can find it either online or copies at our booth today, which is a document that has governance endorsement and explains in many respects where government would think that the solutions might lie. That is not to say that it limits us in many respects. It provides that strategic framework but what that looks like on the ground, what form of words are used to describe that is where we have a lot of, I won’t say latitude, but a lot of flexibility as the negotiations develop. That is where I think as a community we have lots of opportunities. The other thing I will say is if we get further along in the process, and we find that we need to go back to government, and say, well, look, we think we should reconsider a particular position, and here’s the case for that, then traditionally government is very receptive to that advice. So, we have some markers or some guard rails, but I wouldn’t say we don’t have the ability to deliver on an outcome that the Australian community wants either.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: That’s good to hear.

>> FLOOR: So sorry to interrupt, we have an online question. I won’t be reading it myself, but we have Kiki who has raised a hand. Are you happy for that audio?

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Sure.

>> FLOOR: Kiki, you are good to go.

>> KIKI: Thank you so much, I love the energy between our two panelists today. I have had the experience of being part of this multistakeholder approach, that Will and Ian and his team have been leading for these negotiations. It’s very rare that I would say it but I’m genuinely delighted. I think that for a group of people that do come in with different backgrounds and languages and perspectives, Will does a very good job of synthesising those. Even where I have perhaps brought in the scope a little too wide, I have found that the responses have been articulated as to why we may not bring that into this particular, say, negotiating document, and other areas where they have incorporated some things that would operationally allow us later to be able to make those points. Cheryl has got really great knowledge, I guess, from domestic into Asia-Pacific regions and the UN systems and I found that really useful. The domestic internet governance in Australia is something we need to work on, as well as how that interfaces and all the post structuralist community development people out there would love this - but how that works in from local to global processes and how we contribute as Australians in this region with historically odd relationships as Will has said. So, Cheryl, again, great question - where do we sit in that UN system? What that brings me to is, one of the concerns I had around the UN processes was it seems very performative somewhat. Will reminded me of the participation at global level. If we are a multilateral and not multistakeholder in a UN system - please correct me if I’m wrong - it is UN member states that can participate in those discussions or negotiations. So, if you are from a group that hasn’t got as open support from the government as, say, Will and Ian are providing, if you come from a country that is not a recognized UN state, such as Taiwan or Palestine, you will have, you won’t be represented there. I think that comes into this, again, a structural element to what is happening here in these negotiations and why it is important. The IGF in Australia, it may not be right what we want, but it is so worth preserving and having participation because it is the only independent fora. It is the only place that isn’t actually run by a data brokeer in the background and how we participate - I do think that what we are hearing here is we need to develop an open door culture and we have discussed community of practices andly use that because it’s known throughout every industry and I think having independent community organizers to help with those linkages, at those intersections, is important, especially if we are to have a proper place in the Asia-Pacific and not take on some of those in positions that a western country has done previously. For those of you who are new to WSIS on the internet governance forums, check out Action Lines, you might find the familiarity linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. There’s a great map I will put in the chat. But peak bodies like the Australian libraries and whatever it is calls, the association, and the Australian neighborhoods houses and centers already use those SDGs. There are already works for measuring and reporting. I think if we can get that universality and that community engagement I feel that what is being set up is a pivot point between our domestic and international engagements, it’s very good. Thank you, Will, and Cheryl and organizations. I look for ward to how we expand and strengthen our nodes in our networks.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: It’s not a level playing field. Any comments?

>> WILLIAM LEE: There are barriers to participation. I think in an ideal world we would love every single person, the seven billion or eight billion of us globally. I have lost count as to where we are now, to be able to participate in these conversations and I think it’s important we get as close to that as possible. But I think, as I said at the beginning, the WSIS+20 process is compact. It’s an agreement from governments to recognise the value of this multi-stakeholder community. So in a sense it’s OK that the conversation ultimately boils down to an intergovernmental one, because the outcome that Australia and other countries want to see is the continuation of the global multi-stakeholder conversation. If we can strengthen that and improve upon it, that is absolutely fantastic. But we do work in a world where there are kind of processes and structures and ways of doing things to get those outcomes and WSIS+20, the role of the UN general assembly and the membership of the General Assembly is one way to achieve that.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Very diplomatically answered.

>> FLOOR: Sorry to go back on the partnership types. We have a lot of involvement and what do you think about the growing regional areas for example, the Asia-Pacific, Indonesia, and what are interests for government? And we go and help them build capacity, but what’s in it for us? Thank you.

>> WILLIAM LEE: Really good question. I don’t want to speak for every government in our region because I think that would be very bold and very presumptuous of me. But the crux of the question though is what do we as a region see as important? So Australia has helped facilitate with the Asia-Pacific telecommunities and regional conversations amongst governments about what we as a region might see valuable from this. Some of the key messages out of that have been, first, that we still need to get the basics right of digital connectivity? Not everyone in our region is connected. Most people who are not are in rural areas or in small islands or in other hard to reach places. And we shouldn’t accept that we have connected most people, so therefore we have everyone. That’s the first point. The second point is I think that we’ve heard that the needs to be meaningful -- connectivity needs to be meaningful. There’s no point just connecting people to an internet that is only English. There are thousands of languages spoken across our Asia-Pacific region. So closing that divide, closing the gender divide, closing other divides in that space is really important. And the third point that we’ve heard is that the opportunities for young people are particularly important. And how we leverage digital technologies to both young people to education and services but also empower young people to be that next generation of inoivators and entrepreneurs. I always remind myself in our region we have the world’s consumers, the world’s manufacturers and the world innovators across the region. Doesn’t a matter if you’re in Tuvalu, Australia, New Zealand, PNG, Japan, China, India, Indonesia, or many other countries in our region, you have those same opportunities. If we get this digital transformation and connectivity right. So I think those are some of the messages that we have heard from governments and other stakeholders across the region. I’m sure there are many more. But I think we see those as really valuable messages to take to New York, to say to the rest of the world that these are the opportunities for us as a region, that we want to see as outcomes out of this process. How do we enable those things going forward at that strategic and macro level? I hope that’s useful for what you’re looking for.

>> FLOOR: Joyce from APNIC. We have spoken about the fact most of us have not been in the room doing the UN General Assembly and won’t be part of the negotiations. So my first question is can you tell us - you know me, I like to speak in spivs - what exactly it is that you’re going to be defending or protecting at the high level? And of course what is it that you’re gearing up to fight against? That’s the first question. The second question is, being frame APNIC, I come from the technical community. There are a lot of parts for the zero draft where I won’t have that specific expertise to talk about. So my second question is what do you think about the fairly large section on human rights in the zero draft?

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Lead with the easy ones. The human rights section in the zero draft is the largest number of paragraphs of any of the sections and there is a huge number of sections. Over to you, Will.

>> WILLIAM LEE: Thanks, Cheryl. What will we be defending? I think the short answer is I hope we’re not defending anything and I hope we’re not fighting for anything. And I say that, not because we don’t-a view on anything, but I hope that we have a conversation that is consensus driven and a conversation that builds on 20 years of progress, right? But in saying that there are things that are important to Australia. And multi-stakeholder internet governance is one of them. Improving gender equality is another. Supporting the sustainable development goals is another. Supporting the closing of digital divides is another. And I think we will be very concerned if we walk away from some of those ideals and some of those values. I said WSIS is a development agenda and when you have a 20-year-old car, you sometimes have to give it a service and set new targets and new goals and new objectives to reflect the modern world. That’s something we would real want to see as valuable across a whole range of issues, not just simply digital internet governance but digital transformation, eBusiness so on and so forth. That will all be really important. What I will say is we are just finalising our government remarks to the zero draft. And the co-facilitators have kindly committed to publishing all of everyone’s comments. You’ll know what we have kind of been agreed. But it goes to Donna’s point. We-a process we have to go through to agree to those. Broadly speaking we hope to see that and I hope we have no fights. On the question of human rights...

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: I’m going to hold you on that. This is your lifeline. I’m cautious of time and want to give a final speaker a moment. Over to you, Jenny.

>> FLOOR: Hi. This in the last week or so some Aboriginal leaders have called on the Australian Government to honour the United Nations declarations on Indigenous peoples. It’s been about 16 or 18 years since signing it and the government has not implemented the recommendations from that. And they were one of four countries who refused to sign the thing in the first place - Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA. So as an outgoing fellow and in the interest of the incoming fellows for Indigenous internet governance, I’d like to hear directly from the Albanese government about how he will support Indigenous internet governance from this country. Thank you and goodnight.

>> WILLIAM LEE: Thank you. First comment would be...

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Almost a question with notice.

>> WILLIAM LEE: The first copt would be let me take away the question around convention itself. It’s not something I have direct responsibility for but I will make sure that we get through the organisers or grab your details afterwards and we can make sure you get an answer as to where we are with that. But I think the broader question is around WSIS and internet governance and Indigenous cultures and Indigenous languages. And there is a recognition in the zero draft of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous cultures and Indigenous languages and their value to the digital conversation. I think as Australia we would like to see it strengthened and I know many other countries around the world would like to see those references strengthened and not simply references that acknowledge things and move on, but make it meaningful. So it is certainly on our radar but let me get back to you on that other point. And then I can do 30 seconds on human rights.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: You’re pushing it.

>> WILLIAM LEE: I’m holding people between here and lunch. I’m in trouble. Human rights, very important for Australia. I think we were really pleased to see there was such an emphasis as you said on the human rights section. Human rights are increasingly important in the digital environment and for Australia and many other countries, having the same human rights online as offline is really, really valuable and I think we were pleased to see that point recognised. Human rights is one of those areas in the UN that has a long and vexed history and I do not propose to be a, purport to be a human rights expert in this space. But I think broadly speaking the recognition of human rights, as they apply to the digital environment, is something that’s increasingly important and something Australia is keen about.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Ladies and gentlemen, I don’t know if you all understand what it takes to sit up here and just expose yourself as Will has done today on behalf of the Commonwealth, in conversation, and I think he’s done a bloody marvellous job and deserves a round of applause. Thank you.

>> WILLIAM LEE: Thank you.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: I feel like we’re in pretty safe hands. Over to you. We might be in a safe lunch space yet.

>> Thank you. I hope you have Will on the long contract. There’s a lot of knowledge there that it would be a shame to lose at any point in time. So we should have a QR code that folks can provide their feedback for this session. That would be greatly appreciated. We do have lunch now but in 10 minutes, and I can’t get my laptop to work, Simon O’Tool, who is one of our First Peoples fellows from this year and Simon wasn’t in the room when I announced that this morning, so Simon and Astrid, wave at people. That would be great. We’re very, very happy to have them here with us. But Simon was actually submitted some session proposals to the MSSC and unfortunately we couldn’t give him a dedicated time slot during the agenda. What we offered was a lunchtime session. I hope that folks can come back in to Simon’s session. I think it’s been cut down to 40 minutes. So their plan is to start back here at 12:50. And Simon’s session is Sovereignty in the Digital Age, reclaiming identity, governance and power. I think this should be a really interesting conversation.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Essential.

>> Thank you, Simon, for putting it forward. Sorry we’ve had to shorten your time but hopefully folks can come back into the room and participate in Simon’s session.

>> CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: People can bring their lunch in. No excuses then.

>> Simon will start here about 12:50 and the lunchbreak goes for about an hour. Thank you.

>>

>> OK, everyone. The session is about to start. It’s ready to go. Alright. Can you all hear me? Alright. Thank you for coming and listening in your lunch break. I really appreciate it and I think that we’re going to try and keep this a little bit different. And I don’t know if those microphones are on but if you are to not interrupt your eating, I’d love if you participate as much as possible and call out. And I can just repeat your comments and questions or Alexar can as well. If anybody is listening on line.

>> ALEXAR PENDASHTEH Make sure they don’t choke. I don’t have insurance.

>> SIMON O’TOOLE: Let’s hope everyone is covered. Cool. My name is Simon O’Toole. I’ll start with a bit of an introduction because this talk is about sovereignty in the digital age. Identity, governance and power. And identity and governance is key to power. So I’ll be talking about my identity to start with. So I am a Aboriginal Irish man I call himself. Aboriginal and Irish people have had a very long and historied close relationship with each other. But I didn’t grow up around my culture. Why is that? Because we have a gap in Australian Indigenous society. In fact, most, if not all, colonised First Nations societies around the world. My father was in prison for a lot of my childhood. Now, it was proven in a court of law that the crime he was sent to prison for didn’t actually happen but it was proven in a different court of law. He was still sent to prison anyway. Now that wouldn’t have happened with I feel any other - is there feedback? Yep. Good. As the ringing in my ear subsides, I’ll try and getback on track. I guess what I’m trying to ais First Nations to say is First Nations people have a very different relationship to society than and the structures that govern us than other people. And that identity that we have with our, with our indig naty that often puts us into harm’s way but I think, I was just having a conversation this morning about how our identity is important to us, so we make sure that we put that first, even when we know that that’s bringing us in to harm’s way. I grew up in a very interesting environment compared to other First Nations people. I grew up on a computer. That might not sound too foreign to some of you, but I still to this day have not met any First Nations people that their first memory was using a computer. In fact, all of my friends didn’t have computers ever in my First Nations community. And then when I got to university I found that that was still the case and the Australian National University that was First Nations in the engineering computer science faculty and other communities when I found it out and I found this was not an isolated experience but the digital divide was a massive, massive problem. This was only eight years ago. Today it hasn’t got that much better. So ensuring that we participate in the digital economy and dintle policy is incredibly important. So today I lead a tech consultancy. It’s committed to bridging the digital divide in Australia and the South Pacific. The charity that has the same mission and dreaming machines from what I know is the only Australian deep tech innovation company in Australia that actually creates products from scratch rather than just I guess entegritting them from other solutions.

>> ALEXAR PENDASHTEH Thank you, Simon. For sharing some personal stories. I don’t usually refer to my background or personal stories because it’s usually not relevant to my work. However, the topic of this talk I think makes it very relevant potentially. At the moment I lead one of the longest lasting Linux youser groups in -- user groups in the world. It started in Victoria, for 30 years. And also have a private business as well, pursuing manufacturing and renewables in Victoria. So my personal background is that I came from Iran. When I arrived here for the first time, in contrast I was understanding a lot more about the notion of culture, history in itself, and also my culture, my history and leading to this session as with Simon, we both discovered a lot of thoughts about sovereignty and exploring those thoughts which was very pressing and informative for myself. That notion became a lot deeper. So in this very city, in 2021, there was another conference in May, it was called South Start. I don’t know who is from Adelaide or South Australia, how many? Like a quarter of the room. One of the very best start-up conferences brines people together. I believe that was the first year. That was when I was set to in partnership reinvigorate the electronics industry in Australia. When I left Adelaide to Melbourne Airport, basically to come back in a few days’ time to visit some factories, South Australia closed the border to Victoria and that put an end to what had to happen because you couldn’t do it virtually. My next plans were a road trip and travel in all cities in Australia. Including Cairns, Perth, Canberra and Tassie. It was a domino effect of border cultures and all got cancelled. When things libe this happens, disturbance happens in service, you notice you had something and you don’t have it now. The Optus failure happened as well which was very tragic, unfortunately. Sometimes we associate these things with logistics and operations. What’s really important is the fact that in both cases we have mechanisms to address those things so that they don’t happen in the future. That’s what really matters. Those mec that are in place is not something you can touch or interact with until you realise you don’t have those mechanisms. In both cases I mentioned we have those mechanisms. In both cases, a democratic process and contractual agreements and you can put different companies in and services accountable. Sometimes you don’t have those mechanisms and don’t even know. It is very different between health and fitness. Health is something we forget we have until we lose it. Fitness is something you can’t even reflect and consciously know. You only know it when there is an incident and the amount of time it takes for you to recover. Mental fitness is similar, how long it takes you to recover. Very important when it comes to digital sovereignty. There would be a lot of things that we may take for granted. Such as connectivity with Optus. But I want to point out how miraculous it is, how miraculous it is we live in a world where internet is a flat network and it works. It doesn’t have to be this way. It is a good reflection of how internet works where all players are on the same footing. IGF reflects my experience of coming to IGF, people from different sectors and stakeholders so to speak, talking about topics, maybe not binding, but it adds an extra weight to that. And recognising this and making sure that we maintain this, so that if there is, if anything goes withdrawn later, we have a mechanism to respond to that. It’s not something that it just would necessarily remain this way.

>> SIMON O’TOOLE: To pull out some of the themes of what you just said is that when I guess when we don’t have governance over I guess the systems that we have and that we use, when there is some kind of failure and interruption of that, we lose power. We no longer have access to those systems. And I feel that’s really core to the First Nations sovereignty movement, is that when we have systems that don’t meet the needs of society, whether that be through interruption, that failure to provide that service. Or whether the service isn’t designed to meet the needs of the people. We need to take back control and power of those services and resources to make sure they are designed and to be able to support our needs when there is an interruption that we have the agency to be able to do something about it. The Optus 000 interruption was a perfect example of how when something happens, we no longer have the agency to be able to resolve that issue. We’ve handed over the power to someone else entirely. And we don’t identify with that power. It is an organisation that is not really a part of the public good. And is definitely not representative of us, but we have given over that power. But by bringing in that power which we call the bounds of identity is the key to sovereignty. We need to ensure that we have the control over the domains of our identity. And the governance to be able to protect and enforce and respond to issues that affect our identity and affect our needs. And without that we lose power.

>> ALEXAR PENDASHTEH I want to expand on agency. When we lose agency, because it’s painful, then we start paying attention. However, if we don’t use that pain and attention in to making sure the framing that gives us agency is not also under our power, it will happen again. In the very same year I mentioned earlier in 2021, we had floods in Lismore. So there were a lot of observations for me and lessons I believe for NSW and Australia. A particular one I want to mention is how telecommunication failed and people who some of them had to put a hole through their ceiling to swing up to the second floor, in the middle of the night. They didn’t have any way of knowing where everyone else is, and whether there are supports coming, until late morning I believe. So that should have been, so that’s a loss of agency in communication. That should have triggered potentially, I really try not to use the term should have. I’m putting it myself first. There are very simple established protocols, technologies that have been around, you can establish with consumer grade hardware to make sure that there is basic communication always is in place. There is open source software. Very simple hardware. We have a workshop in Linux Victoria prior the hardware hardly adds up to $50 for having a set of that works really well. But when we lose agency and that pain doesn’t reflect in to how it could not help ourselves, then that happens again. I’m hoping that this is very nuanced and everyone’s observations and perspective is very different. The hope we have from this session is we all think about those more abstract layers that are not painful on their own. If they’re not attended to, they leave the exposure point for future pains. And the way technology, this is 2025 recording this, we all have seen how scary it is that how fast it could evolve and grow and how geopolitics can escalate really quickly. We can’t expect the cycles of politics, three years, four years, and the very strong mechanisms of policymaking, law-making but they’re slow and necessary to respond to the exposures that we have from the technology providers. You can never blame, every entity has its own mandates. Corporations have mandatory shareholders. Policy-makers have their own mandates. The playground is very unfair right now. The technology is moving really fast. And it’s really important for us, all of us in our own capacity to talk about how we can take control of the framing. I don’t say we don’t have control of the framing but when a pain point happens, it’s a great opportunity for us to reflect, especially if it happens for the first time. How can it happen for the second time? And we weren’t able to respond to that after the first incident.

>> SIMON O’TOOLE: Whenever I hear people talk about digital and data sovereignty, really what they’re talking about is state, national, digital and data sovereignty but like I said earlier, identity plays a massive part in sovereignty. So identity in governance go hand in hand to make sovereignty. We like to think that we are sovereign over our individual selves. We decide what we ingest when we got to the toilet. When we get in the car, when we go somewhere. We also have our family unit. So having sovereignty as a group and as a collective over that family unit. And it’s that collective that I want to discuss for a second. First Nations cultures are relational. It’s all about the collective, rather than the individual. And I think that when we’re talking about digital and data sovereignty, woe often talk about either the individual having our control over our own data, or just societal at the state level. But identity is composable. Like I’ve said, you’ve got individual identity. You’ve got identity of the family unit. You’ve got identity of a community group or an Indigenous First Nation for example. A state. These are all social constructs. Some of these social constructs might be grounded in something tangible and something real like lineage or genetics. But they’re still social constructs. Anybody apart of that group can change the decisions on how that group is governed to re-establish what the definitions of that group is. And we need to start moving towards a policy framework where we can more adaptively compose these identity groups and be able to create governance that isn’t just individualistic and saying that I as one person have the approval to be able to make a decision that affects a whole group or whole collective. And that’s what we essentially have today in terms of the way that we interact with the internet. And then also in terms of the collective, we have given away that power to a bunch of politicians or a bunch of custodians that we didn’t choose. That don’t represent us. Custodianship is also a fundament al part of First Nations governance. And we don’t have a ways in, within our technological framework to be able to capture and govern the way that custodianship works right across every single level of society. And I think until we decentralise technology, not just in terms of its, its I guess the tools that we have access to, but also taking responsibility over our implementation of that technology and society, we’re not going to solve that problem. And I think, Alexar, when you were talking about having access to simple tools and simple devices and open source software, these are the things that we have at our disposal to be able to take responsibility and take agency over the way that technology is implemented, that governs the boundaries of the individual of the family unit, of a country or a First Nations plan or language group.

>> ALEXAR PENDASHTEH These are real thought-provoking. Again, when incidents happen, we realise how much we might have already become dependent on providers that we don’t have control over. Recently there have a been legislation around the age of social media for teenagers in Australia. And follow-up for that has been the notion that YouTube itself counts as a social media. When it gets to points like that, you realise that this is not something that is unique to Australia. The way it has entered our lives and it has exceeded from being a tool and we live inside and our identities and our ways of living aspects of living, especially for younger people and technology. And allowing the infrastructure providers to be foreign corporations, it leaves us to basically impossible situations, where we would expect our law-makers to solve a problem. Whereas this is beyond their area, as if there is a virtual reality and expecting any time there could be any change and be expecting people who have no access to that infrastructure being able to rule. So in cases like this, this goes back to what you say, Simon, about family and groups. If someone wants to protect their own as theivalues of the family and there is no means for them to have any control over that because without realising we have allowed for technology to become very dependent on technology, the reason this is very timely and we have to speak about these things very directly now is because again we put thin title the -- put in the title the Age of AI, a big part of AI is as we knethe reasoning and the thoughts if we make mistakes in the processes where decision-making happens, we may not be in a position to be hoping to course correct in two or three years time. And with everything else, we are still in a position to do that. However, allowing technology that shapes our society to be provided by sources that we don’t have end to end visibility and control over, it could bow very dangerous and the purpose of this thought is basically for us to all proaboutively think about these topics in our everyday work. And amongst ourselves because these are not abstract and philosophical anymore. This is September 2025. In July I was in Canberra when an A I initiative was launched by the Department of Finance and action is happening. It’s really important we all think about these matters and get involved and making sure it’s not just one department, we can’t put it on one department to make the right call, this is way beyond similar to the social media and teenagers issues abroad. This involves all of us and it’s important we all help each other to make the right decisions and not waiting for one institution to make the decision because there is no point in blaming two or three years later when there’s an opportunity to course correct.

>> SIMON O’TOOLE: William on the last panel said about the question about the UN declaration of Indigenous rights. That’s not my area of responsibility. As autonomous agents come in more and more, into the structures that govern our sovereignty, we’re going to hear that a lot more. We’re going to say - that’s not what I do. This is called a problem of many hands and this existed within government for so long. With responsibility and governance spread over so many different entities, it creates gaps in responsibility, gaps in liability and that will only happen more and more as we move towards the age of AI and autonomous agents and if we don’t act now, we’re not going to find that things are getting better. We will find that things are getting much worse because what consent do we have over an awe - autonomous agent being used. I want you to think of what consent means, you can say I consent but is it really consent if you can’t revoke that consent? What mechanisms do we have within our governance to be able to revoke that consent, to say, no, I don’t want this, or, every time we use a digital service, that we get a privacy policy, we get terms and conditions, we click a check-box, go and submit and all of a sudden we’ve given what they call "consent". It is not consent because it can’t be revoked. So, digital society, whether that be in the infrastructure that we use, to govern that or the way that infrastructure uses that data we essentially don’t have consent over and that’s a scary thing. That is something that we all be worried about but particularly for first nations people who have a responsibility to be custom, custodians of our knowledges and oral history and we have our own protocols to govern those knowledges and cultures. How are we empowered to be able to enable digital governance that reflect those protocols?

>> FLOOR: Good afternoon. I’m Zane, week for AuDA but are asking this in a personal capacity. I want to talk about when you talk about decentralising and getting control back. With AI we talk about if it should be overregulated or let’s celebrate and see approach. Using that as an example, what do you want to see done - do you want more control with tech companies or with individuals? Do you have an idea in mind? Would love to get more thoughts about it.

>> SIMON O’TOOLE: That is essentially what a lot of my work is about. I designed an access control model called Intent, Bound, consentful Capability-Based Access Control. What that allows you to do is to embed into the permissioning of essentially every system, not only consent that can be revoked but also you bind to that consent the intent in which you have given that consent and this is a computational access control model, so that technology and services can reason over that consent and that intent and so you can understand before an action is performed, whether it will, I guess, breach the terms of your consent and the systems can stop it from happening before it even happens, which is something that we don’t have today and I really think that people need to be starting to think about that - how do we not take reactive approaches but preventive ones?

>> ALEXAR PENDASHTEH: I would like to provide an answer to that question briefly. We will get to your question after. A very good question. Thanks for having that. My answer would be, while the technical things I could say, but I want to say the same way as a society that feels wealthy starts looking at more vulnerable ones, when we in Australia, one of the very first things I noticed is how disability is taken really importantly, not only mobility but I was a refugee when I entered Australia and I was seeing how serious especially - I had a few roles in the state governments - they are about accessn’t of the website. At the beginning I didn’t understand, but later I had appreciation for that. The same way we can be kind, because we feel wealthy and take care of people, though we may not necessarily have to. The same way I’m inviting every one of us, especially in more positions of governance and corporate procurement, to go extra mile in, if a technology choice or vendor simply ticks the boxes, we can always go further to make sure we also use providers that are Australian, that are local, that work with Australian universities, and using Open Source solutions that are collective comments and keep knowledge locally. Australian Federal Government in 2019 signed a whole of government contract with IBM for the value of $1 billion. I don’t know the details of that, whether it is right or wrong decision, but what I’m inviting everyone is, to also consider investing in our local industries and we have great assets in Australia. We have great universities. I name a few, but many more, UNSW ANU, Monash, Melbourne, UQ and we have Australian small business owners in tech, one of the very first and early ones, we can feed these resources locally so that the technology that will be building so-called AI, is what we in Australia - does haven’t to be Open Source, it can be proprietary, but it is something out of Australia, we don’t have to buy elsewhere necessarily. If we don’t do now, five years later, I may not have this suggestion because it may have sold already.

>> FLOOR: My name is Susan. I’m a traditional woman and a computer scientist and have been working in this space since the 1980s. I’m also a very cultural woman. I grew up on my country in remote, very remote far north-west NSW. Consent to me is very, a very broad and deep thing to think about. It’s actually - there are many definitions of consent, but one of those is, includes not just free, prior, fully informed consent. So, I don’t believe we can know the full intent of the use of the data or the knowledges are. When you ask about control of technologies, there is no such word as "control" in any language, Indigenous Australian or language here. What there is is custodianship. It’s internet policy and governance that our peoples can contribute to technology development and governance and any of the information systems or technology systems that maintain those. I would like you to think about bringing that to the floor.

>> We are out of time, we need to start the next session. I’m glad Susan had a chance to contribute.

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>> DONNA: I guess everyone is finishing lunch. We will have to get people to round them up. They are ringing the bells. Maybe people don’t understand what the bells mean. Maybe that’s the problem. Tim, come on up. Have you got your group? Do we have two online? We will get started. The title is no-one left behind. This is a session that is sponsored by ICANN. So thank you to ICANN. I will introduce Tim Marshall from the Australian Digital Inclusion Alliance. Tim, I will leave it for you to introduce your panel. Thank you Tim.

>> TIM MARSHALL: Do we have our panel colleagues online? Excellent. Thank you. Good afternoon everyone. I missed the Welcome to Country, so I want to pay my respects and acknowledge we’re on the lands of the Kaurna people here in Adelaide and pay respect to elders past, present and emerging and all the first nations people in the room. Today I would like to note that first nations people experience a unique set of circumstances when it comes to digital inclusion. This is a core to, core target, Target 17 of the closing the gap framework which goes to access to information and services from the concept that digital inclusion can be an enabler for a range of other important things, for getting by in life and is an enabler for a range of other targets in that framework. My name is Tim Marshall, I’m a co-convenor of the Australian Digital Inclusion Alliance. We are a peak body of community organizations, academics, researchers and businesses and other organizations, working to raise awareness and advocate on behalf of the broad issues in the sector of digital inclusion. We’re about connecting, advocating and providing a common voice. Many of our members are community organizations that don’t have a lot of resources to raise up the various issues relevant to their own organizations or the sector as a whole. So we try to play that role as best we can, recognizing the intersectionality and brought opportunities and challenges across digital inclusion. Great to be here. This is an important forum. It’s a vital topic, sustainable digital inclusion and great to see that that forms one of the foundational themes of the event over this next few days. I think the quote for that one in the program is "ensuring everyone has access to the internet and the skills needed to participate in the digital world, while protecting rights and managing risks". Digital inequity was noted this the opening remarks. I think it was Jordan who referred to internet society in terms of governance. We hear more about the digital economy over the last couple of decades and ADIA argues strongly for a shift in that terminology to an equitable digital society with internet equity a key part. I’m joined by four ADIA collaborators. We have fantastic work, including on the intersection of digital and media literacy -Nicole Rossini. And Heather Rea is looking at digital inclusion in social responsibility team at Telstra. Telstra does some terrific work supporting digital inclusion broadly. I’m sure Heather will mention some of that as well. She’s well embedded in that team and well placed to tell us all about the digital inclusion aspects of works on there. To my direct right, Dane Glerum, who is Director of Digital Product and Innovation at Good Things Australia, which is a terrific not-for-profit delivering programs and developing programs across digital inclusion across Australia for many different cohorts. And, again, on the screen, we have Nicole Rossini, program lead, digital inclusion strategy at the NSW Telco Authority with responsibility for implementing the recently announced, about three or four months ago, NSW Digital Inclusion Strategy. Before we go to the panel, I want to do a scene-setter, on digital inclusion. Broadly, as a sector we think of digital inclusion in terms of three main pillars - accessibility, affordability, and ability. So, accessibility - going to the way products and services are designed, and the way one has access to internet and an appropriate device. Affordability - in terms, again, to internet and appropriate devices, how we get hold of those and get them into the right hands of those who can’t afford them. Ability - we’re looking at skills and literacy. Obviously, digital inclusion has an intersection naturalty and digital inclusion can be a combination of those sectors. 6.6 million Australians, one in four, people would be shocked to know, are digitally excluded, according to the index which I’m sure Heather will speak to a little later which last came out in 2023 and is due shortly to update. I think you will agree, it’s intuitive, without effective digital engagement, life is far more difficult, to say the least, let alone learning and work. I did want to give a little insight on some of the scores the ADII did put out in 2023. These are scores out of 100. For various surveys, they point across the community. For access, in Australia, we score 72. That number is trending up and there’s obviously plenty of room to improve. Affordability - 95 out of 100. Good but not something that can be left for chance or we can be complacent about. Ability - 64 and trending down. If we look at the fast pace of technology arriving in AI, and all the different aspects, we reckon that is a concern and the need for a lot of focus. AI is one of the big themes in our space, things are moving fast. There’s a changed dynamic. It brings a whole new emphasis to literacy, confidence, safety, critical thinking beyond pressing buttons and being able to plug in a piece of it can. Meanwhile there is a very high profile productivity agenda nationally around AI, certainly emphasizing the need for digital inclusion to be built in as the foundation to some of the big decisions being made now. Meanwhile, we exist in a sector that’s naturallying frommented, because digital inclusion is intersectional across many and all areas of disadvantage and we have organizations dealing with different cohorts, with different specific issues. Meanwhile challenges are more pronounced in some key communities, first nations, people with disabilities, elderly, long-term unemployed and others. It is for those good reasons the sector is pretty well fragmented across the board and why we as ADIA advocate for a national approach with accountability and coordination in this space. There’s places that to draw inspiration from, including the UK Digital Inclusion Action Plan. Some of the work Nicole and her team are doing in NSW, other successful programs like the First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group run out of the Department of Communications federally here. Digital inclusion, yess a matter of social and economic equity and a social good - some say a human right, some people on my steering group constantly remind me it’s a matter of a human right but it’s also economics and opportunity. Dane’s organizations, Good Things Australia, did a study last year and found almost half a billion dollars in economic benefit, a pretty conservative view if Australia were to lift digital inclusion rates into certain areas and for benefits and looking at government service take-up for getting the numbers, with eno this can disproportionately help people with disadvantage if they can participate in the first place. Great to be here to flesh out some key factors and opportunities. So, to lead in, I think I do want, Jordan mentioned he had a good turn of phrase "reflections on the theme". I think it might be good to look around the definitions of digital inclusion, because this does vary depending on your point of view, where you are coming from, how you see concerns and things are changing, right? It’s an evolving space, particularly as I mentioned, we’re seeing more of an intersection with media literacy, digital literacy, critical thinking and all these things. I might ask some of our panelists to please introduce yourself and your background and perspective and how you see digital inclusion. I will go to Dr Kim Osman first from the University of Technology. In Queensland. Over to you.

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DR KIM OSMAN: I’m coming to you from unseded country and pay respect to elders past and present. I’m a senior research associate with the Digital Research Centre at QUT in Brisbane. I work as part of the creating the digital futures research program in the center. So digital inclusion is a core pillar of the work that we do. We work a lot with those groups you were mentioned, Tim, so people who are digitally excluded. We work particularly with families living on low incomes. So digital inclusion, we take a norm tive approach to it. It’s a system. Some people may not choose to be part of it, but we think that a better society and a better digital society is one where everyone has the option and indeed the right to be included, especially when you consider accessing other rights - right to health, to information - it’s hard to do that if you are not digitally included. The other thing that you mentioned, was that ability gap. This is a really key part of digital inclusion for us, for the families we work with. This is one key group where the ability gap is actually widening. So we have families and importantly for us, children, who are getting left further behind than their peers because they don’t have the access to the technology and the connections that they want and need to be able to participate. This is through an economic lens, absolutely, it’s through an access to services lens. Importantly, it’s also education and creativity and socializing and communicating and doing all of those things that we do online now. I know Jordan was - Alexar and Scott were talking about how engrained this is in our everyday life and for us it’s enabling families to make the most of opportunities through being digitally included.

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TIM MARSHAL: Healther.

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HEATHER REA: Thank you. I work in Telstra’s sustainability team and I lead our digital inclusion program of work. As Tim alluded to one key component is the inclusion of the Australian digital inclusion index as something we partnered with RMIT and Swinbourne University since 2015 to develop and provide. We have now ten years of data that tracks progress on digital inclusion in Australia. It looks at access, affordability and digital ability, and it’s really trying to understand Australians’ capacity to be able to benefit from the digital age and digital inclusion is that idea that everybody should be able to be online, if they choose, and making the most of it. So, Tim gave us a few opening remarks about the data. I would echo that in explaining the rapid digitization we are seeing in Australia and indeed the world, is a positive and it means digital inclusion is also improving, with lots of people doing more things online, but the challenge with that is that those people who are not online or who struggle to have a quality, content connection, are even more disadvantaged than they were before. If you can’t apply for a job online, if you can’t find the ad to even apply for to start with, if you can’t turn up at the interview online, employment is a challenge for you. If you don’t know how to enrol to go into hospital and have an appointment, if you can’t track your medical records online, all of these things are becoming an increasing challenge as there are fewer offline options as well. So this is where digital inclusion is a big challenge and something that we need to work together to address today. Access is improving. Still some challenges in regional Australia and particularly very remote parts of Australia. Affordability - while Tim explained - is pretty good overall - for those who can’t afford it it’s pretty terrible. I think that could be the game changer if we could address affordability for the internet in this country. Ability - I think it is improving, Tim. I think it is improving but I think what is different is that the sorts of skills we need to do the things online we need to do are changing, because we’re doing different sorts of things online. I think a lot of people are skipping over Microsoft Word, we don’t need to use Excel spreadsheets but we need to download an app and use the functionality therein and that’s a different that needs to be generated. The new report of the ADII is out on 5 November. If you look up the Australian Digital Inclusion Index online, you will find the details. You are welcome to join that event online and hear what is coming. We really anticipate there will be some good data in there to take us through for the next few years.

>> TIM MARSHALL: I will be there. You pick up on an important point from today. With each technological shift and adoption increasing the risk of accentuating and increasing the exclusion for some cohorts. Important to keep in mind. Nicole, great to have you representing the view of one of our significant governments in Australia. How - what thinking has helped inform the NSW Government in the formation of its digital inclusion strategy that you are working on now?

>> NICOLE ROSSINI: Hi, everyone. I work for the NSW Telco Authority, the digital inclusion strategy was launched in May. It defines digital inclusion as ensuring all individuals have the opportunity to access, afford and engage safely with digital resources and online resources regardless of circumstances. Our strategy is guided by five pillars, a different to the three you talked about. These five pillars have been designed to implement across government and we came up with these five through a lot of consultation that was done last year. There was a lot of community consultation, and peak bodies and we also did we surveyed the people of NSW to make sure that it was lived experience of voices that we could build this strategy out from. So, the five pillars of our strategy are, connectivity - this ensures all individuals can access fast, reliable and affordable internet as well as mobile services and particularly in those understered regional and remote communities where it is a lot higher. Affordability is about addressing financial barriers, that prevent people from getting online or maintaining connectivity, including costs of devices and services. So, it’s great to hear that affordability is not a bigger challenge but it is still something that as Heather said, if you don’t have the funds for that, it makes it really hard. The third one is digital ability - that’s about building confidence and capability through education and training, so helping people navigate the platforms and use digital tools and staying safe online. Lastly - accessibility - so, obviously supporting equitable access to safe, fit-for-purpose digital devices. This enables everyone to be able to participate in the digital world. And the last one is our digital trust and safety. So, making sure that everyone has the awareness and tools to protect their privacy and security online. Especially with a particular focus on our vulnerable and digitally excluded groups. Another key component is that we in NSW will always make sure that there is face-to-face opportunities, because there will always be groups that cannot be digitally able to get online.

>> TIM MARSHALL: Dane, from Good Things Australia, over to you.

>> DANE GLERUM: I think for me listening, I think it is interesting to where we heard jargon from someone from the outside. One of the words I picked up for the governance forum was multistakeholder collaboration. That is not a word I use a lot in my day-to-day work, but for you here, it is something that is rolling off the tongue. My work is focused on using technology to connect people with positive social outcomes, at the core of what Good Things Australia does, as I got closer to digital inclusion and trying to understand exactly what that is, someone from our board, Monisha, who is probably online so I can’t shamelessly steal her analogy, gave me a good one. When we talk about inclusive design, there are a lot of principles but one that is easy to understand is inclusive playground design. That’s based around three core tenets.

>> Thet -- that idea of can I get here, can I get online too, the playground, to the space we’re having those conversations online using the technology or the barriers that are in place. Can I play here? How do I participate? Do I have the skills and the knowledge to click on the button and to understand what I’m signing up for, to know how to do those things. That is rapidly changing as well. Can I stay here? The idea of confidence. How can we build the skills, is it a scam, is it not a scam, how do I stay in this space? I wanted to share it because it is probably a good lens to think about for those of us who haven’t spent all our time in that space.

>> For me it doesn’t come back to the skills, ability, literacy piece. I see it written into some of the language around the governance forum and managing risks and safety. And skills leading to confident -- confidence is such a big factor. The weight of the responsibility shouldn’t lie with the individual entirely or perhaps not at all. However, we do know that by lifting skills and literacy we can make an improvement there for people. Our panel topic asks us to address AI equity in this context. We’ll come to some of the key considerations to address AI through digital inclusion shortly. First, it seems to be everywhere, it’s a fast-moving environment. As I mentioned we’re seeing the national productivity agenda based on AI. The ABC is running a series, a major article each day, about the opportunity in AI. Today’s one is sub headed the AI Goldrush. I was at a tech conference last week and ministers and assistant ministers were, I should be complimentary here, telling us it was imperative we leave no-one behind and opportunities to broaden the benefits are going to be really important foundation to this. Each technology has the risk of watting -- and I wanted to come to you, Kim, first on this. Around some of the implications of the change in the dynamic, the way we receive and interpret information and the widening of the gap. What’s your views?

>> One of the biggest issues for us at the moment and this is, not just the digital inclusion research team but our wider research centre, is mis and disinformation and the role AI has in producing this. The implication that this has on things from scam and frauds to the decisions that people make around their health. So actually having access to the correct information, needs to be able to navigate, recognise, mis and disinformation and the things they encounter online and in a DJ Ajaxtle space. We work with parents and families and we know for parents that navigating things around social media, particularly the upcoming social media ban or delay, can be difficult. So AI again is something else that parents are having to navigate, not just for themselves, but to support their children and their children’s learning. Anybody that does have a school aged child here will know that the kids are all over AI. They’re using it in theirclassroom and their education and schoolwork. Making sure that we’ve got strategies to support parents, to support families, and we’re not doing some of this rushed kind of ad hoc policymaking in response to those technological changes as well, so we’re really thinking about AI from the outset. These people when are digitally excluded won’t be left further and further behind as we push forwards with AI.

>> TIM MARSHALL: Coming back to you from the design perspective, how is AI making action more urgent or what’s the flavour there?

>> For me there’s bigger brains in the room around the disinformation and need for media literacy. For me it’s the change we’re seeing in technology and the way people interact with technology. If we think probably everyone in the room remembers when the internet used to make a noise and it would beane room. And it doesn’t exist if for a whole generation of people now. It took 20 years. The shift with AI, we’re seeing new interfaces come out every day. Some of it’s really exciting. Suddenly people who couldn’t interabout with machines before can -- interact with machines before can do it now. But it’s always changing. Meta did the A I glasses but having a pair of glasses you talk to is a product they’re pushing out there and people will interact with and it will change how people interact with machines. For us we’re building confidence around using Excel and tools to apply for jobs. We’ll have a cohort of people who felt comfortable with the technology they currently use and suddenly find themselves in a space where they’re far less confident.

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TIM MARSHALL: Back to you, Nicole. How the NSW policy factors in and it’s moving so quickly in the environment. And generally how you would look to design policy in a fast moving space like this?

>> NICOLE ROSSINI: So I suppose from a NSW Government perspective we must be ready to embrace AI but must do it in a safe, ethical and responsible way. Transparency of our information approaches we use is critical to maintaining public trust in government. Our role is to make sure we’re delivering on the initiatives we have captured in the action plan. A couple of things we’re doing in this space is exploring partnership opportunities with MNOs to expand on community access to connectivity literacy programs. So that’s ensuring people no longer have access to internet but the skills that are needed to understand how to get and stay connected to rely on affordable services and that meets both their needs and budget. Another initiative that we’re currently working on is our device pilot. We’ll be partnering with a vendor to donate end of life laptops and they’ll be distributed to communities in need and allow more people to access to devices and in turn access to AI. How do we make sure they get the devices but also get the skills to be able to keep up to date with all of this as well? We need to make sure we do this in a safe, responsible way. It’s important for us to remember that AI poses new risks around consent, privacy. And comprehension which can be compounded for people with disability, low English, proficiency and low literacy. It’s important that we not only seize opportunities but we safeguard digital inclusion and ensure the progress does not come at the expense of equity.

>> TIM MARSHALL: Thank you for that. I’ll come to Heather to see around the urgency of AI. How had some thoughts on the role of industry in this space.

>> Our fear is technology is shaping society and I think it’s where industry has a valuable role to play in the future that we want. That’s where we’ve got to provide tools, digital tools that are safe, fair, accessible. It’s where we’ve got to bring in the inclusive design really clearly. Digital safety matters, back to what Kim was saying, we have all been scammed. Our resilience and ability to bounce back from scams is diminishing. It would be better if we didn’t have to face them in the first place. The ADI I tells us poem that are excluded and privacy and scams limits their internet use. It’s not good place for us to be in. We need to urgently invest in digital skills training. We have a bold target between now and 2030. We are going to support the digital inclusion of one million Australians. We’re going to do it through programs such as partnerships with Good Things Australia and Microsoft where we want to build AI literacy for vulnerable communities and another great project where we’re partnering with Justice Connect and smalled Smart cyst and provides a safe environment where people who have very low digital skills can go in there and interact with AI in a safe way and build their confidence in doing so in the hope they can take it out into the real world and feel a little bit more empowered. Industry does have a valuable role to play.

>> TIM MARSHALL: Couldn’t agree more.

>> FLOOR: Sorry to interrupt. We do have a question from the online participants. Just before you get started. "I’ve worked with marginalised communities, predominantly with elders, for over 21 years in regional South Australia. Digital inclusion access and sustainable internet access infrastructures, as well as affordability and skills training can help assist them. Especially when it comes to health emergency support. In this case, how can Telstra support them? I’d say that’s probably directed more towards you, Heather?

>> HEATHER REA: I’m happy to give it a go. Really positive we have launched a new digital skills program with the South Australian government with a real focus on building digital skills for adults in remote and regional parts of South Australia. We know you need to have the access there and people need to be able to afford the service. If we can come in and bring the digital skills work, I think that can really contribute to a great uplift. It’s a program that will be run through libraries but also with library staff taking training out libraries in to community organisations, because we know not all people like to visit libraries despite the wonderful role that they play in our community. So we’re trying to reach a lot of people is what I’m saying. And that is under way now and will run for the next financial year. And we’re hoping to train at least 4,500 people through that initiative.

>> TIM MARSHALL: Great news. From an ADIA perspective, we look at a range of cohorts that we know have high, if I can say this, high needs around digital inclusion or a great opportunity to lift digital inclusion. Elderly is certainly one of those and they play such an important role in this, with libraries, and important research, to help reinforce the role of libraries in our community across a whole range of things. We also work with the Senior’s Computer Club’s Association of Australia to help advise us to be putting those arguments to government as well when it comes to digital inclusion if that helps to answer the question online. To the room.

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FLOOR: Digital access and skills are inextricably linked, especially for I guess minority groups, given that there is very little representation within our services on kind of minority groups. But we won’t see that representation within AI until the skills increase. So essentially skills are prerequisite to achieving full access. What metrics do you have to be able to capture that interdependency between skills and access?

>> TIM MARSHALL: Let me give a preamble. It could be something Kim could comment on as well. The intersection is real. There’s another factor in there. You need to get the most appropriate device into someone’s hand. If they can’t afford that, then they’re not starting. The research shows that once you get someone the right device they’re more inclined to learn the skills just through practice or whatever. I think there was a study with some kids in the last 18 months in one year, they had no device. They weren’t doing their homework. In the second year, the year of the program, they were given a second-hand laptop and were able to participate. The survey resulted 95% of them did their homework. We can say they learnt various digital skills that sets them hopefully on some other pathway. Is there much that goes to that intersectional piece in the ADII, Heather?

>> HEATHER REA: It’s the people that are not online are also challenged when it comes to interacting with AI. We need to expand what basic digital skills look like to ensure people understand what AI is, how to interact confidently with it. It’s a challenge we’ve got as Australia. AI is moving ahead quickly. We need to be there with them and moving along. The good things have that are supporting that. We have worked with them for a few years now around this. Maybe you want to speak about it?

>> We have a program called AI for Good and one of the programs is Digital Sisters. The goal is to partner with community groups and we make sure that voice is front and centre and so we can have the chats with these guys and put the information in front of community. That’s based on AI literacy. We worked with migrant and refugee women in a community centre where they delivered the training to bilingual mentors who then went out and taught their community on basic AI literacy. Not how do I do coding with a chatbot, how do I use Google translate to take a photo of something, have meaning and share that? How do I help my kids with my homework came through. That’s was a big one for confidence. If you want to go to the website and have a look at Digital Cyst brilliant video that brings -- Sisters there’s a brilliant video that brings them to life. I didn’t understand what my kids were doing on their phone but now I understand to have a conversation with them about how to stay safe. It leads to participation and representation in the data the change inherent biases we see. Absolutely it’s key to have access and skills to have access to represent.

>> TIM MARSHALL: Kim?

>> Probably taking a step back to something that Heather said before around the skills, around Word and Excel and phones. What our research has found is it’s not really, not groundbreaking. Digital inclusion is very different for everybody and families and what it means to be digitally included is so different. Among the different types of farm Eales we speak to. One of the key things that parents -- families we speak. To one of the key things that parents are struggling with is the types of technology they have access to. Often an pad is needed at -- i pad is needed at school but when you go to university it’s hard to do the kinds of things you need to do on spreadsheets and documents on and presentations on the pad. When we’re -- i pad. You are digitally included and that’s just not the case because like a lot of people, I have a laptop and I have a phone and my kids have a tablet. Within the household they’re learning to develop lots of skills on lots of different devices with lots of different connections if you’re in a family without those devices and you’re data poor and having to allocate your data and save it for kids to do homework, other kids in the family are missing out. They don’t get that chance to play and develop skills. To me when we start thinking about AI, the kid without this kind of playground to experiment with digital technology, they are going to get left further behind if they’re struggling to still develop those foundational digital skills as well. We need to keep in mind that digital inclusion is a very wide spectrum. It has a very long history and AI is one part of this history.

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TIM MARSHALL: That’s a great point when we think about young kids and foundational skills. Needing to be upskilled and broaden awareness and knowledge and confidence as well. From the floor.

>> FLOOR: I introduced myself earlier. I want to acknowledge the people and thank them for the welcome this morning. Heather, you mentioned basic skills. And I just wondered how that was creating an inclusive environment if you’re thinking of extending all peoples to be in an environment that is equal to others. When people are starting so far behind, and you’re just bringing them to this, and AI and other technologies are moving so fast, we’re not actually doing much at all if we’re just creating an environment that gives people the basic skills. What more are we teaching people in what they can do on the internet, such as bring people up to an understanding of what’s available to them, their communities, in terms of business, economic independence, and even getting to generational wealth? Just another quick point that I wanted to make - you mentioned the three acts of play. What I wondered was chow I be me, my authentic me, in that space? What are you actually doing to ensure that in terms of, because I come from a Mission town and inclusivity for me means assimilation. So what I’m hearing when you talk about what inclusion is, it means that I have to cut all my bits off to be in this space. I have to be that way. So I’m an academic as well. I’ll just leave that with you.

>> That’s a good one. That idea of inclusive design mean that you can stay there and feel comfortable and confident. You shouldn’t have to cut all your bits off. It’s quite the opposite. For us it’s confidence. How do I feel more confident to be here and that my lack of skills compared to the larger cohort isn’t a blocker? So the bit that comes to mind is people we talk to in community, one unfive said they weren’t confident to do something online by themselves. And the impact is they then don’t do it. So for me that means it’s often easier to not participate in something. So people become more isolated. It’s having the skills and confidence to be scam aware means you can be yourself online but know when it’s a scam as well, lets you know which spaces are safe to be in and which spaces aren’t. It’s a good clarification. Inclusive design should be about it being for everyone and that being available for the whole. And then be that cultural or actual ability as well.

>> TIM MARSHALL: Thank you. Heather, I have things to say on this piece as well around skills development. Do you have a response on that? Milos Raonic --

>> HEATHER REA: Basic skills are needed in today’s society, basic digital skills. How to have an email address because that’s what you need start with most applications. You to know -- you need to know how to be safe online and interact with AI. Tim mentioned sadly it feels like if you don’t know thew do that, it’s your problem or your fault. That’s where as a we need -- community we need to bring people together and support them in a way that is appropriate to build those skills. But then I don’t think skills after that are a continium. I think people can pick and choose, follow the interests they have. Use creativity and the like, rather than need 100 skills. I think if you start with the basics the world is your oyster and you can pick and choose from there.

>> TIM MARSHALL: That’s very right. The ADIA in this space advocates for the design and implementation of a common Langtonwing around what we mean when it comes to digital ability, skills and literacies. There is a spectrum. It goes from the ability to turn on a computer through to designing AI models at the very high tech end. Our work is obviously focused around the very most foundational of those levels. And we’re doing some work at the moment with some other organisations who are looking at the kind of skills you would need in the workplace, not just technical jobs, but any job, and how we can build the foundational skills that get people to there. They might be the skills that kids get but people who have been long-term unemployed or the elderly people looking to do something more in their life. And from there once we’ve got thet articulated and embedded, obviously being flexible for the emergence of new technologies, like AI, people have the ability to self-propel as they choose or as they require. Equally, that an employer has got the ability to define what it needs in an employee, even more importantly, though, an employee has the ability to describe that they have certain capabilities to the bosses. Or to the employer. So this common language concepts is something we’re advocating strongly at the Federal Government. And there’s a few other organisations involved in that where there’s various pilot work and design work going on at the moment. It’s a positive space that we hope to build upon. Again from the floor.

>> FLOOR: Sorry, there is one question on my mind. There is a question a comment "please make sure you’re learning from work in community centred approaches to training and network, so it’s not top down. APC, APNIC, APAA have training reports and virtual laborate Zoerses. Training the trainers means communities can recommend and support each other’s communities at the same time as localising. They must ensure the core work is developmental and not service delivery. It will provide ongoing peer support E."

>> TIM MARSHALL: Thank you. I think that was a good comment around the inclusive design piece as well. There was a comment with some links that might be helpful for people to follow-up on. To the floor.

>> FLOOR: I’m from Western Australia but I live here on beautiful country. I’m one of the fellows along with Simon. Connectivity sim proving in many places but inclusion without sovereignty risks reinforcing inequit how will digital inclusion strategies for remote Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander communities ensure not just access to infrastructure, but Indigenous-led governance, culturally safe platforms, sustainable investments that community priorities?

>> TIM MARSHALL: Thank you for this question. This is not my area of expertise. I will tell you that in my understanding around target 17 of the Closing the Gap framework which is around the digital inclusion piece, one of the points of that is recognising some of the unique circumstances of digital inclusion for First Nations people. Part of that, as distinct to other parts of our community, is the cultural piece. And the need to have better digital inclusion and have the reflection of Indigenous cull and those aspects of First Nations people put further through that capability. That’s probably extended my knowledge in that space. Is there anyone else on the panel who would be happy to speak? Do you have anything on that, Kim?

>> I’ll say the work that Telstra is supporting, the mapping the digital gap project is probably where I would point you to. The team has been working for a few years with remote Indigenous communities up in the Torres Strait and around Australia. And the reports that they’re producing, and I’m not sure if somebody, I can try and put it in the chat later, they’re producing community-based reports and recommendations. In each community the teams working with Indigenous RAs in that community as well. So all of the research that’s coming out is very much community-led in that space. And I don’t know if there’s anything else you’d want to add to the work that the team is doing?

>> HEATHER REA: Those reports are very important because it provides the information back to communities so that back to that sovereignty topic we were talking about just before this. And then they feel and have ownership of that content they’ve provided is so important. The mapping the digital gap project overall has been very important in the digital inclusion landscape. It is helping measure Target 17 of closing the gap, but it has informed the First Nations digital inclusion advisory group’s roadmap about how we will be able to close the gap. It has actually been an evidence base that’s attracted more than $100 million in funding for remote digital inclusion programs, just in recent years. So it is just an example of where when we learn more about this, we can then have the evidence base that we can show what needs to happen and then we can track whether it’s been successful. Thank you for your question. It sounds like it’s a topic all of us here just need to learn a little bit more about as well.

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TIM MARSHALL: It is worth noting that one of the key messages we are as ADIA trying to give is there is a sore need for national accountability, leadership and coordination across digital inclusion as a whole. Meanwhile, though, there are good things to be able to learn from and funnily enough, the work around the First nations digital inclusion advisory group we think sets a benchmark to be broaden into other cohorts. The reason is it’s done work around collecting data, recognizing the unique challenges that exist in those communities. Aligned with a specific gap, the closing the gap target, I should say, it was given a very clear goal, the target that’s in the closing the gap framework. It was well resourced and funding through the department with the secretariat. It had a very strong engamement role where it went to local communities but also had interfaces across industry and other stakeholders’ environments. It lent heavy on research and data. That resulted in a paper last year which came with 65 recommendations now in the process of being funded and rolled out. The proof will be how that is looked after in the long-term. There is great stuff in that space. You will note there’s no measurement against target 17 of the closing the gap framework as yet because this will enable that. The positive hope is that this thing helps tone able some of the other targets, such as health, education and others. We shall see.

>> Thank you, panel. One more question online. This is a follow-up from Kiki in, a question for panelists. What if the barrier was safety, one, does that position you differently? Two, if so, how might you need to adopt your approach to program design?

>> DANE GLERUM: When I talked about confidence, safety is a key part. So when we talk about those basic digital skills and literacy, that is making people know how to be safe online and have the requisite skills which leads to confidence and for me that’s parties paying. That could be participation, does haven’t to be, in everything, but participation to a point a person wants. So safety is fundamental to participation there and confidence and safety is interwoven.

>> TIM MARSHALL: To the panel. Any comments? That’s fine. Didn’t need to bring my notes. So many questions from the floor, terrific.

>> FLOOR: My name is Alisha from the APINIC Foundation. A question for myself. What - we talk about closing the gap and devices and education and knowledge around using technology effectively. What role should be played for organizations that are developing the services to ensure that they’re easy and useable on the devices. We talk about telehealth but people in remote communities might only have a phone yet the service they have built is only interactive and effective via a computer. What role and ownership do you think these critical services and governments need to play to ensure that is more accessible and equitable?

>> DANE

GLERUM: From my from my perspective, having this is important. The fact we are talking about technology change and we don’t want people left behind, but representation is a key message for people. So the Australian Digital Inclusion Index constantly is a vote Kating for that and that’s an incredibly helpful talking point. The other piece at interest other end of the spectrum is genuine community participation and codesign. Be across whatever community group or group it needs, it’s not building something about people without them. So we do work with people with intellectual disabilities. It would be tempting to say - this is how we produce it, this is what this will look like. That’s not the way we approach it. We work directly with community to get their feedback and design on the training that we roll out, that they roll out to their community. So, I think that approach across the board is probably helpful.

>> TIM MARSHALL: Heather you are not responsible for Telstra’s service design, however, you work for an organization involved in service design. Do you have views?

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HEATHER REA: I think we need to codesign with other organizations. I’m looking at Nicole. Government may have a comment. When we codesign well, they are amazing. Telstra recently launched a new piece of, called Touch and Track a tool that people who are blind or vision impaired access tone joy the AFL. Maybe that is not a basic digital skill to the lovely lady at the back but still creativity and really important and ensures people with disability can leverage assistive tech in positive ways. Codesigned with Vision Australia. People have a tablet wi-fi enabled, with a magnet on the screen. It tracks where the ball moves in the AFL game, vibrates -the person feels much more involved than when they could listen it to. I think that is a great example of codesign and I think something that we should do more of.

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TIM MARSHALL: There’s absolutely a role for industry and business. I was on a panel with disability advocates last week. Their core line was, they made good business sense, to make products and services that were contextually for people to access. Nicole, I was thinking you might have a view on this from a government perspective, from that sector partnership approach that I know that NSW has been active with.

>> NICOLE ROSSINI: We recognize that no single agency, is is to do with digital inclusion online. So multifaceted. We think collaboration across communities and governments ises essential to overcoming fragmentation. It requires strong partnerships for us to drive meaningful change and big change. So, we’ve set up a really robust governance framework, which allows us to work with government, non-government and industry groups. We have a formal steering committee that sits over the top, a NSW Government advisory group. That is for, NSW Government alone is so big. And it is made up of people from all the agencies, and their reach into community ensures that the plan is not only implemented top-down but grows ground-up. They help us identify underserved areas and play a key role in helping us get our initiatives out in community, making sure the communities that need it most are the ones we are getting those touch points with. Things like cyber security community training, supporting digital literacy programs through libraries, integrating digital skills into public education and training are some of the things that are really important. We also have two non-government advisory groups. One is community based and includes community organizations, Indigenous-led groups, advocacy networks and peak bodies. They play a vital role in reaching people where government can’t. They allow us to make sure that we are connected and continue to learn and adapt, while ensuring our action plan is staying fit for purpose, so we want to make sure that whilst we have the action plan set up now, is it, with especially things changing so quickly, is it fit for purpose in one, two, three years’ time? Secondly we partner with industry partners like Telstra and they bring that innovation, scale and sustainability. The big tech companies like the telcos and social enterprises, they’re stepping up to offer affordable devices or low cost connectivity options, digital training platforms. How can we partner with them to get that out in scale or to start with, pilots. Some of them are big initiatives. Let’s see how a pilot works, get that data and then how we can get that out into community more broadly. So, for us in NSW Government collaboration is really at the core of our approach and ensures we can address the unique needs of all communities, no matter what it is, because all communities have very different needs when it comes to digital inclusion.

>> TIM MARSHALL: Terrific, thank you. Looking at my chair, would you like us to rap? One more question on the floor? Take the question, then we will wrap. Thank you.

>> FLOOR: Hi, I’m Richie from the Digital Justice Society. I want to talk about ongoing digital inclusion and how that relates to digital literacy. You talked before about how there’s low cost devices and projects that, and codesign is great, where maybe a community gets access to some corporate solution, but then once the funding dries up, they’re just left with - I know how to use these Adobe products but don’t have the budget for said product. In the broader sense of us looking at open standards and open internets, the essential need for, like, general purpose computing. And Xbox or an iPad, you can’t program the iPad with a iPad, you can’t program a Nindendo with a Nintendo but with a desktop, even if it is ten years’ old, you can make music, videos, do everything with that. The Linux landscape now verses ten years ago is very useable. I have seen, if you look at classism -we visited a friend who had five children and an elderly relative and they lived across from a market that just had second-hand computers. Over a bunch of years, kept going to the market, buying graphics cards and things and had created their own network and they have ongoing literacy from that. So, I suppose I’m wanting a comment around - they are fast tech but then there is that conversation around people getting good literacy around what is already open.

>> TIM

MARSHALL: We sat down.

>> DANE GLERUM: I thought we have to have a good chat later. We provide grants on behalf of government or on behalf of other parties, for digital skills building and capacity building and then also Get Online Week coming up. So something like digital capacity building will be perfect where a community group that exists with a footprint like yourselvess present in community. We can supply the funding. It is tame bound, limited, that is the nature of funding, but it means that the community group is delivering the service so that it’s there after the funding may dry up. For us that’s that piece I mentioned of us being present in community and then we sometimes have the chats to the lovely Telstra or lovely Microsoft to help some of the funding come along in programs.

>> TIM MARSHALL: A final point. On the devices piece. We tend the use the term, "the appropriate device" but it’s also the infrastructure that going around that. So in the pandemic, there was a wave of well meaning device donations that came to people who couldn’t afford them, as you can imagine. But a lot of those devices had problems and didn’t have tech support or have the basic skills wrap-around that helped them to use them properly. Dane’s organization and others are right now piloting something called a National Device Bank, as a concept, where major corporates, government departments, the NSW Government made its commitment - commit to donate devices in large numbers - yes, handheld but primarily laptops because that helps people to skip up and get on with their lives and move up the chain, to get them properly wiped, get them properly refurbished, properly distributed through partners like Good Things but then the community organization and then with, yes, with an ongoing support arrangement around those, but also to integrate them with basic digital skills programs as well. So, I hope that describes some of the work or where the sector sees the value. A national device bank as well as an affordable universal broad band product, concessional, can solve the affordability issue. There are two, you might call them, low hanging fruit agenda pieces that we see the Federal Government could grab hold of, too, as part of a more co-ordinated approach around policy in this area broadly. I think we’ve gone a little over time. Testament to the interest in the room. I think some great questions, thanks very much for having us. If we can ask for one thing from the internet governance community and we’re pleased to be welcomed here and to be part of that in an aligned ways you join with us in advocating for greater outcomes in digital inclusion. In Australia we believe some of the priorities are a need for national accountability and coordination and a focus on digital ability and we’re glad to be here to help raise awareness around that agenda. Thanks for having us. Thanks to the panel.

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>> DONNA: Thanks, Tim and the panelists. I know we have gone a little over time, but I didn’t want to stop the discussion. So we have, please go to the feedback QR code, put in your thoughts. We have a little bit of an audio break now, but we will be back in here in about five minutes’ time. Is that OK? Yeah. Alright. For our next session, which is Digital Platform Ownership - diversity, resilience and Trust. So five-minute stretch and a break and then we will be back here to get started again. Thanks, folks. (Quick Break).

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>> DONNA: Everyone take their seats we,we will get started again. We will do wrangling to get people back in the room, Victoria.

>> Our next session is Digital Platform Ownership - Diversity, Resliience & Trust. I will hand it over to the moderator, Victoria Fielding from the University of Adelaide.

>> VICTORIA FIELDING: I would like to acknowledge we meet on beautiful Kaurna country and may respect to elders, past, present and emerging. This session is today is focused on digital authority and trust. I’m from the University of Adelaide, where I research media’s influence on democracy. We have three speakers. Cameron McTernan, Terry Flew and we have Ram Mohan. Cameron is an early career researcher at the University of South Australia, whose work is focused on digital platforms, news and media ownership. Terry Flew is a Professor of Digital Communication and Culture there the faculty of arts and social sciences an the University of Sydney and an Australian Research Council laureate fellow. The two join us as members of the Global Media and Internet Concentration Project of which Terry is the project lead. We are lucky enough to have Ram Mohan, the chief strategy officer at Identity Digital a recent inductee into the internet Hall of Fame for his life-long championing of universal access and his work helping to develop the multilingual modern internet. In terms of the Tommic, new data reveals Australia’s internet supply chain is dominated by key global tech giants. Our panelists are going to examine what this concentration means for media diversity, democratic resilience and public trust and particularly to ask whether the firms are now too big to fail, but also too big to govern. To begin, I invite Cameron McTernan to speak on the global media and internet concentration project Australia data and their findings. Thank you, Cam.

>> CAMERON MCTERNAN: Thank you. Australia has been long known for having one of the most concentrated media and telecommunications systems in the world, with oligopolistic and monopolistic across broadcast media. Many markets are dominated by one or four major players or somewhere in between and little competition. Examples include having a single player in pay TV, a three player market in wireless telecom and increasingly fewer players in television, radio and print and this is an issue for a variety of reasons, specific to consumer protection, and having the opportunity to change providers if you are unhappy with the service and democratic issues, specific to access to high quality information and unbiased information. Our resent work in the project sought to develop an expanded understanding of internet and media concentration in Australia that accounts for digital platforms and the vertical they have framed around a concept called the Network Media Economy. I will briefly share about that. The economy is defined a comprehensive ecosystem encompassing various interconnected sectors from communication, internet and media industries with three subsectors - telecoms and internet infrastructure, online and traditional media services which will include things like cast, television, pay TV, online video services, radio, podcasting, magazines and streaming music, and then the third which is the main thing that we will talk about which is core internet applications and sectors which includes internet advertising, social media, video sharing platforms, consoles, PCs, video games, app stores, operating systems and browsers, also known as the platform economy. This framework of the network media economy is intended to better capture the interconnected mature of the sectors and their collective impact on the overall media landscape.ly begin by showing the first of one of our graphs. Is anyone here familiar with the Herfonder Herschmann index? A couple of people, yes. Those who know, know. It is a methodology used to examine market technology. I will make it simple. It is a scale 0-10,000, not beyond. The way that it is calculated, you take market share and you square it and then you add up the squares, that can only go to essentially 100 squared. So, 10,000. Most competition agencies around the world will have a threshold of around 2,000. 2,000 and it’s at that point that they go, OK, if a company wants to merge or be acquired, they are likely to intervene or closely examine that. Up here on the screen, I’ve got for you, traditional media sector in Australia, the telecommunications sector and then the core internet application sector, which is the platform economy. You can see all of these are above 2000. 2000, if you’re wondering why that number is there, that is indicative of a five-player market or four-player market and anything beyond is well and truly into the oligopoly stage and by the time you get to about 5,000 you’re probably looking at a duopoly or worse. So, as I said before, traditional telecom sectors have been known to be concentrated but we’ve only started looking more closely at this platform part of the sector. Results from our report show that Australia continues to have some of the most highly concentrated telecommunications, print and broadcast sectors. The average market concentration across online, radio, newspaper, television screaming was a HH index of 2,318 indicated in the blue here. Foretelecoms and internet sectors, wireless, mobiles, ISPs and wire-line wholesalers, the pool index was 4,538, indicated by the orange. These are numbers well in excess of those thresholds set by local and international competition regulators.

>> The concentration ratios for, concentration indexes for these traditional media and telecommunication industries are significantly exceeded in all dintle service sectors, where market dominance by one or two players is common place. I’ll show you what it looks like. Alphabet, Microsoft, Meta and Apple’s unprecedented market dominance is a pooled HH of 6,231. You -- index of 26231. You need a -- 2,631. You need a duopoly here to have these numbers. This tracks about 1.5 million websites, looking at user data from people who access them. Looks at search referral and the operating systems that are used by desktop or mobile devices, as well as browsers that are being used here. You can see anywhere Alphabet has a foot print and typically the largest player with the exception of mobile markets and we can see the presence of Apple here. This raises questions for whether the economic power of companies such as Alphabet and Meta significantly exceeds that of traditional media giants such as News corporation and Nine Entertainment. They fly under the radar in discussions with media concentration and power and it’s clearly the case internet companies increasingly compete in spaces and have been the focus of traditional media, most notably digital advertising. As well as providing the underlying digital infrastructures of service platforms from the content of other media content providers. The Australian report sought to quantify this power by drawing upon publicly available data using ASX results and reports in online tracking. It shows while telecommunication internet access providers are highly dominant in terms of revenue, the digital service companies Alph det, is now the second largest company in the Australian network media economy. Larger than traditional network giants such as news corporation and Nine Entertainment Co. Meta is the eighth largest company and larger than all other media companies than the big telcos, News Corp and Nine. And the revenues of Alphabet and Meta are derived exclusively from digital advertising. Internet advertising was worth $14.2 billion in 2022, and growing from $4.2 million in 2012. As figure three here shows, digital advertising revenue is larger than television, streaming, print and radio revenues combined. The rise of digital advertising being monitored by Australia’s own regulatory agencies such as the ACCC and been deserved internet advertising continues to pull ahead of traditional media sectors. While the relationship between traditional media and internet companies have been a phrenomy, they use distributions such as YouTube, face b Instagram or TikTok and they compete directly with traditional media. This is most apparent in the advertising space but it’s also increasingly a feature of the media content, the media conitant markets. In late 2024, it was estimated YouTube accounts for over 10% of US television streaming or Amazon and Apple are major players in the global streaming market. Dovetailing into what Terry will speak about, leads to questions about what it means for how we think about communication and market power to platform companies being dominant in the network economy. It’s been assumed other forms of power such as political power and communication power are downstream of economic power, particularly in political economy frameworks like that used by us scholars. This leaves open a question of power to do what? Historically we associated it as a desire for political influence and it remains relevant for understanding traditional media industries and markets. If we are to move beyond this from simply focusing on bigness as evidence of itself...

>> I’m very sorry to interrupt you, we’ve had a message from the Auslan interpreter. If you wouldn’t mind slowing down just slightly.

>> I’m so sorry. Where was I? If we were to move analysis of media power from simply focusing upon bigness as evidence of itself of power, noting media giants of previous eras are in many cases battling for survival in the age of digital platforms and AI, the question of the end and means of communication power emerge in new ways. I’ll hand over to Terry.

>> TERRY FLEW: Thank you. I should say if you’re feeling slightly daunted by data, we can make the link to the report available to you. I’m going to pick-up on the so what question? I’ll do something that is somewhat unusual for a conference in 2025 and that is to be the first person to mention the name Donald Trump. And it seems to me it’s very interesting to be here as we talk about multi-lateralism, we talk about multi-stakeholderism. And we talk about the internet economy as something that’s different to the media. All of those things are somewhat in question. This week’s question on whether the Murdoches will acquire the US operations of TikTok as a bit of a reminder that the new era might look somewhat like previous eras have. On my way here I came across three quotes that seem to be relevant. The first from Keegan McBride from the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change on the recently announced US-UK AI partnership. Where he said right now a new geopolitical ordser being built with technology at its centre. Digitalisation can no longer be separated from geopolitics. As this new geopolitical reality continues to unfold, developing and accessing hard cutting-edge technological capabilities is perhaps more important than ever. Building new tech alliances will be a key part of maintaining influence, generating prosperity and ensuring security both domestically and internationally. I raise that quote and it was, I was made aware of it via Linked In, posing the question of if the US and the UK are making partnerships like this, what will that mean for Australia? The second is from Steven Levy from Wide Magazine from an article called I thought the new Silicon Valley, I was wrong? It should be the best of times for the tech world. Supercharneled by a boom in artificial intelligence but a shadow has fallen over Silicon Valley. The community still overwhelmingly leans left. But with new exceptions, its leaders are responding to Trump by either keeping quiet or actively courting the government. One indelible image of this is from Trump’s second inauguration where a decisive quorum of tech’s elite after dutifully ticking in million dollar cheques occupied front seats. Tech bros used to be progressive. What happened? It’s a bit of a mea culpa and a few of us may find ourselves performing this mea culpa, particularly we’re of a certain age. "I came from a generation of technologists who assumed arrogantly and naively technology such as the personal computer and the internet were inherently liberatory and the politics of those involved in the tech industry were left leaning. The politics of most of my colleagues in the early 1990s was more dismissive than that. We tended to assume politics was for people less smart and less productive than we were." The 2024 US presidential election and its aftermath can I think be seen as marbing a watershed moment in the relationship of tech company owners to political powers. And I’m not here saying that obviously the internet has developed in the US under both Republican and Democrat administrations in Australia, under both Liberal and Labor administrations and so on, so I’m not making that point in a party political sense, but I would be noting for instance the highly visible campaign of Elon Musk in support of Trump led to the America pact through which Musk managed his financial contributions, spending over $200 million on the Trump campaign. Making Musk by far the largest financial contributor. This investment which is a lot proved to be remarkably lucrative to Trump to Musk and his companies. It’s estimated the stock market boom that followed Trump’s election on November 5 added $54 billion to Musk’s net worth in one week alone through the impact of the share prices of his listed companies, Tesla and SpaceX. Even more remarkably, Trump made Musk a co-care of DOGE, named after Musk’s favourite crypto currency and he had unprecedented level to government departments and analancies. And department, including those that have regulatory oversight of the activities of his companies. And departments that make decisions on purchasing the products and services of his companies, including the Department of Defence. Of course, while there was something of a falling out in a subsequent related decline in the share market value of Tesla, this is still a remarkable level of influence. Where Musk went other tech leaders followed. In the articles, I can’t miss some observations on Meta’s Mark Zuckerberg here when he declared the problem with Meta is it had lacked, "Masculine energy." And wound back measures to block misinformation and to moderate content, so as to be less, culturally neutered." Less met forically, Amazon’s CEO Jeff Bezos made it clear the Washington Post would be reorienting its opinion section in support of, "Personal liberties and free markets." Leaving some to wonder where does that put the Wall Street Journal is the involvement of billionaires in politics is not new. I should add first they came for the Tonight Show hosts. The involvement of billionaires in politics is not new. Moreover, media owners had long had an inclination to use their media outlets to intervene in the politics of the day as I’m sure certainly no Australian needs reminding O. At the same time, there was a sense the model of power that was implicit in these frameworks of powerful individuals and families appointing people to leadership roles who shared their values and such a leaked metwork ensured it stayed within ideological lines was in some sense in decline. The new media companies would be different to the old media. And of course there was a view that traditional print and broadcast media companies being facing unprecedented turbulence, arising from the impact of the internet and digital technologies. I would really have to note the extent to which the intertwining of the tech sector in tomedia businesses and media sector into tech businesses has been proceeding at pace. I think there was a view that companies such as Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, Meta and others were primarily technology businesses, whose engagement with the media was incidental contingent and not at the core of their business models. We have a question about how much does the economic dominance of digital platform companies as Cameron’s presentation has outlined matter in terms of public policy towards the internet. And I think this is a question we are going to need to revisit. Not only because of the increasing centrality of digital revenue streams to traditional media businesses, but how businesses such as online real estate increasingly fund traditional media giants such as news corporation and Nine Entertainment. Interesting fact, news corporation generates more revenue from Real estate dot com than it does from its newspapers. Our platforms matter then has started to look a lot like the way media power has long mattered in fields of communication studies. The rise of the global internet has not led to the much anticipated decentralsition of media power and associated decline of powerful media owners. I leave that open for questions and comment. Thank you.

>> VICTORIA FIELDING: We’re going to open questions to the panellists and then questions for the audience. So the first question, what does internet diversity mean? And why is it important? We might start with Ram. Diversity, what is it, and why is it important?

>> RAM MOHAN: Thank you. Internet diversity is about ensuring that the internet itself reflects the richness of human society. Our languages, our cultures and perspectives. So that means an online world where people can fully participate in their own language. And where no community is excluded because of geography or identity or the availability you lack of availability of resources. So diversity makes the internet more inclusive and equitable. But it also makes it more strong. It makes it stronger. It makes it more resilient and better equipped to build a culture of innovation. So that is to me what internet diversity means. You were asking why is it important? And the way I look at it, and my viewpoint on it is that internet diversity underpins the network’s security, stability and resiliency. So a diverse system is less susceptible to single points of failure. And those single points of failure could be technical vulnerabilities, that’s what people often think about, but it could be something else like censorship attempts or the collapse of a single platform. Or the overdependence on a few platforms, some of which were mentioned earlier. Right? So that internet diversity ensures that if the goal is to have a truly global and open platform for communication, commerce and culture, if you want to do that, then we need a diverse internet and an internet that is more centralised, I believe, will inevitably lead us to a fragmented, controlled and almost inevitably an unsafe space for human interaction.

>> CAMERON MCTERNAN: I’m happy to go next. A lot of your argument speaks to what we would call media and internet communication studies, the cultural argument diversity. And I’d like to also offer that there’s an economic argument to diversity as well. That really kind of boils down to consumer protection and consumer choice. And when there’s only a few limited businesses in control, if you’re not happy with how the product or service is being provided or not happy with the cost, you’re given less opportunities to go elsewhere. But it also means things like moderation practices in the digital platform environment, also create critical challenges of their own. And I think it dovetails into a democratic perspective and it might be something Terry might be happy to talk about as well. If there under wide availability of voices or ideas, it also means when it comes to election time and when it comes to governance time, that we’re not necessarily as informed as consumers as an audience either.

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TERRY FLEW: There’s been growing notion of Splinternet. And does anyone recognise that? The simple version of it would be when you travel to China and find you can’t search for things on Google. But this question, this question of whether we’re actually going to see a singular global communications infrastructure is, I think there’s an assumption we were moving towards that. So if you had this conversation 20 years ago, people would say what about China? China is an exception. It’s a pretty big exception. With 1.7 million people. And I do wonder, we see, we look at say US policy which was politically bipartisan towards Chinese platforms such as TikTok. I think we’re seeing that geopolitics is increasingly in play in how digital infrastructures are developing, not only over content, but over the infrastructural layers upon which it works. I think that will present, is presenting real challenges for multiculturalism. There are those who talk about four, possibly five, internet, possibly more. The open internet, the corporatised internet, Silicon Valley, the Chinese statist internet, the European Union regulated internet, but even within that we think about policies that are happening at the levels of individual states. So Australia is becoming increasingly active in online regulation, the UK has its own set of rules emerging. There’s been a real return of the nation’s state. I don’t think it was ever absent from these conversations but I think it has significant implications for how we think about internet governance, not least because there are those that argue the largest tech companies have themselves become quasi-nation states or sovereign entities in the foreign policy analyst has been arguing along those lines.

>> VICTORIA FIELDING: I wanted to jump in with one thought, harking back to the accessibilities argument from the panel one. One of the things that’s important to diversity is we don’t pretend there’s a vibrant market place of ideas where everyone has a quality. A lot of people come to the marketplace and get abused and it’s almost a form of violence and some people think of the digital world has being separate from the real world. But the things people say to each other the internet are often more harmful than what they would be willing to say if they had to put their name to it. People are blocked from spaces that were weren’t to be a way to democratise their voices based on who they are and what their ideas are? I’m seeing more so with platforms like what used to be Twitter and I perceiver to be a relatively safe space until Elon Musk rolled back a lot of the moderation that was happening there. It’s not a safe place for a lot of people to be anymore. And so I think when we think about diversity, it’s not just whether these spaces are accessible but how you’re actually able to participate when you’re there?

>> RAM MOHAN: One of the fundamental strengths of the internet is for every Twitter that becomes an X and there is a lack of safety, because we’re operating in an environment that is essentially permissionless, there’s an opportunity for a counter to be built to an X.

>> VICTORIA FIELDING: I’m on Blue Sky.

>> RAM MOHAN: That’s a fundamental power of the diversity we have built in as part of the infrastructure, the design of the internet.

>> VICTORIA FIELDING: I think there’s a lot of people at X because it has the mass there. The mass is what makes it valuable because your voice can be heard by more people on X than it can on Blue Sky. It’s a bit like comparing say News Corp that has a huge number of media outlets and saying they’ve got the same amount of influence as maybe The Guardian which has one website, you can’t compare those two things for power and for reach. So, yes, we can build competitors but until those competitors are equally large, the big players just seem to sort of beef able to eat up all of the competition. So just to the next question because I think we’ve started talking about that, why should we be concerned about resilience right now? What does a resilient internet look like?

>> CAMERON MCTERNAN: I’m happy to start on this one. I was inspired by what Simon and Alexar spoke about. A countrywide network outage. Was it countrywide? Does know about Optus’s outage. It was significant regardless? What are the vulnerabilities that occur from having a relatively concentrated market? And these large centralised spheres of control over our internet systems. We have the potential for diversity but potential isn’t always necessarily the reality. That’s part of the struggle. I would argue that a resilient internet is one that can whether environmental, economic, political, cultural and kinetic challenges. Australia doesn’t have its own internet. It has a shared internet and we’re dependent on what happens in other countries to some degreor other spheres for our own internet. The technical infrastructure usually works pretty well for the most part. Occasionally we do have disastrous instances where it doesn’t. We should be asking ourselves are we safe from global challenges? I think diversity at every level, at every level of the internet’s infrastructure, so going beyond the technical layer, but to the infrastructure player and the content layer, is really important to that. But I argue that the multi-stakeholder model is an example of diversity. Where you’re inviting muttple voices and not just dependent on one sphere of influence, one sphere of knowledge to kind of inform policy or governance. And I’ll leave it at that.

>> TERRY FLEW: It comes down to questions around what we used to call the public sphere. What are the pros and cons of a singular network on which competing voices and contending views co-exist as compared to, the example of X and Blue sky looks interesting but this looks like 20th century British newspapers. If you’re a Guardian person, you’re a different kind of person to if you’re a Daily Mail person. That’s not a huge advance, I’m sorry to say. And in the traditional media environment, it was kind of overlaid by the fact everyone had the BBC and paid for it whether they liked it or not. In the internet environment, this question of what’s referred to as effective polarisation, that’s effective pallerization, where one not only disagrees but those who you disagree with fundamentally wrong or evil or must be shot or sacked or whatever, can we say with confidence that the social media and internet environment that we have built hasn’t contributed to this effective polarisation? I know we will point out there are other things going on, but I do wonder about the extent to which the dynamic of fragmentation alongside the ways in which algorithmic shorting pushes certain types of content trooyou based on certain types of reveal preference as heft us with some real problems in terms of trust, resilience and the public sphere?

>> RAM MOHAN: I look at this to the question why should we be concerned about resilience right now and what does a resilient internet look like? I approached this from I guess a less about the platforms and the pieces that write on top of the internet, but the way I look at it is that there are a few areas that we should be concerned about. We need to find a way to bridge technical and political divides. There is currently a disconnect between technical operators and government policy-makers. You’ll find that there is an advocacy for, we need to have an advocacy for better dialogue between those who are operating the internet and those who want to regulate the internet. And&that requires a more systematic approach to internet governance and here is one important thing. Technical operators traditionally have come from the idea that it’s going to break. And we’ll fix it, then it breaks. Right. So that’s kind of a base assumption that technical operators make. But with the, how crucial the internet is becoming to human society and to all aspects of it, if you’re a policy-maker, that is no longer an acceptable answer. And so there is a divide that is starting to widen between the technical operators and government policy-makers. So that’s something that the fix it as it happens mentality is no longer viable. So we need to find a way to bridge that. The second thing that is central is that there is very little funding for preventive measures. And that means that there is a great deal of funding available to fix after an event happens. The 000 event happened and now there’s a lot of focus on what do we do and where do we put the money? If you went back two years ago, the same question had they been asked, the urgency level does not rise, right.

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>> So there’s work that needs to be done to create a compelling case for things that sound simple but that are crucial. Simple things like good operational practices. Proper training. What does proactive security look like? These are table stakes but they don’t get funded. The funding happens after a crisis happens. That’s the wrong order of things. The third part is on resilience, is the supply chain. Very few organizations, governments, institutions, actually map their infrastructure supply and because they don’t map it it’s hard to identify where the key pieces are that are going to be potential vulnerabilities. So, some level of visualization, some level of research is required to map that supply chain gap. The last thing is ever green but becoming more important in the area of AI which is talent development. You need for mall curriculum to train people in intimate scale infrastructure operations. You have to move - there’s a current reliance on war stories to build expertise. You go to Telstra, you go to Optus. They will tell you war stories, but what is the playbook for building a resilient infrastructure and how do you educate in academic institutions, so that you can say, I have built a system, built a network and I can prove that there is resilience to that network? So, look, the internet that we have built is not just infrastructure. It is memory, it is identity, and culture and about representation and identity and by longing. If you want that resilience to happen, then our job is to protect its openness, we have to build trust into its systems and importantly for me, we had to make sure no-one anywhere is left behind.

>> VICTORIA FIELDING: The third relates to the first two questions. Thinking of diversity and resilience, how should we be thinking of trust in the new internet era?

>> TERRY FLEW: I should do that, I’ve got funding to study trust. It’s been very interesting for me. At my university, Is Sydney, we’ve recently established a Centre for AI Trust and Governance, based in the arts and social sciences and law schools and it’s been very interesting to be in conversations with the computer scientists and engineers and think about the different ways we can conceptualise the trust question. I think for people looking in from the engineering perspective on the arts and social sciences perspective on trust, they’d see it as being around the human factors approach to technology, that you need to win over users to a technology. Some of you may be aware of the recent study done by Nicole Glesby at Melbourne University with KPMG that found that Australians have an unusually low level of trust in Artificial Intelligence by international standards. It’s interesting to reflect on what might be the factors that lie behind that. From, I think, the perspective, I’d be coming from, the concern I think, Ram, you put that really well, that the assumptions that systems break and it is only through the breaking of the system that you can sort out how to fix it, it’s not politically platable or politically platable because citizens don’t want, you know, it’s all fine, except for, all fun and games until someone gets hurt with these things. So, the policy space is more likely to be, to look at risk and protection. I think the other point here is, what’s referred to in the policy literature as "issue salience". Your point of 000, suddenly you can get a lot of activity around that, but at the time when it would have been preventative, you wouldn’t, because it wasn’t as salient a policy issue. And in that respect, I think coming back to Ethan Zuc kerman, referring to a book in 2006 From Counter Culture to Cyber Culture, the hippy county culture dynamic which was central to the development of the internet. Some of its blind spots, like it was all white guys, first of all, that was the case in California, but also a sense that technology, developing technology was an alternative to political engagement. That’s very explicit when you read people like Stewart Brand and others that rather than getting involved in the messy compromised world of politics, there was an opportunity to liberate culture through the internet and Turner identified in the mid-2000s some of the limitations of that way of thinking and I think we’re now very aware of them, I think of the recent movie, Mountain Head. They have to kill the guy who’s the poorest of the billionaires because he’s a desell. He has doubts about Artificial Intelligence, so they have to kill him to give away the plot line. Something that is vaguely about technology as liberating but not in the way that I think it was understood.

>> CAMERON MCTERNAN: I don’t have too much to say on trust. I’m interested in what the pannists are saying about it but I think trust is a tricky concept to pin down. For me it’s built on credibility and predictability. The internet is pretty credible and predictable. Most of the time it works with a few recent examples where it doesn’t but generally speaking. I think at the human layer things are a bit less predictable or a bit less credible. That doesn’t just apply to what people do online but the human level that governs it and seeing some of the unpredictability in the world right now or lack of credibility in terms of governance in some regions I think is a moment for pause and concern about what that might mean for the future of a trustworthy internet. Can we expect that the internet we have today is going to be the same internet we have in ten years’ time? Is it going to be governs in the same way? Are the people who use it, the communities that exist on it, going to be the same? Of course, people change, but we won’t be able to do that in a hopeful way - we want to be able to do it in a hopeful way, expecting things good if not better or the same as things now, not worse.

>> ROHAN SACHDEVA: Mow mow trust in the digital environment rests on three pillars. First, perceptions of expertise and confidence, the second perceptions of openness and honesty and the third of concern and care for users and communities.

>> RAM MOHAN: Those three interdependent pillars are for me the primary determ of trust. They shape where individuals engage online and share information and adopt new technologies. But trust is fragile. If you look at large scale data breach Oran some ware attacks or misinformation campaigns, phishing scams - each of those erodes confidence in the digital economy and in civic institutions. Vulnerabilities are particularly pronounced for groups that have historically faced discrimination and also for individuals who have been economically excluded from online participation and also for communities with high income disparity. In each of those places, the digital divide amplifies inequities. So, if you look at that as a basis, then what does a trustworthy internet require? There I posite it requires intentional efforts to create systems inclusive of diverse voices and are resilient against shocks and abuses. Not just technological shocks but social, political, other shocks that you mentioned earlier. That means to me ensuring that people of different languages, cultures, abilities and socioeconomic backgrounds can access first and then safely use the internet. In this area, you know, initiatives to implement multilingual domain names or internationalized email addresses - those are simple things, but they help break down barriers for non-English speaking users and that means that you can broaden participation and reduce systemic exclusion. In a similar way, if you think of inclusive design in digital services, that would mean accessible platforms poor people with disabilities. Blind people have a very hard time accessing and using the internet. That is one example. There are other pieces to it - transparent data policies or things like using Open Source software. It can help establish openness in this ecosystem we’re a part of. So, inside of Australia, you have the Australian Cyber Security Centre, that provides guidance in threat intelligence to organizations. That is a positive thing to improve the perception of transparency, of helping secure critical infrastructure. Certainly - and I was speaking to folks outside about NBN and the efforts there to reduce the digital divide, provide more equitable internet participation - that is another way to improve the ecosystem and increase this perception of trust in the online environment. We also need, I think, initiatives like multilingual public service information, accessible government portals, these are things where you find areas where lack of access to these government platforms are sometimes dependent on if you don’t know English you can access government services. Yet, you know, here is a country that is multicultural, multilingual. So, we have to think about the fact that trust, diversity, resilience are mutually reinforcing. If you build an internet that is inclusive and resilient, that will build confidence and at the same time if you are able to have an internet that is trustworthy, that will encourage broader participation. So, I think you have to look at governance measures, technical standards, and community engagement, so all three have to be designed, but you have to design them with the three pillars I was speaking about. Expertise in confidence, demonstrate that, openness and honesty, build that, and concern and care. Show that. That is the way we ought to be thinking about trust in the internet err

>> VICTORIA FIELDING: Thank you. I will invite questions from the audience.

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>> TERRY FLEW: Do you need a microphone? There.

>> FLOOR: I’m from Internet NZ Kia ora. I want to ask a question on advice of what we should, do you obviously have clear background. The facts of the internet is changing. People are moving solely to platforms through the more Generative AI and we’re moving from the network of works, two, three tech bros owning 99% of platforms 99% of users interact with. What do we do with the tech bros from a technological or users peck tive?

>> TERRY FLEW: go Ly first. I think there is dualism at play. The concentration of the digital environment makes it clearer where the key players are. I think that is important. I think what happened in the last 12 months in particular is that a lot of activity that was happening in and around many of the largest tech companies around corporate social responsibility, social licence and so forth has been derailed. Quite consciously been derailed. So, that is a challenge. At the same time, I think that, it’s an interesting question whether tech people lean progressive, fun fact - in the 2016 US presidential election the vote in San Francisco for the Trump-Pence ticket was 3%. That might have changed now, but it might not have changed too much. If it’s the case that this is not the meal ticket that it once was, because I think the other thing to be aware of is the extent to which AI is eating into tech jobs. You will find a lot of the very skilled and capable people not working in the big companies. So there might be alliances possible, but I think realistically, regulation is back for better or worse. I think the idea that NGOs would work around governments to achieve social goals, I think that is not where it was 15-20 years ago.

>> CAMERON MCTERNAN: I have a quick answer. It’s a bit technical. I hope it’s OK. I remember from my first slide, I showed you that the traditional media companies in Australia were concentrated but the least concentrated sector and telcos, more concentrated and then the platforms, super cons traitsed. I’m not an economist, but I deal in political economy. Typically, industries or sectors that are highly concentrated often have really high barriers to entry. If you want to start a search engine tomorrow, good luck. If you want to start a social media company, good luck. You want to develop a new mobile operating system, it’s a lot of work, a lot of work and it’s very resource intensive. While traditional media companies, still very expensive, still have to buy sated lights and printing presses but it’s not as expensive - satellites - and so there’s room for new entrants, so I would think one of the first places to look at is what we can do to make sure that a business in Australia can compete with a hyper scaler in the United States, how can we lower the barriers for entry into that market.

>> FLOOR: I’m from the WAU, a personal opinion or questionry. Your panel has been fascinating about the whole point about trust, diversity and so on. In the internet governance realm there is a set of largely hybrid institutions that governed the technical core of the internet successfully and they bring together communities that have an interest in doing it, and have the teeth to do so through a range of contractual or norm settings processes. So, then for these harder issues, many of which have been discussed there are no institutions set up to do it, so it falls to government to do so in the absence of anything else. Is there scope or space or do we need to be setting up new institutions that can deal with these new problems that aren’t necessarily dependent on international law or domestic law, or do we instead need to do a better job at distilling the conversations, like, I think the minister suggested this morning, and providing pithy implementable policy frameworks that at least are better considered than 24-hour government policy making processes? It’s not meant to be a slam-dunk question, but I’m interested in your views, thanks.

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TERRY FLEW: I think governance innovation has always characterized this space. And we’ve, sometimes industry self-regulation works, sometimes it doesn’t. I mean the fact that misinformation legislation was on the agenda in Australia came about because the digi framework couldn’t hold. X walked away and said Twitter signed on and we’re X, so see you later. But then when governments sought to introduce mismisinformation legislation, it twice in Australia withdrew the legislation. The problem was some saw it as going too far and some not far enough. There are difficulties for the nation state in trying to manage these activities, particularly because also global companies can play off nation states against one another. So, one of the issues that governments need to be considering is how to collaborate around common rules and standards.

>> FLOOR: Hi, Sylvia. My comment is about some of the analysis, or my question, about the analysis of the companies and market shares. There are a more than a couple of very interesting Australian companies competing in the global market, like Atlassian. They are making investments, one very recently announced on the browsers that Atlassian will put a bet on a competitive, supporting Arc which I encourage you to try. A new browser, slightly different. Signal is also doing things very differently, coming from a non-profit that has a very different business model. I know that purely because we grew with Google and all the others, telling us what to do, it’s hard to consider different business models of different scenarios, on how these players are working out. Is there any interest to do research on what is the contribution from Australian businesses into this global landscape, instead of comparing us with the big ones and seeing how small we are, maybe turn the tables a bit, because I honestly think that Australia has a lot of, to contribute towards but sometimes it seems that, as if our contributions are very small when it doesn’t necessarily be the case. So, if you look at what Atlassian are doing with changes to more sustainable web consumption, green power, over browser solutions and all the communities they are empowering, Open Source, it is way more bigger than some of the numbers you show. Maybe a couple of roads into that and see how Australian companies are operating in that regard, I guess. I don’t know.

>> CAMERON MCTERNAN: I can say quickly two things about the data. HHI, usually we count it only if there is one per cent market share or more. At Atlassian has had a meteoric rise of late and it’s interesting to see them move to browsers. Ad data, 2022-23, so you will see future iterations of what comes next. One exciting one for us is that browsers seem to be - sorry, search engines seem to be one of the things that is maybe relaxing, where Google’s dominance is not so strong but probably attributable to a famous chatbot. People are like, I don’t need to search engines any more, I can use ChatGPT. Things are changing and you will see that if future reports from us.

>> VICTORIA FIELDING: Only time for one more question. I don’t know who got there first.

>> TERRY FLEW: I’m on the last flight out, too, so non-negotiable.

>> FLOOR: I’m Gilbert from the Junior Justice Society with Richie. Not sure if it is a question or a comment. I’m come into tech from the other end. I I’ve been in marginalized communities and have faced a lot of the access and inclusion barriers that big tech present to marginalized communities and have gotten quite deep into Open Source tech and community infrastructure because of that, and I guess I would like to pose, I hear a lot of, like -I guess, phrasing around - it takes a lot of power and a lot of energy to create a new player in the field, but it also, I would also like to say that there’s space for the communities themselves to use existing Open Source solutions to take back that technological independence and find their own inclusive spaces on the internet. Floor

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>> FLOOR: Yes, there is a lot of talk online, self-hosting that’s usually a privileged tech person setting their family up and making a good 12 month process. We’re looking at the community self-hosting, to support 20 other little community groups and combine the tech resources of those groups into a few local desktops that we try to make resilient.

>> RAM MOHAN: That is encouraging. You represent the possibility of the bright side of things.

>> FLOOR: The last comment is there was conversation before around the move from Twitter to Bluesky. If you fundamentally look at how Bluesky comes together, though they use the language of decentralization, there is so much deep centralization, the word of the year for last year "ishidification" was in the middle. And Twitter of the 2010s was, we did see that as a social service. We spoke about it as that, the Arab Spring and politicians on there and the weather department was on there. I’m a little surprised that W3C has come with the activity hub standard and translated to mathedon like email, can I have one here and one here and I’m surprised that open governance groups are not engaging with that platform and with activity pub more actively. Adding that. I think that’s part of the resilience.

>> VICTORIA FIELDING: On the note of Twitter, its beauty was it didn’t have an algorithm. The algorithm is what owners can control. Twitter was an equal footing, you had blue ticks, a verified system, but not having an algorithm, I know MAGA will control a TikTok algorithm a complete disaster for them. And not having an algorithm and better having the community own the resource itself is the ideal scenario. That’s a nice place to finish.

>> FLOOR: We’ve been foregrounding Macedon and we would love you to make an account.

>> VICTORIA FIELDING: I think Terry has to get on a plane. Please grab the panelists left if you want to ask questions. Thank you very much.

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>> DONNA: Thank you, I should have said this was brought to you by Identity Digital. Very hard to say, Ram. OK. So, we do have afternoon tea now. Then we are back at 4.15 for the last session of the day. Sorry things are running over, I see that as a good sign, not a bad sign. Don’t forget your session feedback, thanks, guys.

>> Excellent. I went outside and found your name tag.

>> Who else are you waiting for?

>> Got some freshwater. Bruce is going the long way. Thanks, everyone. If you could take your seats and we’ll kick-off the last session of the day.

>> OK. Our last session of the day is Multi-stakeholder ways time prove trust in Australia’s digital ecosystem. This session is brought to you by the department of infrastructure, transport, regional development, sports and the arts -- communications the arts. I’ll hand it over to Narelle Clark from the Internet Association of Australia to introduce her panel and to kick it off. Thank you.

>> NARELLE CLARK: I’m wondering if we have the folks online yet? Before I, we do. We do. I’d like to see their happy smiling faces behind me which would bow a great help. Here we are at the end of the day, folks. And this one promises I think to be a little bit provocative. I promise you. If they’re not provocative enough, I’ll make sure. OK. The short description here is co-regulation in the communications sector is under pressure. I wonder why that might be? Let’s just think about it. Co-regulation has been in place in the telecom sector in Australia since what was it, 1991, 1992? Keith, what was the year? 1997? Come on. I thought it was a little bit before then. When the second telco came into operation in Australia. Let’s not mention their name too quickly. So consumers criticise it. And the trend is towards more direct regulation. So we’ve seen a whole bunch of new pieces of direct regulation come through over the last year with more likely under way. So could multi-stakeholder methods help solve problems and reduce the need for regulation? Or is it on the flipside that it is buzz of the multi-stakeholder approach that we’ve got that we’re in this position we are in today? Where it is arguable that trust is at its lowest level in a long time? Whether or not you agree that trust is actually at its lowest level for a long time is something we should probably question. Anyway, let’s get on with this. Could lessons in the sector be applied more broadly on other internet issues? Let me introduce the wonderful team I’ve got here to discuss this with us. We have Bruce Tonkin who is a wonderful human being, who is the CEO of the Australian Domain Authority. I’m sure you’ll know that administration. They run dot AU. Bruce was its technical person for a number of years before that and has a long history in the naming space in Australia. Then we have Johanna Weaver who is in the academic sector and made great contributions to policy and technology over the years. We’ve had fun times working over the last year or so on what was the name of that big fat document?

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JOHANNA WEAVER: The telco resilience profile.

>> NARELLE CLARK: It seems to keep coming up. I’m going to run around the circle as I see them here. We have Carol Bennett, the CEO of ACANN, who are the voice of consumers in the telco sector in Australia today. Hi, Carol. Welcome. Great to see you. I’m not hearing you, Carol. Are you on mute?

>> CAROL BENNETT: Sorry. Thank you. Great to be here.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Carol husband a great history in the not for profit sector and consumer advocacy. You came out of the financial services sector prior to ACANN about a yearo so ago? Your background?

>> CAROL BENNETT: Are you talking to me, Narelle? Sorry?

>> NARELLE CLARK: Yes. Go ahead.

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CAROL BENNETT: my background -- sorry. My background is running peak national bodies across health, aged care and various other consumer advocacy roles.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Thank you for that. And we have Luke Coleman, who instead, I have to start calling him the CEO of the Australian Telecommunications Association. Not to be confused with analogue telephone adapters. Go ahead, Luke.

>> LUKE COLEMAN: Thank you very much for having me, ATA.

>> NARELLE CLARK: We have

>> SAM GRUNHARD: from the department, of communications. How long have you been with the Department of Comms for? It’s been ages.

>> SAM GRUNHARD: It does feel like that but it’s only been two years. Friar that I was at -- prior to that I was at Home Affairs and doing other various government things. Sorry to the parliament name and length of it. We’ll see what we can do about it.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Thank you for joining us today. It really is a great combination of experience and I think passion for the industry and passion for getting it right too which comes through across from this whole panel. So then let’s get down to some of the basic questions here. I want to know in this context, what is trust? What is trust? And who wants to get a go at this one first? Johanna is nearest. I’ll ask her. What is trust?

>> JOHANNA WEAVER: There are so many different ways and when I think about trust there are a couple of key componentsthality underpin it. One is having empathy for the other party involved in an interaction. I think communication is really key. Having competency in whatever it is that you’re delivering is also really important. People often refer to the five Cs, the eight Cs and various different parts. When I think about trust specifically in the context of the telco sector, I think consistency and communication are two of the areas where we’re seeing perhaps the public trust being undermined a little. There would be two I call out as we perhaps need to be having more emphasis on.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Consistency and communication.

>> JOHANNA WEAVER: Timeliness of communicating with public, for example.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Which we may or may not have seen lately. Maybe I’ll jump to one of our online folks next. Perhaps Carol, perhaps I should ask you first. What is trust to you, what’s trust?

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CAROL BENNETT: The key elements of trust for me and particularly in this context that people know that they are safe, that their data is secure I think is really important and they’re not going to be taken advantage of. I agree with all those core competencies but I think if the community feels as though elements fundamentally are in place, and there’s a genuine attempt to address those issues on the part of providers, I think that’s the key to building trust.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Bruce, comments on trust?

>> BRUCE TONKIN: I’ll tactile from my critical infrastructure angle. You want the system to always be on. You want it to whether it’s electricity, telecommunications, it’s much the same. You want a consistent experience. Each time you access the service you expect it to behave the last time you accessed the service and it’s not inconsistent. A mobile phone network and you know you have a phone and it works in a particular neighbourhood and works in the same neighbourhood tomorrow. It’s a consistent experience. And then I think people also want help when things go wrong because they do go wrong. And I think the consumer doesn’t want to be just left to their own devices but whether it’s a bushfire-type situations or natural disasters, that the providers of electricity and telecommunications are actively trying to help the services.

>> NARELLE CLARK: What about from your perspective, Luke? What do you see, what is trust? What are the key components of it, key elements?

>> LUKE COLEMAN: I think Bruce has put it pretty well in that summation. I would go back to your opening statement where you asked the question does the industry have a problem with trust? Frankly, I think the answer is yes. Yes, we do. We need to admit that as an industry if we’re going to recover from some of the issues that have come out in recent years. We’ve had outages. We very recently had catastrophic outages. We have had problems with sales to consumers. And I think as an industry, the onus is on to win back trust from consumers, as an industry we can’t have a situation in the long term where two of the top 10 brands in Australia are in the most distrusted brands list. Yes, I think it is safe to say we do need to work a lot harder to win back our consumer’s trust. Now, I think that there are a number of things in place that will assist with that. We have legislation before the parliament right now that will strengthen the regulator’s powers. That is something that we support as an industry group. Because we see that the way to rebuilding trust with consumers is by having a strong regulator, that is able to talk swift enforcement action. When industry fails to uphold its obligations to consumers. I think that legislation will help with that. I think having a strong economic regulator as well in the ACCC assists with that, as well as having a good ombudsman in the TIO which we do have. I think industry is heading in the right direction when it comes to say the increased obligations under the new TCP code which is currently with the ACMA for its consideration which are a substantial uplift compared to the previous code. And that trust with consumers can be done in a co-regulatory environment, given that’s the topic of today’s panel. But the onus is on industry to uplift its own standards to ensure that we can maintain consumer’s trust.

>> NARELLE CLARK: You’re talking about the enhancing consumer safeguards act that is currently before parliament?

>> LUKE COLEMAN: Correct.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Sam, what are your views on trust? What do you think from the department’s position? What is trust? What do you need to do? What do we need to do?

>> SAM GRUNHARD: Turns out to be an unfortunately timely question. I’ll be very cautious in my remarks obviously. We’re still dealing with the terrible incident last week. We’re still in the eye of it. I’ll be circumspect. And everyone has been really brief. I’ll try to be really brief too. Clearly I think what we’re dealing with, I agree with the other panellists that we have a crisis of trust. I think we need to focus really hard on what the public’s expectations are of trust in certain layers of the telecommunications service. I think everybody understands it might be frustrating if your Netflix video drops out on the train but 000 is a different matter as we unfortunately have been highlighted to us over the past few days. So we really I think need to redouble our focus on where trust matters the most and therefore where the co-regulatory model works and where it doesn’t? We’ve long had conversations about what is best suited to co-regulation and what is best suited to direct regulation? Clearly generally thinks like 000 are marched by direct regulation because they are so important. But I’m sure the conversations will start again about where we can afford to turn the trust equation around. Where the public can afford to trust industry and where the public needs greater assurance. That’s another way of looking at trust.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Indeed. I don’t want to appear at all flippant in any of the allusions I made to the triple zero outage that just occurred. All of us in Australian society have been hit hard by that outage. It doesn’t matter whether or not you have - anybody - 99% of people who ring, 99-plus people who attempt to call triple zero are in an emergency or believe they are. It is serious, it is severe. I think many people across industry are deeply upset by that having happenend. I think we need to be very careful about our remarks around this, because there are individuals involved in that service delivery, that may well also be similarly feeling a direct personal responsibility for it rightly or wrongly, that may or may not have contributed to deaths. We don’t know this at this stage. I think we need to be careful about how we discuss it and the fact is there are direct regulation rules and around the delivery of triple zero today. Now, I think - I felt I needed to make that intervention. There is a question here. Is the internet and digital ecosystem inherently untrustworthy. Bruce mentioned, when you go to a mobile phone, to a place and you use it, you expect to be able to use it from one day to the next. But given the way that radio frequency telecommunications works, cells shrink depending on the load they have, the weather, depending on rainfall and propation, dust and so forth. The physics say you can’t necessarily get the same communication from one time to the next. What is one example of how the technology may not be as reliable as what we expect. Is that a fair expectation from the community? Is it inherently untrustworthy? Are we at a point or should we deliver more? I don’t know where to start with this. Is it inherently untrustworthy. Johanna you did that work on resilience.

>> JOHANNA WEAVER: I think when we talk about trust is this something we can rely on, to summarize what Bruce said. I think resilience is an entirely different question. Resilience is, do we have the capacity to respond, to recover, to learn and enter into that type of cycle and to minimize down-time when it happens. I wouldn’t conflate trust and resilience, I think technology is reflection of what ewith, we want it to be. Internet was built inherently as a distry bu tive nature.

>> NARELLE CLARK: To survive nuclear bombs.

>> ZOE HAWKINS: Another was to share information across borders. The way the internet evolved it started out as being something you counted trust if you sent it from one end to the other if someone was looking at it because that wasn’t something we prioritized. Over time we built in systems resilience, redundancy, things like inception have been developed and built. That is important because society’s expectation of what the technology will be will change over time. I think there is a technical reality to the unreliability of the internet but I think society takes a view that there are certain services, certain parts of it, where we need that to be there, because it is an essential service. So, it does depend on what part of the infrastructure you are talking about as to society’s expectation and I think that is right. The effort and the investment to make something constantly available does need to be distinguished because it isn’t fair to hold companies to the same level of expectation around triple zero as for a rural remote area because because of the nature we may have some drops in resilience, some drops in connectivity but we have the ability to build resilience in in other ways. A bit of everything but a reflection on society’s expectation.

>> NARELLE CLARK: So resilience and trust are not the same thing. Bruce, is it inherently untrustworthy?

>> BRUCE TONKIN: I don’t think it is inherently untrustworthy. I think our expectations have changed.

>> NARELLE CLARK: They have, haven’t they?

>> BRUCE TONKIN: If you think of mobile phones as an example. 30/40 years ago you were happy you got coverage anywhere! Now you can’t believe it when you find somewhere you don’t have it, you’re annoyed.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Or a relief because you can sit quietly.

>> BRUCE TONKIN: Interdependents grow. We are close to being a cashlings society. I can’t remember the last time I purchased something with cash. Again, you have an assumption that I don’t need to carry cash. The combination of the communications networks, the banking system and the combination means I have a trust in that system. When it breaks, it has this cascading effect. The communications go down, now I can’t pay with my card at the petrol station, can’t get cash because the cash machine doesn’t work because it’s connected to the communications network. I think it is that cascading nature, because we’ve become so reliant on telecommunications infrastructure, when it goes wrong it has a Adelaiding impact.

>> --It has a cascading impact.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Carol, do you any it is inherently untrustworthy?

>> CAROL BENNETT: To that point. I think communications is an essential service. So if we are talking about it being the cornerstone of everything we do, whether it be accessing health services, accessing government services, our work, education and safety, it is an essential service. I think the reality here is that what we have in place is a system and particularly a regulatory environment, that is not fit for purpose for that kind of service. It is old, 1997, we are not living in 1997. We did haven’t mobile phones then. The reality is people do expect it to work and particularly when it comes to public safety. It is not good enough to just say, well, you know, the community shouldn’t expect so much. The community will expect that these things will work and they should work and just as other essential services like energy, water, banking, these are essential services to how we function as a society today. We have to regulate this sector in the same way that we expect these services to serve the community. The community expects that these services will be not only reliable, but will meet their needs. And to be trustworthy, the community, I think, expect that the system will be delivered in a way that builds in, you know, builds trust through having the right safeguards and protections in place and clearly it does not. Telecommunications consumer protection code, the self-regulatory focus of the telecommunications act, is no longer fit for purpose. It does not work. Consumers have been saying this for a long time, have not been listened to and here we are. That is what the disconnect is here.

>> NARELLE CLARK: The code doesn’t cover triple zero and essential services are regulated under state legislation.

>> CAROL BENNETT: But aside from that, we’re talking about trust and consumer expectations. You have to look at the broader regulatory environment and the culture that operates in. So, yes, of course, the triple zero system doesn’t operate by self-regulation. Although, you know, it feels like it does. Particularly at the moment. It is essential that to instil trust the people operating those ecosystems are also trustworthy but they have to have the right incentives to act in the interests of consumers. At the moment there are different incentives for industry to act than there are for consumer protections. Those two things can not be run by the industry when its focus is not on consumer protection, its focus is on its bottom line. We shouldn’t expect that it’s going to act in the public interest when that’s not the driver, it’s not the incentive for industry and that is why self-regulation does not work.

>> NARELLE CLARK: That sounds like your cue, Luke. Is that - is it an inherently untrustworthy system totally focused on the bottom line and nothing else?

>> LUKE COLEMAN: Thank you, Narelle. I think there is a flaw in the argument that says direct regulation is the silver bullet to all our problems. As you rightly said a moment ago, the triple zero service is already subject to direct regulation and always has been established through legislation. So, it is clear that direct regulation does not necessarily mean that things do not still go wrong and it was a terrible thing that went wrong, but it is a flaw to believe that direct regulation can necessarily solve each and every problem. Now, on the issue of essential services, I think it is fair to say that Australians would consider telecommunications an essential service. They use it every day, but unlike other essential services, you do not get to choose your electricity transmission network provider. It is typically either owned by a State Government agency, perhaps it’s been privatized and is heavily regulated under State Government law. You do not get to choose your gas network transmission provider. You get to choose your electricity pre-Taylor. You get -- retailer, you gas retailer, you do not get to use your water provider. In the telecommunications sector you have a choice of three separate mobile providers a choice of a satellite provider, the NBN for fixed line services. Consumers benefit overwhelmingly from a competitive market. If I were to show you a chart of consumer price index increases in ten years everything will have gone up a lot with very few exceptions but one exception is telecommunications services, where prices have actually gone down over the last decade. That is absolutely not the case for other essential services an one quick look at your own energy or gas bill will quickly remind you of that fact. I think it is still the case consumers Ben from a vibrant, pet tive market in telecommunications, and CPI data will make that evident. So telecommunications is a different kind of essential service and in that context consumers continue to benefit from the co-regulatory environment. It is important to remember the TCP code is a safety net above a safety net. Australians continue to benefit from the general consumer protection laws that are enforced by the ACCC - remember, we have two regulators in this sector. The ACCC, and we have the ACMA. Telcos are subject to both of them. Telcos have been fined by both of them. The TCP code provides an additional layer of industry specific protections for consumers above and beyond the general Australian consumer law. It is not self-regulated. It is co-regulated. It is not voluntary but mandatory as any telco that breached the code quickly realizes and it’s another reason the industry supports the Enhancing Consumer Safeguards Bill currently before parliament, to give ACMA faster enforcement powers to act against telcos found to be in breach of industry codes and increase the penalties that are available for ACMA to fine telcos for non-compliance. We need to look at the broader context of the co-regulatory environment to see why telcos can one and the same time be an essential services for Australians, but it can also be a competitive essential service and that delivers benefits for Australians which we do not see in other essential service sectors.

>> NARELLE CLARK: I might refer you back to a session I ran on what is an essential service and what that might mean for the Australian telecommunications sector. At the risk of digressing, I might point out that Luke, you mention twoed regulators there, the ACCC and the ACMA. The Department of Communications have a role as regulator, not to mention the Department of Home Affairs and the various privacy officers throughout the country and, of course, there are other state-based regulations and legislation that apply to the sector as well. So, Sam, as the representative of all of these forms of regulation, do you feel that - do you have further comments to add on this piece?

>> SAM GRUNHARD: You’ve given me a lot of power that I don’t think I have, but thank you. Look, Chatham House, I won’t be quoted as speaking on behalf of even my own department but certainly not all those agencies - again, it goes to the point about Carol’s point, the differential of what should be directly regular lated and what should be left to self-regulation. I am prepared to concede, though, you can’t regulate to perfection. That’s true of every regulatory system. There will be failures. To strike a different note rather than repeating what others said, I think government and industry have a role in thinking about how we communicate to people, the fact that occasionally things won’t work. We have tried to do work as a department on communications for communities, including in a whole range of languages and AUSLAN about the fact there are times, particularly in natural disastersy things won’t work and no matter how heavily regulated they are, and people do need to think about redundancy, as part of the resilience picture, because we know no system is perfect. I agree we have increasingly pushed people to reliance on the mobile phones, including as a government, without maybe communicating to them clearly there will be occasions they won’t work because of the laws of physics and a range of problems. That doesn’t mean we shouldn’t have a long hard look at our regulation, we absolutely should and certainly will be, but I do think we do have a role explaining to people regulation won’t create a situation where you have 100% up-time and resilience doesn’t mean nothing ever goes wrong.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Yes, I realized I neglected to mention the Department of Treasury and the Attorney-General’s Department as well as having another piece in the regulation space. So, then, that sort of sounds to me like a multistakeholder approach to governance. So can multistakeholderal tern to direct government regulation resolve the concerns in the telecommunications industry, say, to address competition or look at the difference between the old traditional telco verses the over-the-top platforms and the local verses global jurisdictional issues we were discussing? In the traditional telco land, when you rang triple zero then, you had a circuit that ran from your house is to the nearby telephone exchange that then went from the switches to a bunch of other switches directly to the triple zero emergency call center. That was switched all the way through. Now, if it didn’t work, it didn’t work. You didn’t expect it to. Now we’re at that point where people are expecting it to work absolutely everywhere, all the time. Can multistakeholder approaches fix this?

>> JOHANNA WEAVER: I am conscious in a previous life I was a professor of technology policy and I can talk to you about co-regulation and self-regulation and all the different types. I think the most important point with this is effective regulation, that’s what we want. We want regulation that actually achieves the outcome which is that we have availability and on triple zero we have that much higher standard than we might on others. I think it’s good we don’t just focus on that specific case. So, when we’re looking and describing multistakeholder regulation, to be honest, my reaction to that is deep concern and skepticism and I realize saying that in a roomful of people who are committed to the multistakeholder process you might look at me and go why? That’s because I’ve seen the term "multistakeholder" be co-opted as a way to add voices to a conversation, have us have a long conversation that goes around and round and doesn’t do anything. I think when it comes to telco regulation, we need neck tive regulation. We absolutely need multistakeholder input into the development of the regulation, into this question of what is effective regulation, the expertise and how to deliver that. I think the idea of multistakeholder regulation itself - first of all I don’t know what that is - I think it’s a term that until I heard this panel, I had not heard of that term before - but also I think it will have, it will pervert the policy or the intent behind it which is what we want is the regulation to achieve its aim, which is its public policy purpose and providing mechanisms to make that regulation, to have the input, is really, really important. I’m not saying multistakeholder isn’t important, but I don’t think multistakeholder regulation is the answer.

>> NARELLE CLARK: That’s brilliant. Next?

>> Multistakeholder comes out of the internet technology world and by and large the internet protocols have evolved using multistakeholder processes, which means you gauging government, industry, you’re engaging the consumer and you’re engaging people at academic institutions and interested civil society. The concept is by getting those different perspectives you end up with the best solution because it can be implementable, scalable and cost effective, all of which are characteristics of the internet and some services on top. For auDA which’ve applied the same principle since 2001 in the development of the dotau policy rules. We engaged all the stakeholderers, set up panels, make sure we are representatives from the different stakeholders. At lunch-time we are kick off a periodic review of our licensing rules and inviting stakeholders here to contribute. So I think getting stakeholders together to identify that the solutions or the protocols gives you is best outcome in terms of something implementable. For it to be effective, you need other pieces. One is I think you need to monitor it and for the outcomes you are seeking. If the outcome you seek is that from most locations in Australia triple zero will work and someone will answer the phone in ten minutes, or whatever the metric is, you need to set up measuring points and make a call once a minute and measure it from multiple places. So, you are measuring the outcome you want, so you have monitoring and then you have to have enforcement when the rules are not being applied. There’s no point putting all the effort into creating the rules if nobody obeys them.

>> NARELLE CLARK: That is a great comment, too. Carol, what are your thoughts on whether or not multistakeholder alternatives can work at all?

>> CAROL BENNETT: I think, you know, there are challenges around the conflicting of multistakeholders. I think they can be effective, but when there are common interests, some common ground in terms of incentives, some genuine commitment to achieving those things and long-term genuine relationships I think can potentially work. I’ve seen it work well in other sectors. I think it is important to build a social licence and I think multistakeholder commitment where there’s shared and common interests, values, outcomes, and, you know, even where there are conflicting purposes, there can always be a common ground to be found. When that occurs, I think that is really important in terms of fostering a genuine sense of good will and social licence. I think social licence is important. I think the conditions have to be created under which multistakeholder engagement can create an environment which is collective, and addresses the various problems that it’s trying to achieve. So, I think it can be done, but it has to be a genuine commitment to a long-term investment in shared common values and purpose and it needs to be acknowledging some of the barriers and the incentives that face different sectors and coming to the table with a genuine will to achieve an outcome and the outcome has to be for consumers because none of these industries would exist if there wasn’t a consumer. At the end of the day, the end user has to be the foe - the focus of these systems. If they’re not, it can be disastrous.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Products need to meet what consumers want and that gives you the best outcomes. On the regulatory perspective, we’re talking about what is it about outcomes, outcomes and monitoring and Johanna and Bruce mentioned. Luke, what are your thoughts on multistakeholder alternatives to government regulation?

>> LUKE COLEMAN: I think in many ways we have a system that already takes into account the views of multiple stakeholders. You look at our regulatory environment, some regulations are delivered think ministerial direction to the regulator, and others are instigated by industry itself through various codes or technical standards. Some people don’t realize that the Australian Telecommunications Alliance as well as developing industry codes is an accredited standards development organization, recognized by Standards Australia. So, in the process of developing technical standards, it is a requirement on the ATA - we are audited against this by Standards Australia - that we bring in the views of a broad range of stakeholders, all of which have interest in the development of that standards, whether they are telcos, equipment suppliers, cabling providers, a whole range of stakeholders. Of course in a co-development process we will often have the regulator, or the department participate in the development of that code. With a requirement established in legislation under the act that we must consult with a range of stakeholders, including the ombudsman, including consumer representative bodies, before we can submit that code for the ACMA to consider for registration. Now, consulting does not necessarily mean that everybody involved in that consultation process will get their way. That is the nature of these consultation processes but we always attempt to proceed on the basis where - we certainly take into account all feedback. It is a requirement that all feedback is taken into account. We cannot simply neglect that requirement. That is part of the co-development process. I think the environment we have today does often strike the right balance in that it is not only industry led, nor entirely led by government or regulators, but there are a range of stakeholders involved in the development of regulation in our sector.

>> NARELLE

CLARK: To, Sam, what are your thoughts on multistakeholder alternatives and whether or not it works and the aims of regulation?

>> SAM GRUNHARD: Thank you. It’s the term we do commonly use in the internet governance space. It is true we talk about it in the telco space. Funnily enough, I think I agree with lose, I think we do have elements of a multistakeholder approach in the way we currently regulate telco in Australia, whether that is a good thing is a different question. I think it will be accurate to say some of the structures we have in place do resemble something like multistakeholderism, we have in internet governance. It can be very valuable in getting a range of perspectives. It can also result in the lowest common denominator, as has been the criticism at times of the industry code process. That is one of the challenges in managing multistakeholderism. I think in the telecommunications sector and the network ultimately government bears a heavy responsibility for deciding in the end what the rules of the game have to be. Multistakeholderism is the rule of law in a democratic country. In the end there are elements we won’t be able to leave to a multistakeholder approach. That is different to the way the internet is governed for the historical reasons you outlined, Narelle.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Johanna, you wanted to respond?

>> JOHANNA WEAVER: To pull the different threads together. I think there is a really big difference between a multistakeholder approach and having multistakeholder inputs which is incredibly important. This concept which is a bit amorphous that doesn’t exist called multistakeholder regulation. To go to the incentives point and, Luke, the graph that you would have about costs in the telco sector and the costs not going up - frankly I think that is another perversion of a policy intent, right? So, if the costs have actually increased, the telco sectors are having to increasingly, the telco operators, are having to increasingly prioritize where they are spending their money, but are not able to increase the spend and they are ultimately responsible to shareholders. Actually, there is a problem with the way that we’re regulating, that the incentives for them to be spending money and where they’re spending money is not driving in the direction where we actually need it for a society, with a service that has become more and more an essential service and so for this, I’m not - this is not an attack on the telco industry - I’m saying we actually don’t have a regulatory framework that is setting them up to be able to can investing and to your point, Carol, the people - sorry - the people who are working across the ecosystem who want to be spending money on this, who want to be building resilience, right, and but there are commercial incentives and commercial imperatives at play.

>> NARELLE CLARK: We heard a lot of complaints particularly from Optus from the last couple of years about rush on investment declining and declining and that being a massive barrier to them investing. That’s in the next generation networks and upgrades. Joe sorry, I

>> JOHANNA WEAVER: Sorry I had a moment of a failure on your name.

>> NARELLE CLARK: You can call me what you want. I’m aware of the time here. I think there are I think it’s important you do feel empowered to be involved. This is the Internet Governance Forum is meant to be a forum by which people all participate in informing the regulatory processes. And the debate and discussions. Bring it on, folks. There’s somebody I recognise.

>> have an online question.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Could you please introduce yourself?

>> FLOOR: I’m one of the founders in the chair of Digital Rights Watch. I want to raise one concern about multi-stakeholder approaches, there’s often an assumption of equivalence between these various parties which the material reality does not reflect. I’m a tiny organisation and I’m up against some of the largest businesses that humanity has ever seen, that are the most well resourced. And that’s not necessarily people in the telco sector. I’m not suggesting that, but telcos have their own size and weight as a result of their history, reliance on state funded infrastructure. I don’t think it’s reasonable to just say that we’re going to consult with all these different groups and expect that our job is done. We need to properly resource the so that the community voice can be heard. And I’m talking about me, I’m talking about all different organisations, different organisations that have different perspectives, represent different kinds of communities. They need to be brought into the conversation and properly resourced so it can be a meaningful exercise, rather than something that starts to look like window dressing. I wonder if anybody wanted to comment on that power differential and how we can manage the centralsition of power that comes with major industries.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Maybe I should get Carol to speak. That’s how Carol’s organisation is funded. It is funded specifically to provide that consumer voice, an essential voice, in the whole discussion.

>> CAROL BENNETT: Yeah. That’s a really good point. I think going back to the intent of this, it’s one thing to say we’ve consulted. It’s another thing to hear and to listen. And genuinely take it onboard. Luke talks about consumers being consulted and being part of the process. We don’t feel like we’re part of that process at all. Back in 2014, I note that the department of communications itself actually said that the TCP process was protracted, costly and fraught. That we would all say and there’s 22 organisations, consumer organisations, in the Fair Call Campaign, all opposed to the TCP code in its current form being approved by ACMA. Make no mistake, this has been going on for years. We may be consulted, we may be ticked off as being part of the process, but we have not been heard in this process. And that’s regardless of resourcing or input or anything we say. It doesn’t seem to matter. What we end up with is a substandard, self-regulated code that does not meet consumer protection standards at all. And, really, you’d be hard pressed to find any consumer organisation anywhere that would say that it is. So let’s be really clear about that. I think if, to be workable, multi-stakeholder systems or regulation or whatever you want to call it, has to be genuine, it has to be about engagement, not just, tick, we’ve talked to you, but we don’t agree. Therefore we’ll do what we do anyway, even if it’s not in consumer interests but it’s in our interests and that’s absolutely wrong. And that’s why we have the cultural systemic issues that we have in our sector I think.

>> NARELLE CLARK: I have to admit I was employed by ACANN at the time when that 2014 report came out and sitting on the TCP code at the time and I have to agree it was long and drawn out. I need to give Luke a right of reply on that one.

>> LUKE COLEMAN: The protracted process we’re talking about here was done at the request of consumer groups. Who had previously provided the feedback that they weren’t given enough opportunity through various realms of consultation. So the process which ran for more than two years was designed specifically to address feedback from ACANN historically. If we’re now complaining it goes too long, perhaps we need to go back to the previous model. I would simply point out that every single item of feedback from every group involved in the TCP code process was responded to publicly. You can go on our website. You can review those documents now. Carol, I understand you feel you weren’t heard but every single issue that was put forward by both ACANN and every other group as part of the consultation was responded to. If it went to your favour or liking a reason was given as to why it was potentially unworkable or incompatible with other elements of the code. Not everybody gets what they want. And for every bit of feedback we had saying the code didn’t go far enough, I can guarantee you we had just as much feedback on the other end saying this has gone too far. These new regulatory burdens are so great that they have the potential to squeeze smaller providers out of the market who will not be able to wear the regulatory burden. Something that people often forget is it is often the larger providers that are best placed to wear greater regulatory burden. They have got teams of people working in in legal, in their regulatory divisions who bear the cost of more red tape. But we also know it’s often the smaller end of town, those smaller and more innovative providers that provide more innovative products and services that when we increase the amount of red tape, we are squeezing them out of the market. That is the concern that we need to balance and that’s the concern that we sought to address throughout the development of the code.

>> CAROL BENNETT: Can I respond to that?

>> NARELLE CLARK: Quickly.

>> CAROL BENNETT: Why did we see a $100 million fine for Optus for unconscionable sales practices ask $50 million for Telstra upselling products and services that vulnerable poem could not afford, couldn’t make a decision about being able to pay for and were chased by debt collectors? This is the problem. That code did not address that issue.

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LUKE COLEMAN: Reminded us that direct regulation...

>> JOHANNA WEAVER: I think the challenge of what we’re pointing to here, Luke, you’re right, I’m there was a process where everything was considered. There’s a trade-off and always challenges with this. Part of the challenge in terms of building trust in this environment is if it is an impartial body that is provided that assessment, it’s easier for the public to trust. And the outcome might actually be the same. But it’s a trust building exercise that I think is perhaps what is missing here. And I’m not an expert in telco regulation but I am an expert when I look at regulation across the economy. And where you have an industry that is marking its own homework, which I’m not necessarily saying is happening here, but the perception of that is really hard at a point when there is trust, that is really being called into question.

>> NARELLE CLARK: The ACCC did impose hefty fines for those egregious cases of appalling misconduct. Over to the online questions.

>> FLOOR: She was happy for this to be parked. And there was a comment from Jordan as well in the online chat. "Couldn’t a robust multi-stakeholder process help the most efficient way?"

>> NARELLE CLARK: Over to you in the room here, then?

>> FLOOR: I’m Zane and work in policy. I want to understand, I want a bit more, does all regulation enable the trust perception? Because I think we can agree that trust has a big hand in how we perceive things? How the community feels about something? Or how we feel safeguarded by the government? So to give an example, like electric cars, so the government has been pushing that and we have incentives to buy electric cars, who would buy an electric car from a new incoming Chinese brand? As opposed to brands like But they own -- Volvo. But this brand owns Volvo. And with AI, ChatGPT versus Deepseek. The Australian Government tells me Deepsake harnesses my data and uses it fraudulently and I don’t use it. I want to know using those examples, and do you think regulating something increases that trust perception and enhances that? Knowing there are many digital tools out there that are not regulated, digital wallets, QR codes to use and make payments. They don’t come in the full breadth of the banking regulation. I want to tease the regulation aspect a bit more. Thank you.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Given we only have four minutes left, we might be stuck on that one. Perhaps if I go over to Sam and ask for your final thoughts at least, starting with the point on regulation and we’ll move back through the rest of the panel on final thoughts for this session.

>> SAM GRUNHARD: That is absolutely cruel and let me take the opportunity to thank our incredibly hard working Auslan interpreters, it is such a challenging job. Well done. The final thoughts - clearly, we have some divergent views here about the role of different players in the regulatory environment for telco. It is radically different to the way we regulate the online world and particularly the architecture of the internet as opposed to the content of the internet. I think in the end the way we array our telecommunications laws are baseden ultimately sovereign government having to make decisions in the end. That’s what a good robust, democratic process looks like. In the end somebody has to make the call and in the case of a telco it is the elected representatives and that’s a bit motherhead but where I -- motherhood but that’s where I’ll end.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Nothing wrong with motherhood. Luke, final snots

>> LUKE COLEMAN: I do think there’s an imbalance, going to some of the things the questioner raised around which sectors are heavily regulated, which sectors get light touch regulation? Something that we’ve seen in recent years I think is that there is a divergence of policy and regulatory issues between traditional telcos and over the top platform providers. I’ll give you the example of the blue bubbles and the green bubbles on your iPhone. The green bubble is an SMS on your iPhone. A carrier based service and subject to lawful intercept and subject to a variety of codes, stand technical guidelines, home affairs legislation, department of comms legislation. The blue bubble is an i message, subject to a completely different regulatory environment to the green bubble. From the consumer’s perspective, they’re effectively the exact same thing. And so I do think that there is an imbalance of regulation from various sectors. And that historic regulation being applied to one sector, in this case telecommunications, has not necessarily caught up in other sectors, predominantly around those over the top platform providers and there’s a need for a more modern view that looks at the end service that’s delivered to the customer rather than the sector delivering it.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Thank you, Luke. Carol, any closing thoughts on the regulation piece we have to?

>> CAROL BENNETT: I have a lot of closing thoughts but I probably shouldn’t express them all. Look, I think fundamentally, there is a real crisis of trust in the telecommunications zone of regulation, on the digital side I think there are some issues there but I don’t think think it’s just about the form of regulation. It’s about the level of trust the community have and the genuine sense that they get that what they get from companies and what they’re provided with in terms of service is compatible with what they’re told they should get. And I think those two things, there’s a gap between them. An inconsistency. I think that consistency point we talked about earlier is really important. We’ve just done a national consumer sentiment tracker and I’ve just got the results today. Just on that, 43% of Australians do not trust telcos to act in their best interests or keep them safe and keep costs low. 21% said they feel pressured to purchase an expensive and more expensive contract than they wanted. 42% said that they feel they’re getting charged for contracts that they don’t think they’ve entered in to and 30% said the coverage they’re getting is different to what they were told they were going to get. There is a mismatch between people’s experience and what they’re told regulation and the sector and the companies involved, the providers, should be providing to them. So I think instilling trust is about a genuine - yes, multi-stakeholder collaboration that, whether a shared values, shared outcomes, and a shared and genuine approach to building, building our user, end user model that actually works for consumers. Because ultimately that’s what these companies are delivering. It’s a system for consumers. So it’s got to deliver for consumers. If you have that inconsistency and lack of trust, there’s a problem. And so I suspect there’s going to need to be changes and the changes, if consumers are onboard, if they trust in the regulation, they trust in the companies that are delivering products and services, ultimately we all win, including industry. At the moment, I’d say that’s very much a question. So getting regulation right is really about getting those elements right.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Thank you for that. I wonder if you could perhaps drop the link to that research for us all to see so we can have a good look at it?

>> CAROL BENNETT: Exclusive.

>> NARELLE CLARK: I know you’ve done some great research in the past. Sorry, I used to run the research program. Bruce, over to you?

>> BRUCE TONKIN: Thank you. One comment I want to distinguish I guess between multi-stakeholder consulting and decision-making, because they are different things. Because a lot of what I’m hearing is consultation and somebody receiving that and if that person is not trusted, then it could be government or industry, yeah. What we do in the internet world and ICANN is you create a working group which is balanced. And in the case of ICANN, all those panel members are paid to attend physical meetings. We do the same in Australia.au and pay all the members of those panel on the time for their panel so it partly addresses that imbalance between the consumer and the industry. They’re treated the same. And the key is to make sure that the panel is balanced sothality you don’t have 10 people from industry and 10 people from government and one person from industry. So you need to have a balanced panel. And that panel then makes a recommendation to a governing body, whether it’s the Australian Government or ICANN.

>> NARELLE CLARK: Johanna Weaver.

>> JOHANNA WEAVER: A bunch of bureaucrats in Canberra want to keep being paid for what they’re doing and we regulate because we want to prevent a social harm. We want to incentivise a particular type of behaviour. Or we want to address a market failure. They’re kind of the primary reasons why we regulate. And if you get that right, if you get effective regulation in place, then you have a situation where there is trust. Effective regulation builds trust. So I would say the fact that we’re all sort of dancing around and even addressing and, Luke, I applaud the way that you acknowledge that there is a trust issue here, I think it also means that we’re not, we don’t have an effective regulatory regime leer. Now I think the way we get to that is we absolutely need to have consultation in how we get that regulatory framework right. But we also need to make sure that we have clear decision-makers that are empowered to enforce those in the public interest and that the public trusts those decision-makers that they’re empowered and funded and able to enforce it as they’re required to. So it’s why do we regulate? How do we do it effectively is the key thing for us in this space?

>> NARELLE CLARK: I think there’s some fantastic closing remarks there. Thank you to all of the members of this panel and to everybody present. I’d also like to acknowledge our traditional owners upon whose land we stand here today. And recognise again that sovereignty was never ceded. I wonder too if perhaps we had a bit more of that traditional owner input in this we might have a different approach again? Yes. So thank you to everybody who has participated. I’m sorry, we have gone slightly over time. But we’ve had I think a really fascinating session here, haven’t we? Thanks.

>> Thank you very much.

>> CAROL BENNETT: Thank you.

>> So we have made it through day one. Yay. And I think we’ve had some really good conversations. So we have a social networking event that will take place on the other side of those doors and I’d like to ask Pat Cain, our sponsor, if he would like to come up and say a few words.

>> thank you. I was asked as a sponsor of the networking event this afternoon to say a few words and I wasn’t go to. After the third time I got asked I thought I would. So my name is Pat Cain, I’m in Washington DC office and I’d like to introduce Mario West and he leads our Melbourne office. I’m always impressed at least the last several years when I’ve participated in an event here in Australia how you recognise the Indigenous people who occupied this land before we were here today. We don’t have that concept in the US. Although, where I grew up, we knew the land was occupied by tribes because we would always go out to the fields in the back of our homes and find arrow heads. I’m always impressed with that when I participate here in Australia. This morning when Uncle Mickey was talking, I tried to listen closely to what he was saying. It ended up being the first one was are we in harmony? And while we’re not yet in harmony, I think we all want to be in harmony when it comes to this democratising tool called the internet? What should it be? it that we’re trying to do with it? And the second question was who do we serve? When I thought about who we serve, every session we had today, it didn’t come right out and say who it was, but we’re always talking about who depended upon the services and who depended upon the thins we were talking about were we doing from that standpoint as to who we served? It’s not about the internet we have and it’s not about the internet that we want. And Carol Bennett said this was it’s about the internet and the people we serve expect. And I think at the end of the day that’s what we’re trying to do within the Internet Governance Forum either here, other ones I participate in and I’m looking forward to day two and see how that theme continues to roll through. I look forward to introducing myself to you all this afternoon in the networking event and thank you very much.

>> Thank you very much, Pat. So tomorrow we kick-off at 9:00. We will be discussing the social contract idea and also the paper that was developed last year in the WSIS 2024 and if we’re OK with the update. Really important to get your update on that. If we could see you at 9:00 tomorrow morning, that would be greatly appreciated. Thanks, folks.

>> I think I lost my mobile phone. If anyone sees a mini iPhone 12 green, please let me know.