

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Ai-Media CEO Tony Abrahams Joins the Board of Northcott Disability Services**

30 September 2010

Leading not-for-profit disability services provider, Northcott Disability Services, today announced the appointment of Ai-Media Chief Executive Officer Tony Abrahams to Northcott's Board of Directors.

Mr Abrahams is the co-founder of Ai-Media which specialises in developing innovative services for people with deafness and hearing impairment to improve their access. Ai-Media strongly supports the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme to assist all people with any disability.

Northcott Disability Services is an independent organisation that supports more than 8000 children and adults with a broad range of disabilities, their families and carers across NSW and the ACT.

Northcott's Chairman Mr Michael Briggs said: "Tony is an experienced, vigorous and articulate advocate for people with disability. He will be a great addition to our Board as we continue our work to assist people with disability to enjoy inclusion in the community and a better life experience".

Mr Abrahams said: "It is a great honour to join the Board of Northcott – an organisation with a proud history of transforming lives by delivering access and inclusion for people with disability for more than 80 years."

"I am particularly excited to join the Board during a period that promises long-overdue and significant reform to Australia's disability sector. With cross-party commitment in the new Parliament in Canberra to disability services reform, a National Disability Insurance Scheme should be possible soon. The related Productivity Commission report is due by mid-2011, so it is vital that voices with experience of how best to deliver inclusion for people with a complex range of impairments are properly heard."

#### **Further information:**

Northcott Disability Services – Savanna Robinson - 0408 659 779; 98900170  
Ai-Media - Jo Booth, Ai-Media, 0412 233 900; 02 9813 6780

#### **About Northcott Disability Services:**

Northcott Disability Services is an independent, not-for-profit organisation founded by The Rotary Club of Sydney to provide for children with tuberculosis, polio and other diseases.

Today, Northcott Disability Services supports more than 8000 children and adults with disabilities, their families and carers across NSW and the ACT.

Northcott provides programs to people with physical, intellectual, sensory, acquired and degenerative disabilities, as well as challenging behaviours. Some people with rare or lesser known disabilities find Northcott to be the only provider of appropriate support and services.

Northcott's purpose is to build an inclusive society.

Northcott employs more than 400 people including case workers, direct support workers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers and speech pathologists to reach clients within their own community in metropolitan and regional areas.

Northcott receives some Government funding. It also relies on support from individuals, organisations and community groups to continue to provide its services, particularly in programs where non-government or limited support is available.

### About Ai-Media

Access Innovation Media (Ai-Media) is a social enterprise that develops and delivers access services for media, education, business and government clients to ensure their content is available to people with hearing and vision impairments.

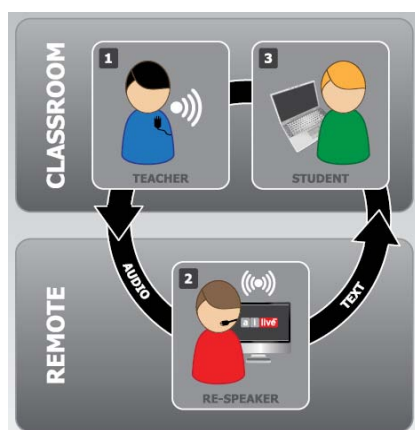
The company provides the following services:

- Pre-recorded captioning and subtitling for television, DVD, online and corporate presentations
- Live captioning using respelling and steno methodologies for broadcast, conference, meetings, online and mobile
- Transcripts
- Audio description

Ai-Media introduced large-scale cost-effective captioning to subscription television in 2004 – a service that has now grown to deliver over 120,000 hours across 45 channels annually.

In April, Ai-Media launched "Ai-Live", a unique system created in Australia that delivers live captioning into classrooms via a laptop and broadband technology so that students with hearing impairment can easily follow any teacher's lessons in mainstream classes. Ai-Live has been designed to allow deaf and hearing impaired students to participate fully in mainstream schools and also to deliver access to higher education, work, community courses and conferences.

### How Ai-Live™ Works:



Ai-Live™ works by having teachers in mainstream classrooms wear a lapel microphone. A teacher's live speech is then relayed by broadband technology to a skilled, hearing-able person – who could be located working from home for example – who "respeaks" the lesson into software that instantaneously translates it into text on a screen. The text is then transmitted via the internet to a deaf student's laptop in the originating classroom with only a few seconds delay. During development, it has been proven that deaf students can follow ordinary lessons with ease, improving their literacy and learning without interruption to regular classroom activity.

**Further information:** Jo Booth, Ai-Media, 0412 233 900; 02 9813 6780  
[www.ai-media.tv](http://www.ai-media.tv) | [www.ai-live.com](http://www.ai-live.com) | twitter @AccessInclusion | Facebook: AccessInclusion