auDA Public Policy Report
April - June 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 showcase aspects of emerging tech and regulatory trends in Australia's tech policy landscape over the quarter, as well as auDA's research contributions.

On 19 June 2025, auDA released its 2026-30 Strategy after a period of public consultation. The strategy sets out our commitment to actively advocate for the practice of the multi-stakeholder model of internet governance that is inclusive, consensus-based, transparent and accountable. Learn how we're stepping into our new Strategy in our latest blog from auDA CEO Bruce Tonkin. Read the full blog on the auDA website

Though it fell slightly outside the quarter, in July, we released auDA's *Digital Lives of Australians 2025* report which provides essential insight into Australians' use of the internet and the ways this has evolved over the last half decade. The findings are important for policy makers and industry to consider how best to engage Australians online and grow their engagement in the digital economy and society. You can read the report on the auDA website and register to attend the webinar.

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Domestic public policy matters

Current technology policy trends

The Australian Government is progressing various initiatives related to regulation of the digital economy, including

- Progressing the Digital ID System, including implementation of the *Digital ID Act 2024* and associated rules;

- Supporting AI governance, with further development of [voluntary guardrails](#) and exploration of mandatory measures.
- Enhancing scam prevention and consumer protection, through the [National Anti-Scam Centre](#) and further reforms to combat specific scams such as romance scams, impersonation scams etc.

Implementation of the *[Cyber Security Act 2024](#)* (*Cth*) saw the commencement of a [mandatory ransomware payment reporting regime](#) to improve government visibility of ransom payments by businesses. This means, as of 30 May 2025, reporting entities i.e., businesses with turnover above $3 million and critical infrastructure operators, must notify the government of any ransom payments within 72 hours.

There has been progress on the digital identity and privacy front. In May 2025, the Department of Home Affairs issued [the National Identity Proofing Guidelines](#) and further strengthened the [Trusted Digital Identity Framework](#).

In June 2025, *[the Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024](#)* came fully into effect. The act grants the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) expanded enforcement powers, mandating greater transparency and oversight by OAIC in use of automated decision-making tools, tightening cross-border data transfer rules, creating a statutory tort for serious invasions of privacy and criminalising malicious privacy violations such as doxxing, alongside enhanced breach notification obligations.

2025 Australian Internet Governance Forum (auIGF)

The 2025 [auIGF](#) has been announced and will take place as a hybrid forum on 23-24 September 2025 in Adelaide and online. The theme of the 2025 auIGF is **Global Visions, Local Impact – The Future of Australia's Digital Governance.** We encourage you to join the event as a participant or sponsor. The auIGF supports the multi-stakeholder model of internet governance by fostering diverse perspectives, strengthening partnerships across stakeholder groups, and promoting community collaboration.

As part of this commitment, auIGF and Identity Digital are launching the **[Indigenous Leaders Internet Governance and Policy Fellowship](#)**, a multi-year initiative that empowers Indigenous Australians to engage meaningfully in internet policy. Through mentorship, programme support, and participation in auIGF and regional forums, the fellowship enhances Indigenous representation and aligns with auIGF's goal of amplifying underrepresented voices in internet governance.

auDA staff are excited to participate across the sessions covering narratives surrounding the future of internet governance, digital trust and inclusion. The [auIGF](#)

[2025 program](#) is now live, and registrations for the event are now open – you can register to attend at www.auigf.au.

Internet governance and global policy

CENTR Jamboree

auDA participated at the [CENTR Jamboree annual forum](#) in May 2025, joining peers from European ccTLD registries to explore shared business and regulatory challenges and opportunities for collaboration. We spoke on a panel discussing the topic *"Shaping the Future of the Internet: Governance and Global Challenge"*. Other contributions from auDA included:

- Participation in a crisis tabletop exercise hosted by the *European Top-Level Domain Information Sharing and Analysis Centre* (European TLD ISAC). The European TLD ISAC brings together domain registry operators, security experts, and other stakeholders to share threat intelligence, identify emerging trends, and develop proactive measures to prevent and mitigate cyber-attacks.

- Engagement in discussions on the use of AI in registry operations and marketing opportunities for ccTLDs.

- Outlining next steps for the Technical Community Coalition for Multistakeholderism (TCCM).

The 2025 Asia Pacific Domain Name System Forum (APAC DNS Forum) and the Contracted Parties Summit

The [2025 APAC DNS Forum](#) took place in May 2025, hosted by the [Vietnam Internet Network Information Center](#) (VNNIC). Under the theme '**An Inclusive Internet: Connecting People, Empowering Our Future',** the hybrid event convened DNS practitioners and experts from across the region to share best practices, explore emerging challenges and foster collaboration. The forum featured a networking session, followed by specialised "GoCreate! Domain Innovations" workshops with [DotAsia,](#) and partnership sessions with [NetBeacon](#) and other critical infrastructure institutions.

The Forum was co-located with [the ICANN Contracted Parties Summit](#). auDA engaged with our registrar community on critical topics including DNS abuse, identity fraud and common challenges faced by domain registries and registrars. In addition, auDA representatives met with other ccTLDs and government contacts to enhance multi-

stakeholder internet governance and discuss best practice in compliance and DNS abuse mitigation.

The 83rd Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN83) meeting

The ICANN83 Policy Forum convened in June with a hybrid format allowing global participation. There was extensive focus on the next steps in tackling *Domain Name System abuse* (DNS abuse), with auDA CEO Bruce Tonkin speaking on the subject in a *country code Names Supporting Organisation* (ccNSO) session. The ICANN community is also contemplating a review of the way it keeps its structure up to date and fit for purpose, with decisions about how to proceed likely to be made prior to the 2025 ICANN Annual General Meeting, scheduled for October 2025. Watch auDA's ICANN83 readout webinar to learn about key takeaways from the forum.

Internet Governance Forum 2025

The 20th United Nations (UN) Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was held in June with the theme **"Building Digital Governance Together"**.

This was the last IGF under its existing mandate from the UN. At the forum, extensive discussions across a number of related sessions showed strong support for the permanent renewal of the IGF's mandate as part of the 20-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20) later this year.

Continuing the high attendance numbers from IGF 2024 and in a strong demonstration for its continued relevance, more than 9,000 participants from across the globe took part onsite and remotely. Representatives from governments, civil society, academia, the private sector and the technical community took part in open dialogue in over 260 sessions focused on issues such as digital rights, universal connectivity, data governance, human rights, emerging technologies and the future of global digital cooperation. Actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt gave a keynote speech on the creative and ethical elements of artificial intelligence.

This year's IGF took place against a backdrop of increasing geopolitical uncertainty, which coloured discussions throughout the week. Many speakers referred to the need for global cooperation and reflected on the importance of the IGF in bringing all stakeholders together. Fast-moving technology such as Artificial Intelligence and global uncertainty mean we need open, inclusion dialogue more than ever.

You can read more about the discussions and outcomes of the IGF on the IGF 2025 outputs webpage.

Alongside the IGF, auDA helped lead an event for Technical Community Coalition for Multistakeholderism (TCCM) members, hosted by our Norwegian counterparts, the Registry for Norwegian Domain Names (NORID). TCCM members met to finalise positions they support on key issues related to the WSIS+20 review. These are summarised in a submission on the Elements Paper, part of the review process. auDA is a founding member of TCCM.

What we're reading

ChatGPT spends 'tens of millions of dollars' on people saying 'please' and 'thank you', but Sam Altman says it's worth it (John-Anthony Disotto, April 2025)

What's it about: TechRadar reports that OpenAI CEO Sam Altman confirmed ChatGPT's energy costs—driven in part by polite user prompts—reach "tens of millions of dollars," drawing on a Future PLC survey showing 70 per cent of users say "please" or "thank you" to the AI.

Why we are interested: The piece showcases the growing problem of AI's substantial energy footprint and the need for sustainable and ethical AI practices. auDA's new strategy sets out our intention to utilise AI technologies to improve the integrity of .au domain names, and also to achieve net zero carbon emissions in the operation of .au.

Internet Governance – The End of Multi-Stakeholderism? (Geoff Huston, CircleID, The Strategist, April 2025)

What's it about: This article explores how rising "digital sovereignty" narratives and state-centric approaches are challenging the established multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance, particularly ahead of the WSIS+20 review.

Why we are interested: auDA engages in global forums and the WSIS+20 process, with a goal of improving and upholding multi-stakeholder internet governance. This approach is crucial to maintaining an open, free, secure and interoperable internet underpinned by technical expertise and inclusive decision-making.

Made to Manipulate: The impact of deceptive online design practices on wellbeing and strategies to mitigate harm research report (Chandni Gupta, Churchill Fellow, April 2025)

What it's about: This report analyses how "dark patterns" and other deceptive interface designs exploit cognitive biases—through sneaking, nagging and obstruction—to steer user behaviour, erode digital autonomy and harm mental wellbeing. It reviews case studies across social media, e-commerce and news platforms, and proposes

mitigation strategies such as enforceable design standards, user-centred design principles and industry-wide awareness campaigns.

Why we are interested: The report's findings illustrate the importance of considering user interface regulation or collaborative industry responses to change the practices of online vendors and services providers to better safeguard Australians' online experiences.

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 for more information on our policy and advocacy initiatives and other related matters.