

**AUSTRALIAN ACCESS AWARDS — CENTRE FOR ACCESSIBILITY AUSTRALIA**

*Statement by Minister for Disability Services*

**MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Disability Services)** [9.30 am]: I am delighted to rise today to inform the house of the Australian Access Awards I attended in celebration of the achievements of organisations and individuals who are demonstrating best practice in digital accessibility, both nationally and here in Western Australia. The Australian Access Awards have continued to grow in strength since 2019 and, as Minister for Disability Services, I am proud to see the passion, commitment and progressive approach to inclusiveness that these awards demonstrate. Digital accessibility is at the heart of inclusion. These awards are a fantastic channel for showcasing outstanding digital accessibility initiatives and highlighting best practice for the greater participation of people with disability. As a fellow Western Australian, I must add that I was thrilled to see individuals, organisations and government agencies from WA among the finalists, as well as representation and sponsorship by the state government's Office of Digital Government on the night. Our country is extremely lucky to have innovative organisations that are dedicated to creating positive change for the 4.4 million people in Australia who have a disability, ensuring they can maximise their potential and participate as equal citizens in society.

This work supports the Cook government's work and vision laid out in the *State Disability Strategy 2020–2030*. This strategy sets the direction over the next 10 years for a more inclusive Western Australia that acknowledges and responds to the value of diversity in our community. Although there are many great initiatives underway across Australia to improve accessibility, the reality is that too much of the digital world is still inaccessible for too many people. The Global Accessibility Awareness Day Foundation's mission is to disrupt the culture of technology and digital product development to include accessibility as a core requirement. The awards show us that accessibility can be achieved without sacrificing design or usability and they demonstrate best practice examples for many organisations to learn from.

I would like to commend the Centre for Accessibility for continuing to ensure that digital accessibility remains at the forefront of conversation and supports the inclusion of people with disability. I pay thanks once again to the finalists and winners for their innovative work in developing leading resources that are accessible to everyone.