

# auDA Public Policy Report

January – March 2025

In this issue we provide an update on our internet governance and public policy work, including our contribution to policy discussions domestically and internationally during the quarter. We also showcase aspects of emerging tech and regulatory trends in Australia's tech policy landscape over the quarter and provide research contributions such as the [Why .au? Trusted by Australians online report](#), in which highlights the benefits of the Australian domain name space. During this quarter we also released the [Internet Governance Roadmap 2025 Progress Report](#) which assesses the current state of internet governance and emphasises the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration. These outputs underscore [new auDA CEO, Bruce Tonkin's commitment](#) to ensure auDA continues to deliver a secure, reliable and trusted .au and a focus on continuous improvement.

## Quick navigation links:

- [Domestic public policy matters](#)
- [Internet governance and global policy](#)
- [What we're reading](#)
- [Upcoming events and webinars](#)

## Domestic public policy matters

### Emerging technology policy trends

The first quarter of 2025 saw a continued focus on Australian technology regulation. Cyber security, online safety and digital consumer protection featured on the parliamentary legislative agenda, were discussed in issues papers or the subject of independent reviews, as the government sought to introduce new obligations for businesses and expanded consumer protections against online harms.

[Cyber Security Rules](#) to accompany the [Cyber Security Act 2024](#) (Cth) passed in March 2025 and set out new obligations including mandatory ransomware reporting within 72 hours, minimum security standards for IoT devices, and an independent Cyber Incident Review Board..

The recent report on [the Statutory Review of the Online Safety Act 2021](#), published on 4 February 2025, recommends 67 reforms to strengthen digital protections, following



similar UK and EU regulatory models i.e., the [UK Online Safety Act 2023](#) and the [EU's Digital Services Act](#). A government response to the review is expected later in 2025. [Key recommendations of the review](#) include introducing a digital duty of care requiring platforms to address foreseeable harms, with stronger obligations for high-risk services. It proposes expanding the definitions of online harm and covered entities to better reflect emerging risks and technologies. The review also an expanded, multi-member Online Safety Commission in place of the eSafety Commissioner and increased penalties for serious breaches.

The [National Anti-Scam's Centre's Targeting Scams Report](#) released on 11 March 2025, found that financial scam losses fell by 25.9 per cent in 2024. On 20 February 2025, [the Scams Prevention Framework Act 2025](#) (Cth) was introduced, imposing \$50m fines on social media platforms that fail to take mandated 'reasonable steps' to prevent, detect, disrupt, respond to and remove scams. While strengthening consumer protections, industry groups have raised concerns over enforcement mechanisms and compliance costs.

Lastly, U.S. political developments may impact Australian technology (and other) regulation. For instance, [U.S. social media companies have called out Australia's regulation](#) as burdensome and have asked the U.S. Government to consider that when devising its new tariff strategy.

## TechFutures25

On 10 February, auDA-sponsored the [annual Tech Futures 2025 event](#), hosted by the Tech Policy Design Institute at Parliament. auDA CEO Bruce Tonkin spoke at the event, emphasising the critical role of .au in Australia's digital economy and the ongoing importance of the multi-stakeholder model of internet governance. Other notable speakers included Dr Andrew Charlton MP, Special Envoy for Cyber Security and Digital Resilience, Lizzie O'Shea, Chair of Digital Rights Watch, Julie Inman Grant, Australia's eSafety Commissioner and Damian Kassabgi, CEO of the Tech Council of Australia among others. The forum addressed topics such as AI, online safety, human-centered policies, and innovation. We thank the Tech Policy Design Institute for hosting and facilitating such lively debate on this important issue.

## Supporting the 2025 Australian Internet Governance Forum (auIGF)

[The 2025 auIGF](#) has been announced and will take place on 23–24 September 2025 in Adelaide. The theme of the 2025 auIGF is **Global Visions, Local Impact – The Future of Australia's Digital Governance**. auDA will continue its support of the auIGF as Secretariat for the 2025 event, collaborating with the Multi-Stakeholder Steering



Committee (MSSC). We encourage stakeholders to join as a participant or sponsor. For updates, including signing up to the mailing list, please visit [the auIGF website](#).

## Internet governance and global policy

### auDA Internet governance roadmap 2025 progress report

During the quarter auDA released its [Internet Governance Roadmap 2025 Progress Report](#), showcasing our ongoing contributions to internet governance over 2024. At the NETmundial+10 event in São Paulo in April 2024, auDA supported the reaffirmation of the 2014 NETmundial principles and the introduction of the São Paulo Multi-Stakeholder Guidelines, strengthening collaboration in digital policymaking. auDA also played a pivotal role in founding the [Technical Community Coalition for Multistakeholderism \(TCCM\)](#) in June 2024, which now includes over 30 global members from the domain name and IP address allocation communities, advocating for a stronger technical voice in governance of the internet.

Looking ahead to the 20-year review of [the World Summit on the Information Society \(WSIS+20\)](#) in July 2025, auDA is working with TCCM members to reinforce the multi-stakeholder decision-making model, and ensuring governance frameworks remain inclusive and development focussed. You can find out more about this work in and in the dedicated [internet governance section of our website](#).

### International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Council working groups – February 2025 meetings

auDA observed a series of ITU meetings, held from 10–21 February in Geneva, including those focused on the [WSIS+20](#), scheduled for December 2025, and the ITU's input to the WSIS+20 process. The ITU is the United Nations specialised agency for digital technologies. auDA monitors the ITU's discussions and decision-making processes to stay up to date with evolving debates and identify issues that could impact multi-stakeholder internet governance. This allows us to meaningfully contribute to global policy dialogues, advocate for strengthening multi-stakeholder internet governance and provide up to date expert advice to help inform Australian Government positions.

### Asia Pacific Top-Level Domain Association (APTLD 87)

APTLD is the regional organisation for ccTLD (country code Top Level Domain) registries in the Asia Pacific region. auDA attended [APTLD 87](#) in February and contributed to several sessions supporting operational resilience and policy dialogue. As part of the programme, auDA delivered an interactive crisis management tabletop exercise,



enabling participants to test their incident response planning and enhance cross-registry preparedness. Additionally, auDA contributed to sessions on business continuity during crises and a panel on the pros and cons of open and closed domains.

## **Internet Infrastructure Forum (IIF) inaugural event**

auDA was pleased to participate in the founding meeting of the IIF that was held in Amsterdam in February 2025, a collaborative initiative aimed at enhancing coordination among internet infrastructure operators to combat online abuses. The IIF seeks to connect diverse stakeholders—such as DNS providers, hosting services, and internet service providers—to share best practices, develop communication channels, and establish cooperative mechanisms for abuse reporting and handling.

## **The 82<sup>nd</sup> Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN82) meeting**

ICANN82 was held over 8–13 March 2025 as a community forum, allowing for both cross-community collaboration and internal policy work within ICANN's various constituent groups. auDA's focus was on the work of the Country Code Names Supporting Organisation (ccNSO), where staff hold leadership positions on several policy committees, including those for DNS abuse mitigation, strategic and operational planning, assessing gaps in ccNSO policies, and global internet governance. We also participated in a collaborative session with the Governmental Advisory Committee to explore different operating models for ccTLDs, as well as a range of plenary sessions on internet governance issues. Find out more about ICANN82 by viewing the March 2025 [auDA webinar: ICANN82 debrief](#).

## **What we're reading**

### **[The Pacific needs greater cyber resilience as malicious actors break into networks](#)**

(Blake Johnson, Fitriani and Jocelinn Kang, ASPI, The Strategist, February 2025)

**What's it about:** This article highlights the growing cyber threats facing Pacific Island nations, with increasing incidents of malicious actors targeting critical networks. It calls for greater investment in cyber resilience, regional partnerships, and capacity-building to protect digital infrastructure.

**Why we are interested:** auDA supports regional cyber resilience through its participation in multistakeholder internet governance and capacity-building initiatives across the Pacific. As part of its regional engagement, auDA collaborates with partners such as APTLD and the Pacific Internet Governance Forum (PacIGF) to strengthen



technical expertise and promote secure, stable domain name infrastructure. Developments in the Pacific are directly relevant to auDA's mission to champion an open, free and secure internet for all, particularly as digital interdependence across the region grows. Read more about auDA's recent efforts in [our 2025 – a pivotal year for internet governance blog](#).

**[The battle for the internet](#)** (Mercedes Page, ASPI, The Strategist, March 2025)

**What's it about:** The article discusses the ongoing geopolitical struggle between democratic and authoritarian states over the future of internet governance, highlighting the approaching WSIS+20 review as a critical juncture.

**Why we are interested:** auDA works to champion an open, free, secure and global internet. Engagement in the WSIS+20 review process and similar forums is essential to counteract efforts that may lead to a fragmented and state-controlled internet landscape, ensuring that the internet continues to serve as a platform for innovation, free expression, and economic growth.

## Stay up to date with our upcoming events and webinars

auDA hosts regular webinars on a range of topics, including public policy matters and debriefs of key internet governance events. [See our recent webinars and upcoming events schedule on the auDA website](#).

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