

## **.au Licensing Rules Review 2025**

### **Policy Advisory Panel terms of reference**

#### **Introduction**

.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.

auDA operates under an [agreement](#) with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the international body that coordinates the internet's naming and numbering system.

Our [Terms of Endorsement](#) from the Australian Government set out auDA's core functions. One of auDA's core functions is to administer a licensing regime for the .au domain, based in multi-stakeholder processes that are transparent, responsive, accountable, accessible, and efficient.

Our multi stakeholder approach to internet governance is inclusive, consensus-based, transparent and accountable, and balances the needs and views of the community, civil society, industry, the technical community, academia and governments.

#### **Purpose**

The **.au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing** (.au Licensing Rules) commenced on 12 April 2021. The auDA Board has resolved to review the .au Licensing Rules to ensure these rules remain relevant and effective over time. The Board has also resolved to include consideration of contested .au direct names, covered under the [.au Licensing Rules](#) and the [.au Domain Administration Rules: .au Direct Priority Implementation](#).

An external multi stakeholder **Policy Advisory Panel** (Panel) will be convened to undertake a review of the .au Licensing Rules to ensure they continue to provide the greatest benefit for the Australian community.



The Panel will undertake public consultation before making recommendations to the auDA Board on proposed improvements.

### **Chair of the Panel**

The Chair of the Panel will be appointed on merit by the auDA Board following a public process inviting expressions of interest.

### **Members of the Panel**

The Panel will consist of up to seven members in addition to the Chair.

Panel members will be appointed by the Chair and auDA on the basis of their individual skills, experience and knowledge of the domain name industry, following a public process inviting expressions of interest. The Chair and auDA will strive to achieve a broad representation on the panel from all key stakeholders.

The Panel will include:

1. A representative of domain name consumers.
2. A representative of domain name suppliers.
3. A peak business body representative.
4. A consumer protection representative.
5. An academic with expertise in internet policy or domain names.
6. An Australian Government representative from a relevant organisation such as the National Anti-Scam Centre.
7. A representative from the auDA membership.

auDA will provide secretariat and relevant support services to the Panel.

### **Scope**

The Panel will inform its work through submissions and investigation, and gather feedback through in-person and online public consultation, to examine



issues relating to the effective and fair operation of the .au Licensing Rules, including:

1. Allocation rules for the com.au and net.au namespaces.
2. Domain name monetisation in the com.au and net.au namespaces (currently prohibited in the org.au, asn.au, id.au, edu.au and the State and Territory Namespaces).
3. Contested .au Direct domain names (auDA will provide the Panel with the outcome of a survey of contested .au Direct domain name holders for consideration as a submission to the review).
4. Fraudulent and bad faith registrations and reserved names.
5. Complaint process for domain name audits.
6. Alignment of selected rules in .au with equivalent rules in generic top level domains (gTLDs) (such as .com).

**In addition to other issues the Panel wishes to consider, as raised by stakeholders and the public during the consultation phase of the review.**

The Panel in undertaking this review will have reference to:

- The relevant principles and procedures set out in the auDA corporate policy [Process for the Development and Review of auDA Published Policies](#).
- The importance of maintaining trust in the .au and confidence in its integrity, security and resilience.
- Promotion of competition, fair trading and consumer protection to facilitate equitable access to .au domain names.
- The role and responsibilities of auDA as articulated in the Terms of Endorsement and the Agreement with ICANN.

## **Deliverables**

The Panel will:



- Demonstrate a genuine multi stakeholder approach in its consultations with the public and key stakeholders.
- Provide, via the Panel Chair, regular updates to the auDA Board on the progress of the review.
- Provide the auDA Board with a review report setting out recommendations for change, supported by information, evidence and/or submissions obtained during the review process.