

# Board Paper

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| Meeting     | Board Meeting                          |
| Date        | 16 October 2025                        |
| Agenda item | 8. Licensing Rules Review Panel Report |
| Prepared by | Matt Healy, LRRP Chair                 |

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| <b>Purpose and context:</b> | To provide the Board with an update on the work of the Licensing Rules Review Panel and share the attached Project Plan and Engagement Plan for information. |
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| <b>Recommendation:</b> | That the Board note the update. |
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# Project Plan

## Policy Advisory Panel 2025 – review of the .au Licensing Rules

### Background

.au Domain Administration (auDA) is an Australian not-for-profit community based organisation, endorsed by the Australian Government to manage the .au domain for the benefit of all Australians. One of auDA's core functions under the Terms of Endorsement is to administer a licensing regime for .au domain names based in multi-stakeholder processes which is transparent, responsive, accountable, accessible and efficient.

The .au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing (.au Licensing Rules) set out the rules to licence .au domain names as part of the overall licensing regime, the .au Licensing Framework.

The auDA Board has appointed an external Policy Advisory Panel to undertake a multi-stakeholder review of the .au Licensing Rules to ensure these rules reflect community expectations and remain relevant and effective over time.

One of the deliverables of the Policy Advisory Panel is a Project Plan which sets out a high level view of the project, including the timelines and the deliverables.

The Terms of Endorsement require auDA to support fair and transparent multi-stakeholder engagement processes and take into consideration a full range of stakeholder views, when reviewing or developing policies related to auDA's core functions.

Information about the review, including the review terms and conditions, can be found on the dedicated webpage: <https://www.auda.org.au/public-impact/have-your-say/policy-panels/au-licensing-rules-review-2025/>.

### Project overview

The Policy Advisory Panel will review the .au Licensing Rules to ensure they remain fit for purpose, reflect community expectations, and support auDA's policy objectives. The review will be conducted in stages from September 2025 to June 2026, with clear deliverables

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|                                             | <p>aligned to stakeholder engagement, drafting, consultation, and final reporting.</p> <p>Deliverables of the Policy Advisory Panel include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This project plan</li> <li>• An engagement plan</li> <li>• Regular updates to the auDA Board</li> <li>• Demonstrated wide engagement and consultation on the issues</li> <li>• A draft report for public consultation</li> <li>• A final report to the auDA Board with recommendations.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p><b>Timeline and key deliverables</b></p> | <p>The time line is indicative only, and contingent on the issues raised and the requirement to undertake a thorough multi stakeholder engagement process.</p> <p><b>September/October 2025 – Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deliverable:</b> Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Project Plan</li> <li>• Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify key stakeholder groups (registrars, registrants, government, industry, consumer groups, and the general public).</li> <li>○ Map engagement methods (surveys, roundtables, written submissions, webinars).</li> <li>○ Develop communication materials and schedule.</li> <li>○ Develop and publish project plan and engagement plan.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>September – November 2025 – Stakeholder Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deliverable:</b> Completion of engagement with stakeholders and the public.</li> <li>• Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Conduct structured engagement activities (consultations, meetings, submissions).</li> <li>○ Record and analyse stakeholder input.</li> <li>○ Identify common themes, issues, and emerging recommendations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>December 2025 – Drafting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deliverable:</b> Draft Report</li> <li>• Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Panel consolidates stakeholder feedback.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

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|                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assess and document policy options, risks, and benefits.</li> <li>○ Prepare a draft report with preliminary recommendations.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>February 2026 – Public Consultation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deliverable:</b> Consultation on Draft Report</li> <li>• Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Publish draft report for public review.</li> <li>○ Collect feedback via submissions, forums, and targeted engagement.</li> <li>○ Analyse consultation feedback to refine recommendations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>April – June 2026 – Finalisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deliverable:</b> Final Report to auDA Board</li> <li>• Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Integrate public consultation outcomes into final recommendations.</li> <li>○ Draft and endorse final report.</li> <li>○ Present to the auDA Board for decision.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>Panel meetings</b>       | <p>The Panel will meet on a monthly basis, in addition to engagement and consultation activity. See the Panel Engagement Plan for an overview of the Panel’s approach to multistakeholder engagement.</p> <p>The agendas and minutes of the Panel meetings will be published on the Panel webpage. Panel members undertaking consultation and engagement activities will report on those activities in the Panel meetings, and a summary of stakeholder input will be included in the Panel meeting minutes.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Supporting documents</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Terms of Reference of the .au Licensing Rules Review 2025</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">.au Licensing Rules</a></li> <li>• auDA corporate policy <a href="#">Process for the Development and Review of auDA Published Policies</a>, which sets out the process under which the review will be undertaken</li> <li>• auDA <a href="#">Terms of Endorsement</a> from the Australian Government</li> <li>• <a href="#">NETmundial+10 Multistakeholder Statement</a> (including São Paulo Guidelines)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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|                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• auDA <a href="#">Engagement Charter</a> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stakeholder Engagement Plan available on the Panel webpage: <a href="https://www.auda.org.au/public-impact/have-your-say/policy-panels/au-licensing-rules-review-2025/">https://www.auda.org.au/public-impact/have-your-say/policy-panels/au-licensing-rules-review-2025/</a></li> </ol> </li> </ul> |
| <b>Risks and Mitigations</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low engagement → Mitigate with targeted outreach and multiple feedback channels.</li> <li>2. Timing slippage → Set clear milestones and check-ins each month.</li> <li>3. Stakeholder disagreement → Transparent process and clear rationale for recommendations.</li> </ol>                                                                                                          |

# Stakeholder Engagement Plan

## Policy Advisory Panel 2025 – review of the .au Licensing Rules

### Background

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The .au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing (.au Licensing Rules) set out the rules to licence .au domain names as part of the overall licensing regime, the .au Licensing Framework.

The auDA Board has appointed an external Policy Advisory Panel to undertake a multi-stakeholder review of the .au Licensing Rules to ensure these rules reflect community expectations and remain relevant and effective over time.

One of the deliverables of the Policy Advisory Panel is this Engagement Plan, to be published on the Review webpage, which identifies the relevant stakeholders and how consultation with these stakeholders will be undertaken.

The Terms of Endorsement require auDA to support fair and transparent multi-stakeholder engagement processes and take into consideration the full range of stakeholder views, when reviewing or developing policies related to auDA's core functions.

Information about the review, including the review terms and conditions, can be found on the dedicated webpage: <https://www.auda.org.au/public-impact/have-your-say/policy-panels/au-licensing-rules-review-2025/>.

| Engagement objectives                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that all relevant stakeholder groups are made aware of the review and given an opportunity to contribute, and key stakeholders provide feedback through direct engagement.</li><li>• Raise public awareness of the review and encourage submissions by interested parties.</li><li>• Ensure an accessible, transparent and clear engagement process.</li><li>• Ensure a respectful consultation process and exchange of ideas, in accordance with the auDA Engagement Charter.</li><li>• Receive feedback /submissions from a range of relevant stakeholders to inform the Panel’s recommendations and report to the auDA Board.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |              |                                       |                                                                |                          |                      |
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| Multi-stakeholder engagement guidelines                        | <p>Through its internet governance work, auDA is a contributor to, and supporter of, the NETmundial+10 Multistakeholder Statement. This statement includes a set of guidelines and process steps for effective implementation of multi-stakeholder internet governance (Sao Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines).</p> <p>The São Paulo Guidelines promote best practice in multi-stakeholder policy processes, for example, having clear processes, making sure information is accessible to stakeholders and explaining how feedback shapes decisions. The work of the Policy Advisory Panel will be guided by the best practice principles in the São Paulo Guidelines.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |              |                                       |                                                                |                          |                      |
| Supporting documents                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Terms of Reference of the .au Licensing Rules Review 2025</a></li><li>• <a href="#">.au Licensing Rules</a></li><li>• auDA corporate policy <a href="#">Process for the Development and Review of auDA Published Policies</a>, which sets out the process under which the review will be undertaken</li><li>• auDA <a href="#">Terms of Endorsement</a> from the Australian Government</li><li>• <a href="#">NETmundial+10 Multistakeholder Statement</a> (including São Paulo Guidelines)</li><li>• auDA <a href="#">Engagement Charter</a></li><li>• Policy Advisory Panel project plan, available on the Panel’s webpage: <a href="https://www.auda.org.au/public-impact/have-your-say/policy-panels/au-licensing-rules-review-2025/">https://www.auda.org.au/public-impact/have-your-say/policy-panels/au-licensing-rules-review-2025/</a></li></ul> |              |                                       |                                                                |                          |                      |
| Relevant Stakeholder Groups                                    | <table><tr><th>Stakeholders</th></tr><tr><td>Domain name consumers and registrants</td></tr><tr><td>Federal and State governments, including government regulators</td></tr><tr><td>Registrars and resellers</td></tr><tr><td>Australian community</td></tr></table>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Stakeholders | Domain name consumers and registrants | Federal and State governments, including government regulators | Registrars and resellers | Australian community |
| Stakeholders                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |              |                                       |                                                                |                          |                      |
| Domain name consumers and registrants                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |              |                                       |                                                                |                          |                      |
| Federal and State governments, including government regulators |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |              |                                       |                                                                |                          |                      |
| Registrars and resellers                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |              |                                       |                                                                |                          |                      |
| Australian community                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |              |                                       |                                                                |                          |                      |

|                                                                | Business peak bodies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                 |                      |                                       |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                |                                                                                                             |                          |                                                                                                                                      |                      |                                                                                          |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                              |                                                                                                                                                            |          |                                                                                                     |                      |                                                                                         |                    |                                                                                                                                                            |
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|                                                                | Consumer peak bodies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                 |                      |                                       |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                |                                                                                                             |                          |                                                                                                                                      |                      |                                                                                          |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                              |                                                                                                                                                            |          |                                                                                                     |                      |                                                                                         |                    |                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                | Academia, including students                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                 |                      |                                       |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                |                                                                                                             |                          |                                                                                                                                      |                      |                                                                                          |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                              |                                                                                                                                                            |          |                                                                                                     |                      |                                                                                         |                    |                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                | Registry                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                 |                      |                                       |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                |                                                                                                             |                          |                                                                                                                                      |                      |                                                                                          |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                              |                                                                                                                                                            |          |                                                                                                     |                      |                                                                                         |                    |                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                | Law Institutes/legal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                 |                      |                                       |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                |                                                                                                             |                          |                                                                                                                                      |                      |                                                                                          |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                              |                                                                                                                                                            |          |                                                                                                     |                      |                                                                                         |                    |                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                | Internet community                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                 |                      |                                       |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                |                                                                                                             |                          |                                                                                                                                      |                      |                                                                                          |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                              |                                                                                                                                                            |          |                                                                                                     |                      |                                                                                         |                    |                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Timing</b>                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public consultation and targeted stakeholder engagement will commence in September 2025.</li> <li>A draft report with recommendations will be developed by end of 2025 and referred for further public consultation in early 2026.</li> <li>The final review report with recommendations will be presented to the auDA Board in early to mid 2026.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                 |                      |                                       |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                |                                                                                                             |                          |                                                                                                                                      |                      |                                                                                          |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                              |                                                                                                                                                            |          |                                                                                                     |                      |                                                                                         |                    |                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Engagement methods</b>                                      | <table> <tr> <th>Target audience</th><th>Method of engagement</th></tr> <tr> <td>Domain name consumers and registrants</td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication channels including website, blog, member newsletter, webinar, in person events.</li> </ul> </td></tr> <tr> <td>Federal and state governments, including government regulators</td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct contact with in person meetings where appropriate.</li> </ul> </td></tr> <tr> <td>Registrars and resellers</td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communications as above, and registrar updates and registrar summit.</li> </ul> </td></tr> <tr> <td>Australian community</td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communications as above.</li> </ul> </td></tr> <tr> <td>Business peak bodies</td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication as above, and direct contact including in person meetings where appropriate.</li> </ul> </td></tr> <tr> <td>Consumer peak bodies</td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication as above, and direct contact including in person meetings where appropriate.</li> </ul> </td></tr> <tr> <td>Academia, including students</td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication as above, and direct contact including in person meetings where appropriate.</li> </ul> </td></tr> <tr> <td>Registry</td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct meeting with Australian registry operator.</li> </ul> </td></tr> <tr> <td>Law Institutes/legal</td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication as above.</li> </ul> </td></tr> <tr> <td>Internet community</td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication as above, and direct contact including in person meetings where appropriate.</li> </ul> </td></tr> </table> | Target audience | Method of engagement | Domain name consumers and registrants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication channels including website, blog, member newsletter, webinar, in person events.</li> </ul> | Federal and state governments, including government regulators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct contact with in person meetings where appropriate.</li> </ul> | Registrars and resellers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communications as above, and registrar updates and registrar summit.</li> </ul> | Australian community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communications as above.</li> </ul> | Business peak bodies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication as above, and direct contact including in person meetings where appropriate.</li> </ul> | Consumer peak bodies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication as above, and direct contact including in person meetings where appropriate.</li> </ul> | Academia, including students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication as above, and direct contact including in person meetings where appropriate.</li> </ul> | Registry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct meeting with Australian registry operator.</li> </ul> | Law Institutes/legal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication as above.</li> </ul> | Internet community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication as above, and direct contact including in person meetings where appropriate.</li> </ul> |
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| Academia, including students                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication as above, and direct contact including in person meetings where appropriate.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                 |                      |                                       |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                |                                                                                                             |                          |                                                                                                                                      |                      |                                                                                          |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                              |                                                                                                                                                            |          |                                                                                                     |                      |                                                                                         |                    |                                                                                                                                                            |
| Registry                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct meeting with Australian registry operator.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                 |                      |                                       |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                |                                                                                                             |                          |                                                                                                                                      |                      |                                                                                          |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                              |                                                                                                                                                            |          |                                                                                                     |                      |                                                                                         |                    |                                                                                                                                                            |
| Law Institutes/legal                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication as above.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                 |                      |                                       |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                |                                                                                                             |                          |                                                                                                                                      |                      |                                                                                          |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                              |                                                                                                                                                            |          |                                                                                                     |                      |                                                                                         |                    |                                                                                                                                                            |
| Internet community                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-channel communication as above, and direct contact including in person meetings where appropriate.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                 |                      |                                       |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                |                                                                                                             |                          |                                                                                                                                      |                      |                                                                                          |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                      |                                                                                                                                                            |                              |                                                                                                                                                            |          |                                                                                                     |                      |                                                                                         |                    |                                                                                                                                                            |

**Engagement  
Schedule**

The engagement schedule for public consultation by the Panel will be published on the Panel webpage in October and updated as required: <https://www.auda.org.au/public-impact/have-your-say/policy-panels/au-licensing-rules-review-2025/>

# Board Paper

|             |                                        |
|-------------|----------------------------------------|
| Meeting     | Board Meeting                          |
| Date        | 4 December 2025                        |
| Agenda item | 8. Licensing Rules Review Panel Report |
| Prepared by | Matt Healy, LRRP Chair                 |

|                             |                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Purpose and context:</b> | To provide the Board with an update on the work of the Licensing Rules Review Panel. |
| <b>Recommendation:</b>      | That the Board note the update.                                                      |

## 1. Advice

### Context

The [Licensing Rules Review](#) commenced in September 2025 with the appointment of the Policy Advisory Panel (panel) members and publication of the terms of reference on the auDA website.

### Project Plan and Timeline

The panel was required to publish a [project plan](#) which was tabled at the 16 October 2025 Board meeting. A draft report is still expected to be published in early 2026 with a final report due to the board by June 2026 and this is largely on track. Timing flexibility may need to be revisited early in the new year and in light of the significance of stakeholder feedback. It may be that a further round of consultation prior to the draft report may be needed and if so, a “slippage” of a couple of months may arise. The Chair of the Panel will revisit this potential at upcoming Board reports.

### Stakeholder Engagement Plan

An overview of completed and planned engagements are available in Appendix A. As dates are firmed up, they are published to support the public [stakeholder engagement plan](#). Some themes emerging from recent consultations include:

- The benefits flowing from the “Australianness” in the eligibility requirements.
- The utility of aligning some of the administrative rules with other gTLD jurisdictions



- A “light touch” approach to contested names flowing from the direct registration process.
- Strong differing views around the efficacy of monetisation as a demonstration of compliance with the allocation rules

## Online Public Consultation

On 24 November 2025, [online consultation](#) opened up to the public on the auDA website, facilitated by a short consultation paper. Online submissions are encouraged up until 31 March 2026.

## Panel meetings and board reports

Licensing Rules Review Panel meetings and board reports have been held as follows:

| Date              | Meeting         | Agenda & Minutes published |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 10 September 2025 | Panel induction | Yes                        |
| 16 October 2025   | Board report 1  | Plans published            |
| 22 October 2025   | Panel meeting 1 | Yes                        |
| 19 November 2025  | Panel Meeting 2 | In progress                |
| 4 December 2025   | Board report 2  |                            |
| 9 December 2025   | Panel Meeting 3 |                            |

**Note:** Panel meeting agendas and minutes and board progress reports must be published (within 10 days)

## Appendix A: Stakeholder Engagements

| Date         | Format  | Location  | Description                                                                                                     | Status    |
|--------------|---------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 25 Mar 26    | Event   | Melbourne | Young Australians                                                                                               | Planned   |
| 20 Mar 26    | Event   | Brisbane  | Expo                                                                                                            | Planned   |
| 19 Mar 26    | Event   | Adelaide  | Women’s event                                                                                                   | Planned   |
| 16 Mar 26    | Event   | Perth     | Link to West Tech Festival                                                                                      | Planned   |
| 6 Mar 26     | Event   | Sydney    | auDA membership presence                                                                                        | Planned   |
| 25 Feb 26    | Event   | Canberra  | auDA Member event                                                                                               | Planned   |
| By 31 Dec 25 | Meeting | Online    | Meeting registry operator                                                                                       | Planned   |
| 11 Dec 25    | Online  | Online    | Member consultation                                                                                             | Planned   |
| TBC Dec 2025 | Online  | Online    | auDA team including compliance                                                                                  | Planned   |
| 27 Nov 25    | Online  | Online    | Member information session                                                                                      | Completed |
| 25 Nov 25    | Online  | Online    | Meeting with Department                                                                                         | Completed |
| 18 Nov 25    | Meeting | Darwin    | Meeting with Minister Burgoyne, Office of Digital Government and First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group | Completed |



| Date       | Format | Location  | Description                | Status    |
|------------|--------|-----------|----------------------------|-----------|
| 14 Nov 25  | Event  | Melbourne | Registrar Summit           | Completed |
| 24 Sept 25 | Event  | Adelaide  | Lunchtime session at auIGF | Completed |

# Board Paper

|             |                                     |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| Meeting     | Board Meeting                       |
| Date        | 5 February 2026                     |
| Agenda item | Licensing Rules Review Panel Report |
| Prepared by | Matt Healy, LRRP Chair              |

|                             |                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Purpose and context:</b> | To provide the Board with an update on the work of the Licensing Rules Review Panel. |
| <b>Recommendation:</b>      | That the Board note the update.                                                      |

## 1. Context

The [Licensing Rules Review](#) commenced in September 2025 with the appointment of the Policy Advisory Panel (Panel) members and publication of the terms of reference on the auDA website.

The Panel is undertaking extensive multi stakeholder consultation to develop evidence based recommendations, which will be provided the Board in a final report scheduled for mid 2026.

## 2. Online consultation and submissions

On 24 November 2025, [online consultation](#) opened up to the public on the auDA website, facilitated by a short consultation paper. Online submissions are encouraged up until 31 March 2026. A constant banner on the auDA homepage with a call to action to the consultation page raises visibility of the consultation process.

To date the Panel has received seven submissions to the review. The submissions are reviewed by the Panel before being published on the review webpage. auDA's General Counsel is available to review and provide advice on issues such as defamatory content before submissions are published.

## 3. Public engagement

The Panel held online town hall webinars on 27 November and 11 December 2025. The first webinar was introductory in nature, the second provided an opportunity for a deeper dive into some of the key issues identified by the Panel to date.



A feature of the second webinar was instant online polling on the issues, which provided an opportunity for attendees to put their views and provide instant feedback on the temperature in the virtual room.

Public engagement events planned for early 2026 are in a table at Appendix A. The two online sessions and four in person events will be facilitated and supported by ThinkPlace, external facilitators who worked with auDA in 2019 on the previous review of licensing rules and policies.

auDA is undertaking an electronic mass mailout to stakeholder groups on 23 January, providing links to in person and online engagement events and encouraging stakeholders to make an online submission.

Following publication of the Panel's draft report in early 2026, a further round of public consultation is required before a final report is developed for the Board, scheduled for June 2026. Timing flexibility may need to be revisited early in the new year depending on the significance of stakeholder feedback. The Panel Chair will revisit this potential at upcoming Board reports.

#### 4. Themes emerging via stakeholder engagement

An overview of completed and planned engagements are available in Appendix A. As dates are firmed up, they are published to support the public [stakeholder engagement plan](#). Some themes emerging from recent consultations include:

- The benefits flowing from the "Australianness" in the eligibility requirements.
- The utility of aligning some of the administrative rules with other gTLD jurisdictions
- A "light touch" approach to contested names flowing from the direct registration process.
- Strong differing views around the efficacy of monetisation as a demonstration of compliance with the allocation rules.

#### 5. Panel meetings and board reports

Licensing Rules Review Panel meetings and board reports have been held as follows:

| Date              | Meeting         | Agenda & Minutes published |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 10 September 2025 | Panel induction | Yes                        |
| 16 October 2025   | Board report 1  | Plans published            |
| 22 October 2025   | Panel meeting 1 | Yes                        |
| 19 November 2025  | Panel Meeting 2 | Yes                        |
| 4 December 2025   | Board report 2  | Yes                        |
| 9 December 2025   | Panel Meeting 3 | Yes                        |

**Note:** Panel meeting agendas and minutes and board progress reports must be published (within 10 days)



## Appendix A: Stakeholder Engagements

| Date            | Format  | Location  | Description                                                                                                     | Status    |
|-----------------|---------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 25 Mar 26       | Event   | Melbourne | in person public consultation                                                                                   | Confirmed |
| 23 Mar 26       | Event   | Brisbane  | in person public consultation                                                                                   | Confirmed |
| 19 Mar 26       | Event   | Sydney    | in person public consultation                                                                                   | Confirmed |
| 2/3 Mar 26      | Online  | Online    | Webinar                                                                                                         | Confirmed |
| 25 Feb 26       | Event   | Canberra  | public consultation                                                                                             | Confirmed |
| 11 Dec 25       | Online  | Online    | Member/public consultation (webinar)                                                                            | Completed |
| 9 December 2025 | Meeting | Online    | Meeting registry operator                                                                                       | Completed |
| 2 Dec 2025      | Online  | Online    | auDA team including compliance                                                                                  | Completed |
| 27 Nov 25       | Online  | Online    | Member/public information session (webinar)                                                                     | Completed |
| 25 Nov 25       | Online  | Online    | Meeting with Department                                                                                         | Completed |
| 18 Nov 25       | Meeting | Darwin    | Meeting with Minister Burgoyne, Office of Digital Government and First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group | Completed |
| 14 Nov 25       | Event   | Melbourne | Registrar Summit                                                                                                | Completed |
| 24 Sept 25      | Event   | Adelaide  | Lunchtime session at auLGF                                                                                      | Completed |

# Board Paper

|             |                                                         |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Meeting     | Board Meeting                                           |
| Date        | 9 April 2026                                            |
| Agenda item | 10. Licensing Rules Review Panel ( <b>LRRP</b> ) Report |
| Prepared by | Matt Healy, LRRP Chair                                  |

## Purpose and context:

To provide the Board with an update on the work of the [Licensing Rules Review Panel](#). Since the last Board meeting, the Panel has held four in-person [consultations](#) in Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne and two webinars and two Panel meetings (4 March and 8 April). 34 [submissions](#) have been received in total.

The Chair will provide a verbal update to the Board on key themes from the consultation phase and an indication of the direction the panel is heading in its draft report. The current Panel Timeline is set out below.

## 1. Licensing Rules Review Panel Timeline

|                              |                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>31 March 2026</b>         | Consultation         | Phase 1 Consultation period closes                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>9 April Board meeting</b> | Update the Board     | Chair to provide an update to the Board, talking about key themes from the consultation phase and, if possible, giving the Board an idea of the direction the panel may be heading                                                               |
| <b>End-April - early May</b> | Release draft report | Chair to brief the Board and outline key recommendations from the Panel's draft report. The Panel does not need (and should not seek) Board approval - this is to inform the Board rather than seek their direction.<br><br>Release draft report |
| <b>Mid-May to early June</b> | Consultation phase 2 | Consultation phase 2. This consultation phase may be longer than indicated in this table, particularly if there are controversial recommendations.                                                                                               |
| <b>From early June</b>       | Draft the report     | Drafting of the final report                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |



|                                                                   |                |                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>23 June or<br/>27 August<br/>(Board<br/>meeting<br/>dates)</b> | Release report | Final report presented to the Board before release. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------|

# **2025/6 review of the .au Licensing Rules**

## **Draft Report – update to auDA Board**

May 2026

Matt Healy, Chair Policy Advisory Panel

# **A quick recap....**

- auDA periodically reviews the .au Licensing Rules so they remain effective over time and support the .au for the benefit of all Australians.
- The Policy Advisory Panel has undertaken extensive multi stakeholder engagement to get feedback on the .au Licensing Rules. This is the Panel's Draft Report that is now proposed to be published and subject to public submission responses and further stakeholder engagement.

# Key Recommendations in Draft Report:

3

## 1. Domain name monetisation in com.au and net.au

- *On balance, the Panel recommends that the practice of monetisation of a website be retained in the com.au and net.au namespaces.*

# Key Recommendations in Draft Report:

4

## 2. Allocation rules for com.au and net.au

- *Given the divergence of views received by the Panel around monetisation in the context of allocation, consideration was given to three possible responses:*
  - *Increase compliance efforts under the current Rules*
  - *Adoption of additional administrative rules related to the use of monetised sites to ensure they are not used, or inadvertently used, to cause Domain Name System (DNS) Abuse (as defined in the .au licensing rules section 1.4 and listed as a prohibited use in clause 2.11.17 of the .au licensing rules)*
  - *Remove monetisation as a means to achieve allocation together with the rest of the avenues for allocation set out in 2.4.4(2)(f) of the Rules. (see addendum for current clause).*

# Key Recommendations in Draft Report:

## 1. Domain name monetisation in com.au and net.au

- *On balance, the Panel recommends that the practice of monetisation of a website be retained in the com.au and net.au namespaces.*

## 3. Contested .au direct names

- *The Panel recommends that the current arrangements around contested names ought to remain and therefore over time, the numbers of names in a contest is expected to continue to remain and therefore over time, the numbers of names in a contest is expected to continue to fall.*

## 4. Fraudulent and reserved name list

- *instead of publishing the list, auDA should consider publishing the specific criteria based on which it decides to put a domain name in that list.*

# Key Recommendations in Draft Report:

## 5. Complaint process

- *Panel recommends that the complaints process in Part 3 of the .au Licencing Rules be amended to accommodate complaints about the auDA audit process, and that the definitional scope of the 'affected person' definition is changed to reflect the current "pro-consumer" approach that allows for all interested parties to access internal and external reviews.*

## 6. Aligning domain lifecycle with international best practices

- *It is recommended to amend the four rules of the .au domain lifecycle to align with what was put to the Panel as "international best practices".*

# Key Recommendations in Draft Report:

7

## 7. Other matters the Panel considered

- Whilst not a formal draft recommendation, the Panel nevertheless encourages auDA to consider a further review of the Rules in approximately 3 years to assess the impact of the changes presented by the Panel but also likely changes in the use of domain name licences generally and the impact of technology developments like AI in particular.

# Draft Report – Next Steps:

| Date       | Activity                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 29 May     | Board briefing                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 4 June     | Publication of draft report on Panel webpage and opening online consultation                                                                                                      |
| TBC        | Comms to members and stakeholders regarding consultation, including direct emails, member newsletter, and social media                                                            |
| 17 June    | First virtual town hall                                                                                                                                                           |
| 18 June    | Second virtual town hall                                                                                                                                                          |
| 6 July     | In-person consultation (Melbourne)                                                                                                                                                |
| 7 July     | In-person consultation (Sydney)                                                                                                                                                   |
| 10 July    | Submissions close (Comms has confirmed that this allows sufficient time for online consultation. This gives the Panel slightly longer to review submissions and finalise report.) |
| 13 July    | Week to analyse submissions                                                                                                                                                       |
| 20 July    | In-person Panel meeting to review submissions and finalise position                                                                                                               |
| 27 July    | Virtual Panel meeting to review draft report                                                                                                                                      |
| 3 August   | Week for Panel to finalise the report                                                                                                                                             |
| 10 August  | Final report to auDA for internal review by Comms and Legal, and draft Board paper for review by Exec                                                                             |
| 27 August  | Board meeting – Panel Chair to attend and speak to the report                                                                                                                     |
| 13 October | Board meeting – Board statement on Panel recommendations                                                                                                                          |

# Board Paper

|             |                                                         |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Meeting     | Board Meeting                                           |
| Date        | 23 June 2026                                            |
| Agenda item | 11. Licensing Rules Review Panel ( <b>LRRP</b> ) Report |
| Prepared by | Matt Healy, LRRP Chair                                  |

## Purpose and context:

To provide the Board with an update on the work of the [Licensing Rules Review Panel](#). The Review is now in the Phase 2 consultation period. Since the Board Briefing on 29 May 2026 the draft Report was Published on 4 June and two online webinars were held on 17 and 18 June, with in person consultations scheduled for 6 July (Melbourne) and 7 July (Sydney). Submissions are being received online and the Draft Report has received some media attention. The consultation period ends on 10 July and a Final Report is expected to be provided to the Board for consideration at its August meeting.

I also ask that the Board consider increasing Panel remuneration and providing a 'top up' based on recognising:

1. The increased workload of meetings and related reading
2. Travel to added stakeholder engagements
3. Overall level of complexity of the matters under consideration
4. The delayed timeline for delivery of the report on account of contested nature of the Review.

The increase proposed is 50% of the fees for Panel Members and 25% for me as Chair. I have raised this request with the CEO.

|                   | Current fees (ex GST) | Proposed fees (ex GST) |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Panel Chair       | \$60,000              | \$75,000               |
| Panel Members (6) | \$5,000               | \$7,500                |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>\$90,000</b>       | <b>\$120,000</b>       |

## Recommendation:

That the Board note the update and consider the remuneration request.

# Board Paper

|             |                                                         |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Meeting     | Board Meeting                                           |
| Date        | 27 August 2026                                          |
| Agenda item | 11. Licensing Rules Review Panel ( <b>LRRP</b> ) Report |
| Prepared by | Matt Healy, LRRP Chair                                  |

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|                             |                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Purpose and context:</b> | To provide the Board with the final report on the work of the <a href="#">Licensing Rules Review Panel</a> . |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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|                        |                                                                  |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Recommendation:</b> | That the Board consider the recommendations in the final report. |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|

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## Cover note from Matt Healy

I am delighted to be providing the Board with the Final Report of the auDA Licensing Rules Review Panel 2025. This Final Report is the culmination of almost a year's work by the Panel and its support team. During the review period, the Panel has undertaken a significant amount of stakeholder engagement encompassing in person and online round tables and information sessions across most states and territories. More targeted consultations also occurred with specifically impacted commercial groups, government entities, and civil society representatives.

A number of supporting documents were developed and published to help guide the Panel's work and to stimulate conversations and debate on the Rules. In keeping with the high levels of transparency and probity that is required in relation to internet governance stakeholder engagement, the Panel's activities were posted on the [review website](#), along with minutes of meetings, submissions received and summaries of stakeholder meetings.

The Panel also had the assistance of both an independent [expert facilitator](#) at a number of the events as well as expert research and drafting support from Shilpa Jaswant. The Panel itself met around ten times and as you are aware, I provided regular progress updates to the auDA Board. The attached Final Report is informed by a prior Draft, which was also subject to a round of public consultation and round tables.

In light of this level of stakeholder engagement and the significant level of deliberation by the Panel, I am very confident that the Final Report reflects the high standard of reporting and review that the auDA is well known for. The Final Report was approved by six of the seven members of the Panel.

Finally, aside from recognising the time and energy committed to this process by the Panel members, I would also call out the skill and dedication of Barbara Schade, Duncan Cambray,



Sonia Joksimovic, Linda Brown and Bruce Tonkin in stepping in to support our work whenever needed. This has been gratefully appreciated by the Panel and especially so by me as Chair.

I trust the Final Report provides the auDA Board with the appropriate analysis and recommendations to continue with its important work to operate the domain name system for the benefit of all Australians.

Kind regards

Matt Healy  
LRRP 2025 Chair