

Public Policy Report

auDA's Public Policy Report – July to December 2024

In this issue we provide a snapshot of our internet governance and public policy work, leadership and contribution to policy discussions domestically and internationally in the six months to 31 December 2024. We also share recent submissions and highlight aspects of emerging tech trends. These activities support our goal to foster a secure and innovative digital environment for Australians.

As always, we welcome your feedback or comments. Please navigate to the relevant policy section below:

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Domestic public policy matters

Emerging tech policy trends

In the second half of 2024, cyber security remained a priority in Australia, with increased support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) through government programs like the [cyber health check](#). Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration in cyber security grew, enhancing threat detection, while cloud security concerns became more pronounced as more businesses migrated to the cloud. The period saw the Australian government introduce multiple laws concerning digital identity, privacy, AI, cyber security and online safety.

In August 2024, the Australian government announced the [Trust Exchange initiative \(tEX\)](#), a key project providing a secure framework for identity verification across sectors, enhancing digital trust and reducing fraud risks.

In September 2024, the [Privacy and Other Legislation Bill 2024](#) was introduced into Parliament containing the 'first tranche' of reforms to Australia's privacy law. This Bill sets out amendments designed to address legislative change in relation to automated decisions, overseas disclosure of personal information, data security and data



breaches, children’s privacy, civil penalties, enforcement powers and a statutory tort for serious invasions of privacy.

Also in September, consultations, the [proposals paper for introducing mandatory guardrails for AI in high-risk settings](#) and a new [Voluntary AI Safety Standard](#), were introduced by the Australian Government as a first step in regulating AI in Australia.

In November 2024, the Federal Government passed a suite of legislative reforms to enhance Australia’s cyber security. These comprised of the [Cyber Security Act 2024](#), the [Intelligence Services and Other Legislation Amendment \(Cyber Security\) Act 2024](#) and the [Security of Critical Infrastructure and Other Legislation Amendment \(Enhanced Response and Prevention\) Act 2024](#). Key measures include mandatory ransomware payment reporting within 72 hours, security standards for Internet of Things (IoT) devices and the establishment of an independent Cyber Incident Review Board for post-incident reviews. The legislation also expands the definition of critical infrastructure to include data storage systems and strengthens government powers to intervene during incidents affecting critical infrastructure.

The [Online Safety Amendment \(Social Media Minimum Age\) Act 2024](#) was also passed in December 2024. The Act introduces a mandatory minimum age of 16 for accounts on certain social media platforms, one part of the Government’s broader strategy to create safer digital spaces for everyone. This policy is intended to strengthen existing measures for protecting young users. This change is connected with the broader [Digital Duty of care](#) that the Government intends to legislate.

Submissions

auDA submitted views in the following consultations from July to December 2024.

Agency	Consultation	Date lodged
First Nations Digital Advisory Group	Creation of a First Nations Digital Inclusion Roadmap	July 2024
Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR)	Proposal Paper for Introducing mandatory guardrails for AI in high-risk settings	October 2024
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security	Inquiry into the Cyber Security Legislative Package 2024	October 2024



Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee	Inquiry into the Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 (Provisions)	October 2024
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[When submissions and consultation responses are made public, auDA publishes them on the website, these can be found here.](#)

The Sydney Dialogue

The [Sydney Dialogue](#) is an annual summit led by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI). [The Sydney Dialogue was created](#) to help break down silos and bring together political leaders, senior officials, technology industry innovators and civil society leaders. It was held in Sydney 2-3 September 2024.

auDA was represented by the Chief Communications Officer Sophie Mitchell. This year, the event explored the increasingly sophisticated nature of cybercrime, online disinformation, hybrid warfare and electoral interference, all of which are exacerbated by AI technologies. Discussions highlighted the critical risks these pose to societal stability. Recommendations and outcomes included necessity of robust AI governance, building cyber resilience at regional and national levels, fostering innovation and supportive environments for start-ups and small-medium enterprises.

Internet governance and global policy

Asia Pacific Internet Governance Academy Australia (APIGA Australia)

auDA hosted the inaugural [Asia Pacific Internet Governance Academy Australia \(APIGA Australia\)](#) in Melbourne on 20-21 November 2024. APIGA Australia welcomed 40 participants aged 18-35 from diverse academic and professional backgrounds, providing a platform to cultivate the next generation of leaders to shape the future of the internet.

Funded by auDA's Public Benefit Program, APIGA Australia is the first Australian chapter of the regional APIGA program held annually in South Korea and includes fellowships for two top participants to attend the 2025 South Korean program, fostering Australian contributions to global internet governance. Read more about the event in our [APIGA Australia 2024 blog](#).



Asia Pacific Internet Governance Academy (APIGA)

The Asia Pacific Internet Governance Academy (APIGA) was held 8-12 July 2024.

APIGA aims to build capacity in regional internet governance. auDA's Manager Industry Relations, Michael Lewis, and Tess Patridge from auDA's Compliance Team joined as a facilitator and participant respectively. Find out more about the APIGA experience in [our APIGA Australia blog](#).

Technical Community Coalition for Multistakeholderism (TCCM)

auDA continued its active advocacy for the multi-stakeholderism approach as a core principle for internet governance through [The Technical Community Coalition of Multistakeholderism \(TCCM\)](#).

From July to December 2024, the TCCM shared joint statements at key global policy forums and processes. In December, the [TCCM hosted a hybrid launch](#) event at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2024 to promote the coalition and its work with the wider internet governance community.

Global Digital Compact (GDC)

The [GDC](#) is a key initiative of the UN Secretary-General to establish common ground on principles for a secure, free and inclusive digital future for everyone. The GDC was agreed by governments at the [UN Summit of the Future](#) in September 2024.

auDA engaged in the GDC process largely through the work of the TCCM. Points raised included the importance of broad based, multi-stakeholder input into the GDC and the importance of support for continued multi-stakeholder internet governance, including the continuation of the Internet Governance Forum. You can find information about the statements and input the TCCM made at the website: <https://tccm.global/>

The World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly (WTSA-24) and its regional preparations

The [WTSA](#) is a multi-lateral process, held every four years and sets the priorities for the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Telecommunications Standardisation Sector. Leading up to this event held on 15-24 October 2024, a series of preparatory meetings identified priorities for each of the ITU's six regions. The Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) leads the Asia Pacific Region's preparations for the WTSA-24.

Final outcomes at WTSA-24 expanded the ITU's mandate by way of eight new resolutions that reinforced the ITU's standards development role in new areas such as



AI, metaverse, digital public infrastructure and intelligent transport systems. Overall, the WTSA-24 outcomes were broadly consistent with auDA's objectives to support a free, open, interoperable and global internet. However, debate between those who prefer intergovernmental processes to standard setting versus those of the more inclusive, multi-stakeholder subject-focussed standard setting organisations such as the Internet Engineering Task Force continues. [Find out more about the WTSA-24 in our WTSA blog.](#)

The 2024 Australian Internet Governance Forum (auIGF)

The auIGF took place in Melbourne over 28–29 October 2024 and gathered stakeholders from the government, industry, civil society, and academia to discuss issues and opportunities related to internet governance for Australians, focusing on themes such as digital inclusion, cyber security, privacy, digital rights, and social media use by young people. [Find out more about the auIGF on the auDA website.](#)

The 81st Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers Meeting (ICANN81)

The most recent meeting of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN81) was held on 9–14 November 2024. It marked the company's Annual General Meeting for 2024, meaning that alongside the usual policy development work, the community welcomed new Directors and farewelled departing ones. The meeting focussed on global policy development, management of the domain name system (DNS), and fostering an open, stable, and secure internet, bringing together the community of stakeholders to make critical decisions about the internet's technical coordination. [Read more about ICANN81 on the auDA website.](#)

Internet Governance Forum 2024 (IGF)

The global Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2024 was held on 15–19 December 2024. The IGF provided a platform for dialogue among stakeholders on the theme of "Building our Multistakeholder Digital Future".

This year's forum was structured around four core themes: leveraging innovation while managing digital risks; enhancing digital contributions to peace, development, and sustainability; advancing human rights and inclusion in the digital era; and improving digital governance for a more secure and open internet. auDA was represented by Jordan Carter and Annaliese Williams who helped to introduce the TCCM to the IGF audience, and participated in sessions discussing how to strengthen the IGF and multi-stakeholder internet governance in the run-up to the WSIS+20 review.



Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF)

The APrIGF was held on 21–23 August 2024. The event brought together the local multi-stakeholder community to discuss the theme “Evolving Ecosystems, Enduring Principles: Shaping Responsible Internet Governance”. The auDA delegation presented in several sessions where there was considerable focus on shaping the future of internet governance in the Asia Pacific, and on discussing how the GDC and the WSIS+20 review might interact with this work.

Asia Pacific Top-Level Domain Association (APTLD 86)

[APTLD](#) is the regional organisation for ccTLD (country code Top Level Domain) registries in the Asia Pacific region. APTLD 86 was held from 17–19 September 2024.

auDA staff at the event presented and moderated several panels, speaking about internet fragmentation, the GDC and auDA’s work with the Papua New Guinea ccTLD (.pg). |

Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC58), the Pacific Internet Governance Forum and others

[APNIC 58](#), the annual conference for the Asia Pacific Network Information Centre, and the [Pacific Internet Governance Forum](#) was held from 30 August to 6 September 2024. The conference brought together technical internet experts, government representatives, industry leaders and other interested parties from around the region. auDA was represented at the event and discussed priorities to support the development of the internet in the Pacific.

To aid in strengthening the internet and its governance across the region, auDA and partners delivered two events alongside APNIC 58. One was the Pacific country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD) Forum, bringing together ccTLD managers from the region to discuss issues of mutual interest. The second was a donor forum which brought together Pacific Island internet organisations, the technical community and funding organisations to discuss priorities to support the development of the internet in the Pacific and strengthen the Pacific multi-stakeholder community. auDA’s Public Benefit Program supported these two events. [Read more about auDA’s contribution to internet governance in the Asia Pacific region in our advancing global internet governance blog.](#)



What we're reading

The following items related to internet governance, digital policy and regulation may be of interest for further reading:

[Joint Statement on Competition in Generative AI Foundation Models and AI Products](#) (July 2024)

What's it about: The joint statement from the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC), European Commission, Consumer and Markets Authority (UK) and other partner agencies highlights concerns about AI's potential to harm consumers through biased algorithms, privacy violations and deceptive business practices. The document illustrates the need for AI regulation and transparency to prevent misuse and protect consumer rights by taking a human-centric approach to AI governance.

Why we are interested: auDA's commitment to trustworthy AI and ethical digital practices aligns with its broader policy goals of protecting internet users' digital rights and fostering transparent, inclusive governance of the .au domain. In line with its approach to AI, auDA advocates for a human-centric perspective that prioritises the welfare, safety, and rights of Australian internet users, ensuring that digital innovation serves the public good while upholding the principles of fairness and accountability.

[CENTR fireside chat: Interoperability and standardisation start with DNS](#) (December 2024)

What's it about: The CENTR fireside chat focused on the European Digital Identity Regulation (eIDAS 2.0), which aims to provide secure, interoperable digital identities for EU citizens and residents by 2026. The discussion explored the role of digital wallets, standardisation, and the DNS in achieving cross-border interoperability. It also highlighted how digital identity solutions could enhance the accuracy of domain registration data and support cyber security compliance under EU regulations.

Why we are interested: EU's approach to digital identity and its integration with DNS operations provides valuable insights for enhancing cyber security and domain management practices. Understanding these global trends can inform Australia's own digital identity and internet infrastructure strategies, ensuring interoperability, security and innovation in managing the .au domain. This is relevant given Australia is also adopting a similar regime, starting with [the Digital ID Act 2024](#) that came into force in December 2024.



[IGF 2024 in Riyadh: AI, WSIS+20 and the Global South](#) (January 2025)

What it's about: The article provides a summary of key topics of discussion from the 2024 IGF in December 2024. Prof. Kleinwächter is a long-time observer and participant in internet governance and his astute observations about the 2024 IGF will be of interest.

Why we are interested: 2024 marked an important moment in the IGF's existence, being the second to last under its current mandate. The article is a helpful read out for those interested in a summary of the event.

Upcoming events and Webinars

auDA hosts regular webinars on a range of issues including on public policy matters and debriefs on key internet governance events. [Keep track of our webinar and events schedule and register here.](#)

Contact auDA's Policy team via public.policy@auda.org.au for more information on our policy and advocacy initiatives and other related matters.