

Annual Report 2025-26

auda.org.au

Summary

Celebrating 40 years of .au,
Australians' trusted online address.

auDA's 2025-26 Summary Annual Report

The .au Domain Administration Limited (auDA) 2025-26 Annual Report summary is an overview of auDA's 2025-26 Annual Report. This year's annual report celebrates 40 years of .au and highlights our achievements over the financial deliver delivering on our core functions and the first year of our 2026-30 Strategy.

Read the [2025-26 Annual Report](#) in full on auDA's website

From the Chair



"I am pleased to present auDA's 2025-26 Annual Report to auDA members and stakeholders on behalf of the auDA Board.

This financial year we celebrated 40 years of .au. Since it was established, .au has evolved into an essential component of Australia's communications infrastructure, supporting Australians to connect, communicate and participate in the digital economy and society."

Marina Go AM,
Independent Chairperson, auDA Board

From the CEO



"The .au domain was established on 5 March 1986. Four decades later, .au is critical communications infrastructure and a trusted online identifier for Australians.

We closed out the 2025-26 financial year with more than 4.3 million .au domain names for the first time. Almost 620,000 new .au domain names were registered in the period, demonstrating the ongoing value of .au to the Australian community."

Bruce Tonkin,
auDA Chief Executive Officer

Year at-a-glance

1 July 2025

Collaborated with peers to host the **Pacific ccTLD Forum** and participated at the **Pacific IGF**

Announced inaugural **R&D Grant Program** recipients

Launched **Digital Lives of Australians 2025**

Completed **ISO 22301 audit** for business continuity

Staff **leadership training** commenced

Announced inaugural **auDA Churchill Fellows**

Announced **.au Licensing Rules Review Policy Advisory Panel** and consultation commenced

Announced incoming **auDA Chair**, Appointed **Board Directors** and candidates for Elected Director Ballot

Participated and presented at **APTLD88**

Participated at and supported **auIGF 2025**

.au member survey

Participated at **Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum**

Hosted Elected Director Ballot **candidate webinar**

Participated at the **ICANN84**

Hosted auDA's annual **Registrar Summit**

auDA Annual General Meeting

Announced auDA will host **APTLD91** in Brisbane 2027

.au Licensing Rules Review virtual town hall

auDA Chief Operating Officer Sharon Copeland-Smith elected to the **APTLD Board**

1 January 2026

Announced **2025 Community Grant** projects and hosted celebration event

Participated and presented at **APTLD89**

Hosted **APIGA Australia 2026**

auDA team planning retreat and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation activity

Completed **ISO 27001** audit for information security

.au Licensing Rules Review virtual town halls and workshops in Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne

40 year anniversary of .au on 5 March 2026

Participated at **ICANN85**

Participated at the **Young Australians in International Affairs National Conference**

Consulted on changes to **edu.au** rules and auDA's **purpose statement**

Announced the inaugural **auDA Internet Governance Fellows**

Published 2026 **Why .au?** report

Sponsored **Tech for Social Justice** conference

Launched the **Build your own website guide**

Glenn Wightwick commenced as **auDA Chief Innovation Officer**

Published the Policy Advisory Panel's Draft Report on the **.au Licensing Rules Review** and phase two consultation commenced

Participated at **ICANN86**

30 June 2026

Celebrating 40 years of .au



In 2025-26 auDA celebrated 40 years of .au. Established on 5 March 1986, over the past 40 years .au has grown to become a recognisable marker of trust online for Australians and Australian organisations. Today, the role of .au is more important than ever, providing a stable foundation for innovation and emerging technologies to support Australia's digital future.



The Australian Government officially endorsed auDA as the administrator of .au

auDA was established by the Australian internet community, with the aim to administer the .au domain and support its reliable operation.



1986

The .au domain was created. Management was delegated to Robert Elz at the University of Melbourne, by Jon Postel at the University of Southern California.



1997

2000

.au reached 1 million registrations

1 million

2002

2007

auDA began accrediting .au registrars, marking the beginning of the competition model which remains in place.



40 years of .au, with over 4.3 million domain names registered and .au a marker of trust online for Australians

4.3 million

 **direct**

On 24 March, Australian's newest .au domain namespace launched with .au direct (forexample.au)

2013-14

auDA introduced the Information Security Standard to improve registrar security and deployed DNSSEC to increase security of .au



2022 2026

Our material themes

auDA's material themes are those our stakeholders consider most important, or material, to auDA's work. The top 10 themes as identified through auDA's 2026 Materiality process are below.



Reliable infrastructure

Maintain reliable .au infrastructure with 100% availability. Australians rely on .au to access applications and services that operate over the internet, including to connect with the community, do business and engage with government services.



Cyber security and DNS abuse

Maintain international cyber security standards to support a secure .au domain free from cyber breaches and malicious activity. Take an active approach to drive down DNS abuse and uphold the integrity of .au domain names for internet users.



Governance and transparency

Uphold transparent, accountable and responsible corporate governance to maintain the integrity of the .au domain and stakeholder trust in the effectiveness of auDA's operations.



Internet governance

Participate in, advocate for and support multi-stakeholder internet governance locally, regionally and globally to ensure the internet remains secure, accessible and globally interoperable. Grow the cohort of Australians participating in internet governance.



Licensing rules, compliance and dispute resolution

Uphold transparent, accessible .au Licensing Rules that are applied consistently, with best practice dispute and complaints resolution. Facilitate periodic multi-stakeholder reviews to ensure they reflect community expectations and remain effective over time.



Representing .au in the public interest

Represent .au in the public interest, independent of the government, in domestic, regional and international policy discussions on internet governance, regulatory developments and DNS abuse.



Financially sustainable not-for-profit

Ensure auDA's financial sustainability as a self-funding not-for-profit through innovation and productivity. Maintain funds for the efficient administration of .au, to invest in innovation and public benefit activity, and respond to unforeseen expenses.



Stakeholder relationships

Maintain and build strong relationships and trust in auDA's effectiveness through engagement with the multi-stakeholder community. Uphold transparent, accountable and responsive practices in engagement with stakeholders.



Technological innovation

Explore the use of new technologies and approaches, including AI, to ensure auDA's financial sustainability, improve the utility of .au, respond to competition and technology changes that impact the DNS, and continue to meet community expectations.



Consumer protection

Enable a secure space for consumers to interact and transact online by promoting competition, fair trading and consumer protection within the .au domain.

Performance scorecard

Status:

On track	
Managed within tolerance	
Outside tolerance	

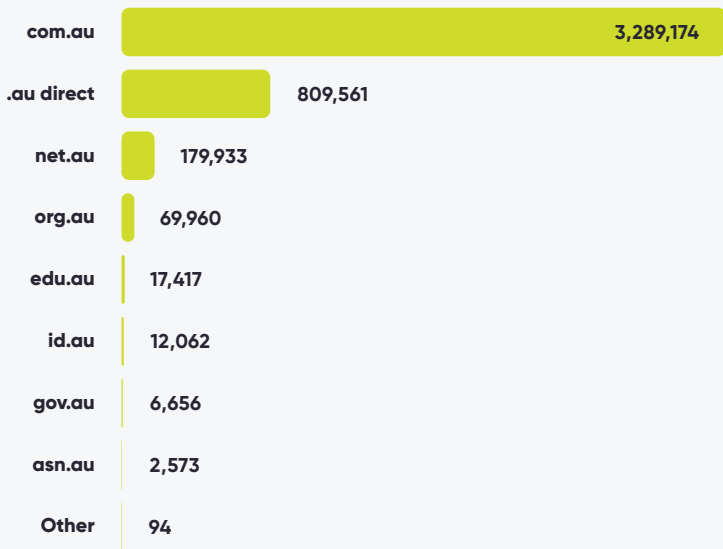
Objective	Key results	Measure	Target by 30 June 2026	Actual	Status
Core function					
Ensure stable, secure and reliable operation of the .au domain	.au DNS continuously available	DNS service availability	100% per month	100%	
Administer a licensing regime for .au domain names based in multi-stakeholder processes	.au domain name space is trusted	Number of proactive audits per month	>1,000	2,570	
		.au names reported and verified for DNS abuse	<100 per month	28	
Advocate for, participate in, and support multi-stakeholder internet governance	Strengthen multi-stakeholder internet governance processes	Licensing Rules Review Panel recommendations	Recommendations delivered by Policy Advisory Panel that have multi-stakeholder support	Panel draft recommendations released for consultation in June 2026	
Strategic pillar: Trust					
Strengthen Australians' trust in .au and auDA and grow Australians' engagement in the digital economy and society.	Raise the trust and integrity of .au domain names	Monthly percentage of new registrations and renewals with validated Australian presence	99% creates	99%	
			95% renewals	93%	
	Diversify membership and grow member engagement	Gender diversity	26% women	25% women	
Strategic pillar: Innovation					
Use new technologies and approaches to ensure the financial sustainability of auDA and improve the utility of .au	Ensure auDA is financially sustainable and improve organisation productivity	Chief Innovation Officer commenced and Innovation unit established in June 2026 to lead Innovation strategic initiatives.			
Strategic pillar: Impact					
Strengthen multi-stakeholder internet governance, develop new DNS and internet governance experts, support R&D and digital inclusion.	Increase the number of Australians skilled and participating in internet governance and the DNS	Number of graduates from APIGA Australia and auDA Fellowships awarded	85 (cumulative)	82	
	Support Australian communities challenged by digital inclusion and concerns about online safety to participate online	Number of people from under-served communities using the online materials funded from the Community Grant Program	50,000 people per annum	157,300	
	Achieve net zero carbon emissions in the operation of .au	Net carbon emissions trend toward zero*	Reductions and offsets equal a 5% reduction	1,435 tCO ₂ e, 45% reduction on 2024-25 levels	
Strategic pillar: Capability					
Grow leadership and technical skills to confidently meet the challenges of our dynamic environment.	Leadership Team members have completed a leadership training program	Percentage of leadership team that have completed leadership training	90% of Leadership Team have completed foundational leadership program	100%	
	AI is integrated into the business, enabling greater productivity	Percentage of employees using AI tools to support productivity.	100% active users	94%	
	Staff rate auDA as a great place to work	Favourable staff engagement survey results	77%	78% (comparative to previous surveys). New baseline 66% based on expanded question set	

* GreenHouse Gases (GHGs) are measured in Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalents (tCO₂e)

Operations

auDA manages the .au Domain Name System (DNS) and the .au Licensing Framework to enable internet users to connect to .au websites and email addresses with confidence. We focus on trust, security and reliability to deliver .au for the benefit of all Australians.

.au domain names by namespace



4,387,430

Domains under management at 30 June 2026

100%

Availability of the DNS during FY26

57,535

Average new .au domain names created each month

Upholding trust in .au

- .au Licensing Rules Review**
Supported the external Policy Advisory Panel in their first round of public consultation and to publish their Draft Report for further consultation.
- Maintained a Critical Infrastructure Risk Management Program** and met our legislative obligations under the *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018* (Cth)

FY26 Compliance activity

2,570

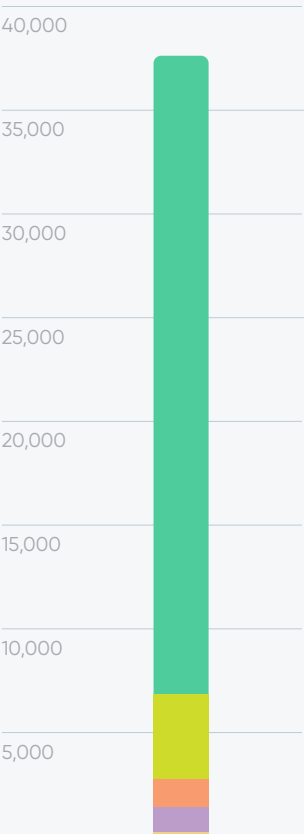
Proactive audits per month on average

99%

New registrations with validated Australian presence

93%

Registration renewals with validated Australian presence



- 30,842 Compliance audits
- 4,099 Enquiries
- 1,354 Complaints
- 1,213 DNS abuse reviews
- 118 Enforcement body requests
- 71 auDRP disputes

Engagement

auDA's engagement with our multi-stakeholder community enables us to deliver on our Terms of Endorsement, achieve objectives under our 2026-30 Strategy and create more opportunities for Australians to benefit from the social and economic potential of the internet.

6,587

members at 30 June 2026

\$573,500

in Co-Marketing Grants awarded

39

graduates of APIGA Australia 2026 and auDA Internet Governance Fellowships

Public Benefit Program

- **Community Grant Program:** **\$750,000** awarded to 15 community-based projects that advance digital inclusion for Australians.
- Inaugural **auDA Churchill Fellows** announced
- **auDA Research and Development Grant Program:** Monash University and Deakin University delivered the first year of their projects

Digital Lives of Australians 2025

auDA's 2025 Digital Lives of Australians report is the fifth edition of our annual research that explores Australians' online behaviours and attitudes.

64%

of Australians say they can't do their job without the internet

67%

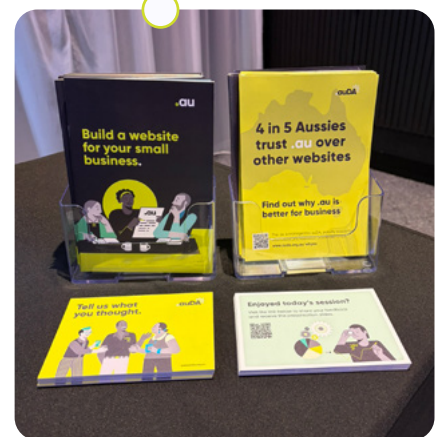
of Australians avoid certain online activities to minimise their cyber security risk

20%

of small businesses have a cyber security policy or offer cyber security training to staff, despite broad concern about cyber security



auDA resources created to provide value for members and small business owners: *Build a website for your small business* guide and *Why .au?* report.



Annual Member survey

According to our 2025 .au member survey, 73% of respondents joined the program to "support the independent administration of the .au domain". Members also indicated that downloadable guides and toolkits (52%) and research, insights and reports (42%) provide value to them as .au members.

People

auDA’s people are essential to our success. Through their extensive expertise, they help us deliver our core functions, strategy and make a positive public impact. In 2025-26, we focused on building capability, improving how we work together and supporting staff wellbeing.

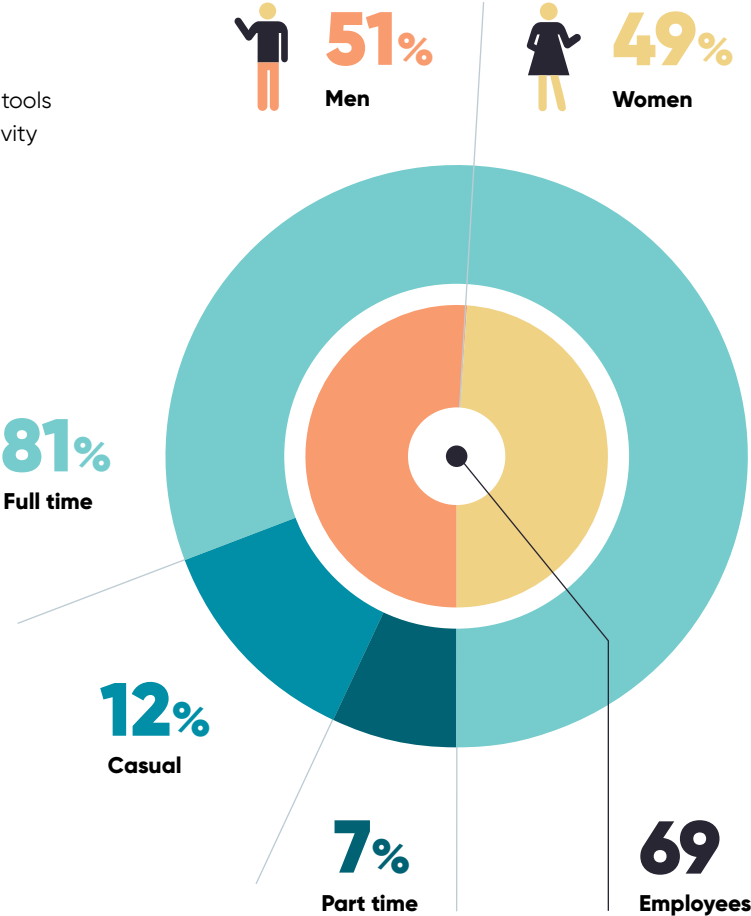
100%

Leadership Team completed leadership training

94%

Employees using AI tools to support productivity

The auDA team grew to 69 employees as of June 2026. New roles created help deliver our 2026-30 Strategy by building capacity and capability in strategically important areas. This includes the establishment of a new Innovation unit.



Our values

Our values guide us in our work. Under our 2026-30 Strategy our values are:

Accountability

We honour our commitments, are responsible for our decisions, actions and performance, and deliver excellence.

Curiosity

We seek to grow our knowledge, including of emerging practices, be adaptive and improve our understanding of our stakeholders and their viewpoints.

Collaboration

We work together as one auDA in the service of Australian, regional and global internet users.

Leadership

We are committed to communicating openly, and adding value to our multi-stakeholder community, locally, regionally and globally.

Governance

auDA is committed to robust, effective governance to meet the highest standards of transparency and accountability as we deliver on our purpose to connect Australians to an open internet with trust and confidence.

auDA Board

The Board is accountable to auDA members, stakeholders and the broader Australian community and responsible for overseeing auDA's work in accordance with the Constitution, the Australian Government's Terms of Endorsement, our agreement with ICANN, and the 2026–30 Strategy.

Board Committees

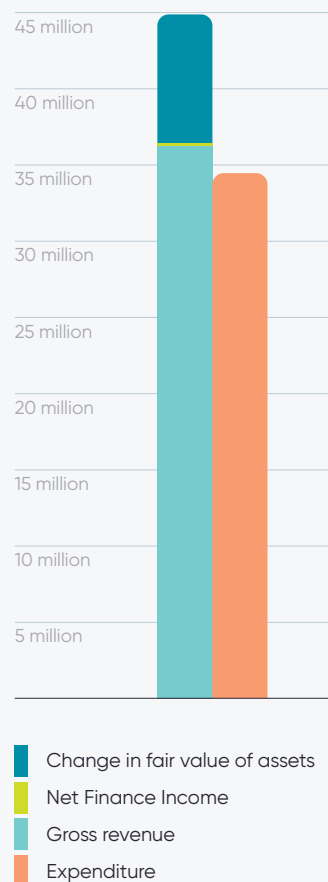
- Governance and Culture Committee
- Finance and Audit Committee
- Public Benefit Program Committee
- Security and Technology Committee

Sustainability Framework

auDA's Sustainability Framework supports our objective to deliver an environmentally and socially responsible organisation that upholds robust corporate governance and influences the domain name ecosystem to be more sustainable.

In the financial year we established a baseline for organisational carbon emissions and improved waste management practices. We also revised auDA's Community Grant Program to introduce an environmental sustainability aspect to the grant assessment guidelines for the first time.

2025–26 Summary of financial performance



Reconciliation Action Plan

auDA delivered key initiatives from its inaugural Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) during 2025–26 to meaningfully contribute to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Activities included staff cultural learning and participation in National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week, engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities, support for their digital inclusion initiatives, and increased procurement from their businesses and charities.



auDA staff at a cultural immersion experience at Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association Incorporated

In the spirit of reconciliation, auDA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We also acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' commitment to innovation and technology over many millennia, a commitment we deeply respect and share.

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