CATHY EASTE: We now come to the part on the program that is the ATEND life member presentation. My name is Cathy Easte. I am actually now the new President of ATEND, as of the AGM here on Monday night. So hopefully you will all get to meet me, if you haven't met me, in time. Before I start I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of all the lands on which we meet which are many and we're in many different States and places at the moment, and acknowledge their Elders past, present and emerging. So ATEND always uses the Pathways conference to award life members, or it has in the past few years and so forth. We have two life members today. Firstly, Kay Deane. And Kay is with us today and Kay can turn her camera on if she's comfortable doing that at the moment. Hi Kay. Kay Dean has been - has had a substantial impact on disability in education for well over 40 years. Kay started her career in the disability sector in the University of Newcastle way back in 1980 as an equity officer. And in 1980 there would probably be very few equity officers in existence. Eventually she went on to manage the assistive technology team back in the time when computers and technology were in their infancy. So in 2003, Kay ran the first ever assistive technology Expo and had over 6,502 attendees on that day. As an attendee I thought it was a really good thing. This was before there were many online booking systems and the only help she received was from students helping at the registration desk on that day. In 1993, Kay and her fellow equity colleagues from the University of Newcastle established NATEA - and I'm sorry, I can't recall what NATEA stands for - to support fellow practitioners in the higher education sector, which is the forefront to today’s FEA, and most of us are very familiar with FEA. So as one of the original 11 RDLO’s, Kay was instrumental in the extension of the program and was invited by Canberra to be part of the select committee from DCO’s, Disability Coordination Officers for the TAFE sector. Kay was a part of the consultative group to bring these two groups together to its eventual evolution of what the current NDCO program is in 2005 when it started. Kay has also been very actively involved in the development of practitioner association, she was a member of the steering committee to establish a professional association in New South Wales and the ACT and served on the management committee for many years holding a number of executive positions. She was integral to the establishment and implementation of the Dean professional development program and administered the New South Wales disability list for many years. Later Kay assisted Dean to become ATEND New South Wales State Chapter of ATEND national. Kay has been involved with the following - and it is a list - executive member of the Australian association special education, student equity officer when equity became a thing and made changes for students with disabilities, piloted strategies and led working parties with New South Wales and ACT universities, member of UDAN, university disability alliance network, and helped form TEDCA, tertiary, education, disability consultants alliance, all of which are precursors to today's ATEND. So the rollout of the educational access scheme. She was a member of the university admissions centre advising on disability, established on DGAE, Hunter and central coast, developed support for supporters, supporting businesses who employed students with disability, a part of the NDIS trial roll out in the Newcastle region and piloted strategies in disadvantaged high schools. Kay has presented papers at many Pathways conferences and other conferences and has always been a very strong advocate for students to attain accessibility to higher education and graduate employment. Kay has also been a strong advocate for the professional development for disability practitioners and the importance of a professional association such as ATEND, and has attended every Pathways since she assisted in its inception. Kay's contribution to people with disabilities in the educational sector has been very significant and she has been a champion for substantial change, growth and development over many years. Kay has influenced professional practice and training and has been an agent for the acceptance of access and inclusion for people with disability among academics, government departments and the wider community, and has commanded respect and admiration from her peers. So thank you very much, Kay, from ATEND, and from those who acknowledge you and the wider practitioners. Now, we normally have a plaque or something to give you, but as you probably heard that is not available but we will make sure we get that available to you.

KAY DEANE: Thank you.

CATHY: So can everybody just join me and just, you know, a round of applause. Thank you. You might not be able to hear it because everyone is on mute but thank you very, very much, Kay.

KAY: Thanks so much, Cathy. Look, I knew nothing about this honour. It's a complete surprise. And I'm just absolutely thrilled to be considered for this award. I'm gobsmacked. And, look, it reflects on my 40 years in higher education. I would like to thank my family and friends, the University of Newcastle, my TAFE and uni colleagues for supporting and collaborating with me on all this work we have achieved across the sector. I truly have seen the evolution of disability and equity in further education over my 40 years in higher education. 40 years, I know you're all saying, "But she looks so young, how is that possible?" But there's so many things I've been involved with, and just very briefly, I remember at the 2002 Pathways we were saying in a car in the rain, "Gee, it would be good if we had a central point where we could put information", that conversation turned into NSET, which is now ADCET, running the very early UDL workshops using the CAST model in the early 2000’s and it was a new concept for so many people but introducing that to the Catholic, the private, the TAFE and the university sector, and working with them, how can we do this, and being really excited to be able to try and take it forward. But we all know in our sectors that you need champions higher up, you need champions in senior management to go with you on that journey, and 10 steps forward and then management changes, you go five steps back. So that's the nature of our sector. And one of the - one of the key points, too, is when I was lecturing for our faculty of education at the University of Newcastle, was working with a Masters students on inclusive technology. I ran lots of conferences early, very early, until I collaborated later with NDCO’s from 2007, and working with Masters students to actually set up inclusive technology in their home countries for their departments of education. And Barbara Lansburg, I have to mention her, she has been in that journey with me and our fellow NDCO’s from 2000 and she is with Texthelp and probably here today and Jim Spiralis and later Greg O'Connor and Jerry Kennedy, the inclusive technology in education journey, which I introduced to the sector and then collaborated with colleagues. I'm really proud of that. And I'm proud of my work at UAC because the educational access scheme, the standardised scheme for New South Wales and the ACT, to work on the working group and the special working group, it took a while but we made it. And I've seen the effect of that on people. Success in access participation is really heart warming that I've had a role in that, collaborating with a whole lot of you out there, some of the you have long retired, my goodness, but we did make a difference, a big difference. So, look, my challenge to you is embrace the information that we've learned at this conference. COVID has changed things. Really changed things permanently. And what we're doing with this, how we take that forward, I really challenge you to keep the fight going for true UDL, true inclusive education. We can do it. I'm feeling that we're on the same page. And we heard from DESI that they're on the same page too. They were mentioning things and they're here, they're speaking to us and I think we're at a crossroads. So I really believe we're at a time for change. So my challenge is keep the momentum going and embrace it all and professional development is so important. Please, any managers out there, do encourage your staff to come to Pathways every two years, and to be part of any professional development available because we don't know what we don't know. I was working in the day with no email, no internet, no Disability Discrimination Act, so we had to listen to the students about how to do things. So we've come to a time when, look, we're all online. My God. So let's take that forward and let's keep working. So I'm retiring in two weeks. So this is a great full stop on my career. Thank you so much for the honour. So apparently I walk out in two weeks' time and I'm not supposed to come to work the following Monday or any Mondays after that but I will be on LinkedIn and I will miss you all but my greatest thing in my career is working with all of you collaboratively in achieving a whole lot of things for the sector. So thanks very much, Cathy.

CATHY: Thank you. Thank you very much, Kay. And hopefully we will still see you about and you will still be involved. There is another Pathways, okay, you still can come. So thank you very much. Okay.

KAY: Thank you.

CATHY: If you haven't already, please add your congratulations in the chat, if you can't clap, you can’t pat her on the back, do add your congratulations in the chat. I'm sure Kay will enjoy reading that.

KAY: Thank you.

CATHY: Okay. We do have to be wary of time. We do have another life member. So our second life member is the wonderful Darlene, or as my auto captions call her, darling. So the darling Darlene McLennan has brought herself a national reputation as an outstanding advocate for equity of opportunity for people with disability. In her advocacy she’s been both creative and tireless embracing new technologies and opportunities to engage with critical stakeholders, through her seven-year tenure as mentor of the Australian Disability clearing house on education and training, ADCET, and 15 years in the role of the NDCO for northern Tasmania, Darlene has been innovative in the provision of vital information for the sector through delivery of webinars, podcasts, guidelines, through facilitation of information exchange. She has deepened the sector's knowledge, identified and addressed key issues affecting the participation of people with disability in tertiary education. She has informed good practice and policy and ensuring research and other knowledge is readily available and always accessible. She has been instrumental in initiating key training for the sector, including disability in VET and undertaking the redevelopment of the introduction of disability awareness e-learning training that is widely used within numerous organisations throughout Australia. During her role as a ATEND President, Darlene has been involved in the implementation in professional standards and code of ethics, as well as establishing a membership model for the tertiary education sector. She continues her strong association with ATEND as the current ADCET representative on the national ATEND committee and as Tasmanian state chapter convenor. Darlene is an active contributor to ATEND advocacy submissions, for example the 2020 review of disability standards for education in 2005. Darlene's involvement in the local community is substantial, having been a Board member of new horizons for a number of years and working tirelessly within the University of Tasmania to increase awareness for students with disabilities within university. She has played a key role in developing inclusive toolkit for staff which aims to enhance the understanding of disability amongst UTAS staff, provide UTAS staff with resources to support students with disabilities improve the understanding and application of learning access plans at UTAS and provide a resource that UTAS content specific aligned with current processes, policies and procedures. The attributes that Darlene is valued for locally transcend her national and international stakeholder relationship. She brings people together to work collaboratively in a strengths-based and complimentary way. She leads by example, encouraging and supporting, information sharing which allows people with common interests and purpose to share information, knowledge and experience, all who know her value Darlene as a strong networker and collaborator and acknowledge her as a passionate and tireless mentor, advocate, supporter, leader, facilitator, connector, strategic and conceptual thinker, friend, role model, champion for inclusion and driver of change. Her far-reaching impact of her words access in driving opportunities for people with disability throughout Australia and beyond make her a worthy recipient of the life membership of ATEND. Thank you and congratulations, Darlene.

DARLENE MCLENNAN: Thank you, Cathy. I'm very emotional now. I am so honoured and I want to thank all the people who took the time to nominate me. Many of you would have heard me say that I'm so grateful to have the best job in the world. Now I'm going to cry. I've been working in the sector as the NDCO since May 2005, as Kay mentioned, and was the ATEND President for a number of years, and more recently the Manager of ADCET. The collegiality, respect and willingness to share knowledge and practice across the sector continues to amaze me. We really are the best sector. There are many things I'm proud of achieving throughout this time but I want to acknowledge that none of it could have been achieved on my own. There are so many wonderful people who have supported me, worked with me and became my friend in the process. I don't want to start naming people in the fear I will miss someone off but I hope these people know that I appreciate and love them. During my time as President of ATEND, the ATEND committee developed our professional standards of practice for ATEND members and code of ethics. Ironically we also set up the life membership award, which I never thought I would be receiving, and we started the website. Being on ATEND is one of the best professional development opportunities around. I was asked to be on the committee at the Melbourne's Pathways in 2008 and sat there quietly in the background for a couple of years not really understanding what was being said. Then at one AGM I had made the plan I would resign, as I felt I wasn't offering any value and I left that meeting as President. And that's where my life changed. ATEND has given me so much. Lifelong friendships, it has kept my passion and fire in my belly. It has enabled me to make positive differences at a personal and strategic level and enabled me to work with others to bring about real change. This past year COVID has put all of us in touch with our personal vulnerabilities, but also the vulnerabilities of our sector, the shifting priorities and the budget restraints. We now need to rise to these challenges and continue our work. While this award is often given to people with a Swan song, you can't get rid of me that easy. There is so much more work to be done in meeting these challenges and so much more that can be achieved. And I'm still passionate as ever in doing my part. There are a couple of big ticket items I wanted to just bring to people's attention that I'm going to continue to fight for with others. Getting disability firmly back on the equity table at the Federal Government level. So many recent government reports and policy directions in the equity space, disability is no longer being mentioned. We need - it is teetering on the edge of the equity table or sometimes fallen off completely. We need to continue to chip away at moving the approach to disability from a medical and social rights to a more human rights perspective, and to ensure that the voice of students and staff in the sector with disability is centre and foremost of the decision-making. There is still much more to do to turn the rhetoric of nothing about us without us into reality and we worked hard at this Pathways conference to ensure a number of our presenters had a lived experience of disability. The other important barrow I wanted to keep pushing is professionalise the role of us as disability practitioners. Whether this is through post-grad qualifications or minimum requirements or points for ongoing professional development, this is something that our dear colleague and friend and life member of ATEND, Trevor Allan spoke about in Pathways 6 in 2002. And nearly 20 years on we're still talking about it and I would like to encourage us to take that further. The positions I've held have also given me a unique perspective. I see that there is so much variance with the support provision on students with disabilities in tertiary education. Some might make sense in responding to local contexts but in other cases we would be better served if we engaged in benchmarking to consider critical questions, such as what might be the minimum number of disability practitioners per students with disability in tertiary education. These are only a few of the things on my wish list and each conference the list gets bigger as it's time to reflect and be energised by the knowledge, passion and commitment from others in the sector. In conclusion, thank you so much again for this honour. Thank you to my colleagues, friends and family. Now I'm going to cry. I really do feel humbled, privileged to be acknowledged for something that brings me so much meaning, purpose and joy to my life. And if you're not an ATEND member, I encourage you to join and to participate in your State committee in the national campaigns and other forums. I also just want to recognise my - Kay Dean as a fellow life member with me now. Congratulations Kay. It's going to sad to see you leave from the sector. But the last word is I want to give to Helen Keller who wisely said, “Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much”. Thank you.

CATHY: Thank you, Darlene. True words. True words. And I'm so pleased, as Merrin says, you're not leaving the sector. And Kay may be retiring, it doesn't mean she's leaving ATEND. We don't give life members just so you can disappear and watch the sunset. We call upon you. So thank you. Thank you very much to Kay and Darlene. And I will hand back to Anthony. And don't forget, you can still put your - you can still put your congratulations in the chat. And I'm sure you can also contact them both personally and I hope they both will stay around for drinks and you can join them in drinks and perhaps have a chat to them later this afternoon. So join me again and just saying congratulations.