

# .au product guide

Marketing .au domains



# Contents.

- 1. About this guide ..... 3
- 2. .au snapshot..... 4
- 3. Research insights ..... 5
  - About .au..... 6
  - com.au ..... 6
  - .au direct ..... 6
- 4. Category insights ..... 7
- 5. Explaining the .au rules..... 10
- 6. Messaging by audience segment for
  - SMEs / Startups ..... 12
  - Entrepreneurs..... 13
  - Individuals..... 14
- 7. Further information ..... 15



# About this guide.

**This document is intended as a guide for registrars and resellers marketing .au domain name licences to different audiences.**

It draws on auDA's qualitative and quantitative market research and reflects the approach auDA uses across its marketing of the .au ccTLD.

We encourage domain name providers to use this guide as a starting point for their .au marketing efforts.

We will update this guide with any relevant, new auDA brand research findings as they become available.



# .au snapshot.

## Total names under management:

4.2m (as of December 2024)

## Maximum licence period: 5 years

**Privacy:** Selected registrant information is available via the public .au WHOIS at <https://whois.auda.org.au>

Namespace	% of domains under management
com.au	74.9%
.au direct	17.9%
net.au	4.6%
org.au	1.6%
edu.au	0.4%
id.au	0.3%
gov.au	0.2%
asn.au	0.1%

Source: .au registry data, auDA, end December 2024



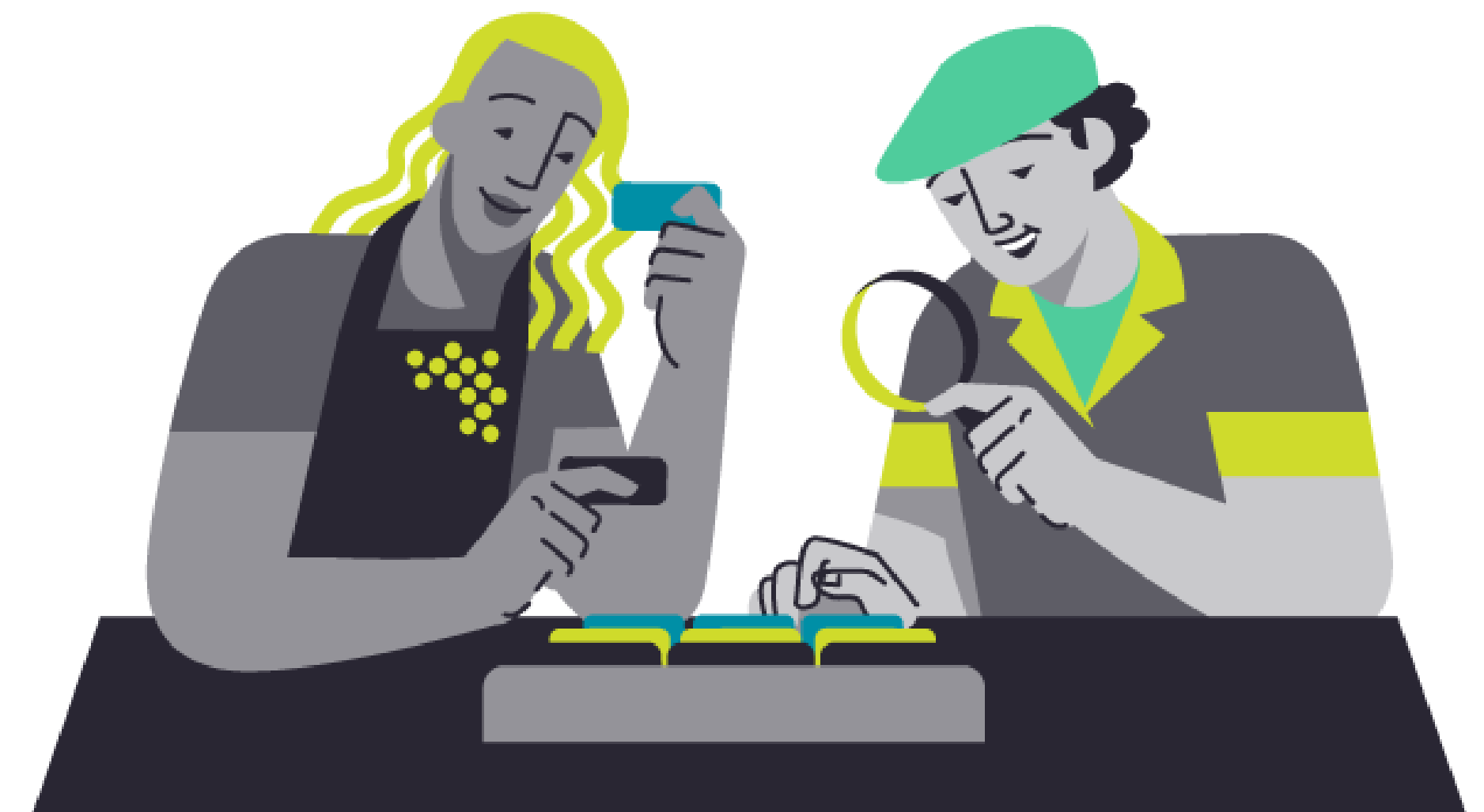
# Research insights.

## auDA regularly conducts market research, which informs our marketing strategy.

Through our annual quantitative brand tracking, we measure consumer perceptions of the .au ccTLD and the category more broadly among consumers and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

In 2024 we also conducted a wave of qualitative research aimed at building understanding of emerging trends related to perceptions of domain names and online presences for businesses.

On the following pages is a summary of key findings from the 2024 qualitative research and the 2025 auDA market research conducted by Sagacity Research.



You can find further market research information in the auDA registrar portal or by contacting [cmp@auda.org.au](mailto:cmp@auda.org.au).

# Research insights.

## About .au domains

- Domain names ending in .au are more trusted than other extensions in Australia.

---

- The .au domain remains the preferred domain for consumers and businesses in Australia.

---

- A .au domain name licence is the primary domain for 7 out of 10 SMEs who hold a domain name.

---

- Half of consumers and SMEs will only purchase from a website with a domain name ending in .au.

---

- A desire to be seen as Australian online is the key driver for choosing .au.

---

- Australian consumers look for .au more than any other domain when buying online. Supporting local business is the key driver of this.

---

## com.au

- com.au is the most trusted commercial namespace in Australia.
- 

## .au direct

- Launched in 2022, recognition of .au direct continues to improve, with awareness up 5% in 2025 to 71%.

---

- .au direct is now the second most trusted commercial namespace by Australians, following com.au.

---



# Category insights.

## Use case first

- Consumers think of domain names in terms of the use case - a website or email address.
- Understanding of domain names is generally low for those without specialist technical knowledge, but people understand the terminology 'web address'.

## Websites

- While social media, ecommerce platforms and online marketplaces have broadened the digital landscape for consumers and businesses, there's still a strong case for websites as a key part of an online presence.
- auDA research indicates small and medium enterprises (SMEs) recognise the value of a business website, but that for some, registering a domain name and building a website is a lower order priority.
- auDA research shows one third of consumers will only purchase from a business with its own website, and half of consumers and SMEs will only purchase from a business online if they have a website ending in .au.

## Email

- People often overlook the email use case, thinking primarily of a website.
- There's low knowledge of how to set up an email service and how to keep using 'free' email services with a custom .au domain name.

**Opportunity:** Compared to creating a website, an email service can be created relatively easily. Awareness as to how to set up an email service and manage any migration to a new email address is low. Offering clear guidance on these issues is paramount.

# Category insights.

## SMEs

- auDA research shows people looking to start a business consider a website the most useful online platform for their future business.
  - SMEs without a domain name rank social media profiles as most useful.
  - Existing SMEs with a domain name rank their website as most useful.
- SMEs recognise there are limitations to relying solely on social media profiles to build their online presence, particularly around generating content and achieving cut-through.
- Perfectionism can be a barrier to SMEs registering a domain name because some feel that creating an imperfect website won't be "good enough".
- Research shows a custom website can increase consumer trust compared to only having an online platform or marketplace presence.
- Custom websites remain the most trusted form of online presence among consumers.
- New customers who find a business via social media often look for the business' website as part of their decision-making process.

**Opportunity:** For many micro businesses, a simple brochure website using a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) website builder that includes core business information will be adequate. Registrars and resellers may be able to appeal to micro businesses by highlighting:

- How new customers use a website as a proof point in the purchase process.
- That a website can be expanded, perfected as they go, at their own pace.
- auDA research shows that once micro businesses have a website, it becomes the most useful part of their online presence.



# Category insights.

## Consumer use

- Hobbies and personal projects are the key drivers for consumer domain name registration.
- Australian consumers have a strong preference for domain names within the .au ccTLD.



**Opportunity:** .au direct domain names are perfect for consumer use. Anyone with a validated 'Australian presence' can register a .au direct domain name. This includes any Australian citizen or permanent resident. Consumers that meet the Australian presence requirement can choose any available .au direct domain name, providing more options for a trusted .au name.

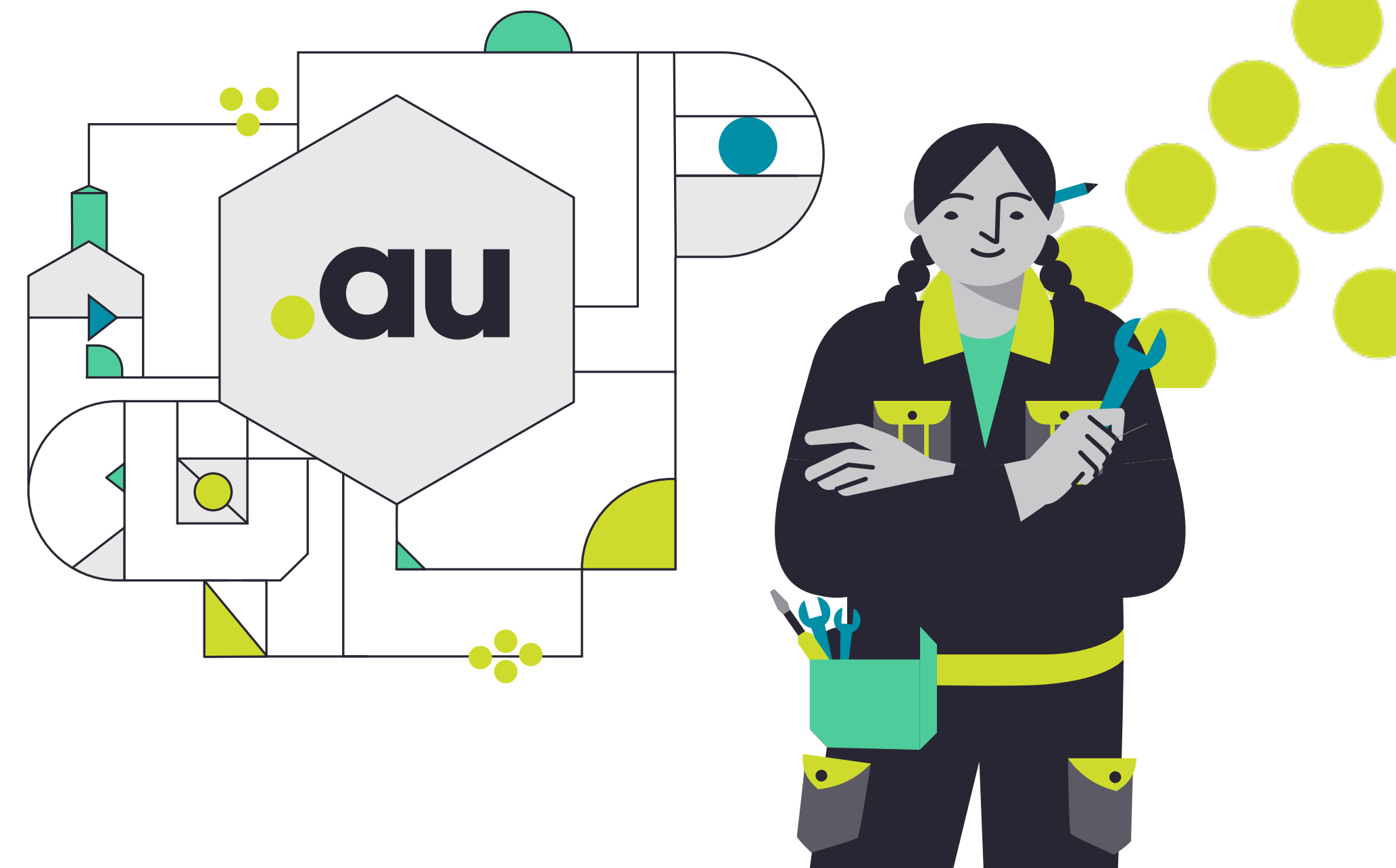
# Explaining the .au rules.

Compared to some ccTLDs and TLDs, .au has clear rules around who can register what .au domain names. Known as eligibility and allocation rules, they are part of the *.au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing*.

The minimum requirement to register any .au domain name is an 'Australian Presence', which is a verifiable connection to Australia and is validated at the time of registration.

These rules help .au maintain below-average levels of DNS abuse and help drive the high levels of trust Australians have in .au domain names.

Each .au namespace has slightly different eligibility rules. It's important that potential registrants are aware of these requirements when they register a .au domain name. Below is a high-level summary of the eligibility and allocation rules for each .au namespace.



		 				
<b>Who can register in this namespace (Eligibility rules)</b>	.au direct domain names can be registered by anyone with a connection to Australia. This includes citizens, permanent residents and organisations registered in Australia.	.com.au and net.au domain names are for businesses and can be held by commercial entities registered to trade in Australia or who hold a trade mark in Australia.	org.au domain names are for not-for-profit entities registered in Australia. Companies that are registered with ASIC and are limited by guarantee, incorporated associations under state legislation, and other organisations that are registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) qualify to hold org.au domain names.	id.au domain names can be registered by Australian citizens and permanent residents.	edu.au domain names can be registered by recognised Australian education and training entities. This includes higher education institutions, registered training organisations, TAFEs, research institutions, schools, early learning centres, peak bodies, and professional associations. Registrants can also register names in Australian state-based namespaces such as vic.edu.au or nt.edu.au provided they meet the requirements.	asn.au domain names can be registered by Australian not-for-profit entities and unincorporated associations. Not-for-profit entities include entities that appear on the Australian Charity Register, companies limited by guarantee and incorporated associations.
	When registering .au direct domain names, registrants will be required to provide information that shows a connection to Australia – like a driver’s licence or ABN.	When registering com.au and net.au domain names, registrants will need to provide their business information including their ABN or ACN, or Australian trade mark number.	When registering org.au domain names, registrants will need to provide information on their not-for-profit status such as their ABN or ACN.	When registering id.au domain names registrants will need to provide information that shows they’re an Australian citizen or permanent resident, such as a government issued photo ID.		When registering asn.au domain names registrants will need to provide information such as their ABN or ACN which demonstrates they meet the requirements for asn.au domain names.
	For the full list of entities eligible to hold .au direct domain names registrants should refer to the <i>Australian Presence</i> definition in the .au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing.	For the full list of entities eligible to hold com.au and net.au domain names, registrants should refer to the Commercial Entities <i>definition</i> in the .au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing.	For the full list of entities eligible to hold org.au domain names registrants should refer to the definition of <i>Not-for-profit entity</i> in the .au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing.	For more information about who can register id.au domain names registrants should refer to section 2.2.6 of the .au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing.	The full list of entities eligible for an edu.au domain name is set out in Schedule A Part 2 of the .au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing.	For a list of entities defined as a <i>Not-for-profit entity</i> refer to the .au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing.
<b>What names they can choose (Allocation rules)</b>	Registrants can choose any .au direct domain name they like, provided it’s available and they’re allowed to use it.	com.au or net.au domain names need to have a connection to the registrant’s business. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their business or personal name</li> <li>• An acronym of their business name</li> <li>• Their Australian trade mark</li> <li>• The name of a service or product they offer</li> </ul>	The org.au domain name registrants choose must have a connection to their organisation. It can be the organisation’s name, or a service, program, event or activity the organisation provides.	The id.au domain name registrants choose must match or be an acronym or abbreviation of their first name or family name, or their nickname.	The edu.au domain name registrants choose must be closely related to the name of their organisation or a program or project their organisation runs.	The asn.au domain name registrants choose must have a connection to their organisation or group. It can be the organisation’s name, or a service, program, event or activity the organisation provides or an occupation its members practice.
		Section 2.4.4 of the .au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing articulates all the ways names can be connected to a registrant’s business or organisation.	Section 2.4.6 of the .au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing articulates the full list of ways names can be connected to organisations.	Section 2.4.8 of the .au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing provides the full details.	Schedule A of the .au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing articulates the full eligibility and allocation criteria for edu.au.	Section 2.4.7 of the .au Domain Administration Rules: Licensing articulates the full list of ways their name can be connected to their organisation.



# Messaging by audience segment.

## SMEs/startups

**Profile:** This segment is in the process of building their business. They likely have a social media presence which requires regular monitoring and upkeep to keep content fresh and engage customers.

If they use an online commerce platform or marketplace to reach customers, they will also need to work at standing out and amongst competitors.

Creating a website is likely on the 'to-do' list but it may seem like a big project so it's easy to de-prioritise it.

**Namespaces:** com.au, .au direct, net.au

### A strong online presence on your terms

A .au website means you can build your business' online presence in a way that establishes trust, suits your brand and which isn't subject to changing social media algorithms or platform restrictions.

While you're building your website, you can use your domain name for a professional email.

### A .au website keeps you considered

- Checking for your .au website is a key way new customers verify you're a legitimate business, especially if they first find you via your social media presence.
- Half of Aussie consumers and small businesses will only buy online from a business with a .au website.

### Build trust with a .au

If you're targeting Australians, choose the most trusted domain name in Australia.

### Start simple - just as long as you start

Being discovered is half the battle. Your website doesn't have to be perfect right from the start, it can evolve over time. Get the right .au domain name and make sure the basic information about your business can be found online, building consumer trust and confidence in your business and business credentials. You can get started by using any of the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) website building tools that are designed for any business user to create a simple website.

### Look the part with a .au email address

Send a signal that you're a legitimate business with your own .au mailbox. A professional .au email address is easy to set up, you can integrate it with your other existing free email services and begin to build your brand with every email you send.

# Messaging by audience segment.

## Entrepreneurs

**Profile:** This segment intends to start a business in the near term.

They recognise a strong online presence will be important for their business success, and likely see a website as the most valuable channel for their future enterprise. They're keen to lock in their idea, build its credibility and be seen as reliable themselves, and perhaps even more established than they actually are.

**Suggested namespaces:**

.au direct; com.au

### A .au domain name is an easy early win for your idea

Registering your .au domain name is a cost-effective way to safeguard and bring your idea to life online.

### Build trust in your idea from the start

For less than the price of lunch, you can stake an online claim for your business idea. It pays to move quickly, before someone else gets in.

### Look the part with a .au email address

Send a signal that you're a legitimate business with your own .au email address. A professional .au email address is easy to set up, you can integrate it with your other existing free email services and begin to build your brand with every email you send.

### A trusted touchpoint

A .au website is a great way to build trust with new customers who find you via social media, and who expect to be able to verify your legitimacy before they commit to purchase from you.

- Half of Aussie consumers and small businesses will **only** purchase online from a business with a .au website.
- A third of Australian consumers will only buy online from a business that has its own website.

# Messaging by audience segment.

## Individuals

**Profile:** Individuals seek domain names for the following reasons:

- For a personal project or hobby
- An online portfolio/CV presence
- A professional looking email address
- A digital hub for the family.

It's likely they have low knowledge of domain names and how to build a website or establish a professional email address.

The idea of a .au address resonates with them, and a .au is something they look for when buying online.

**Suggested namespaces:**

.au direct, id.au

### Look the part with a .au email address

Look the part with a professional looking email address on your own .au domain. They're easy to set up, you can integrate it with your other existing free email services and begin to build your brand with every email you send.

### Join the dots with a simple .au website

A website with a .au domain shows it's you online, and can be a great way to connect the pieces of your online presence together.

### A flexible, enduring online presence that you control

When it comes to building a personal brand, a website with a .au domain name gives you control of how you show up online.





# Further information

## .au namespace logo assets

The full suite of .au namespace logo assets can be found on the auDA registrar portal.

[auda.org.au/portal-login](https://auda.org.au/portal-login)

## The .au Co-Marketing Program

The .au Co-Marketing Program (.au CMP) offers eligible registrars the opportunity to apply for funding for marketing activity that aims to grow the .au domain.

Find out more: [auda.org.au/cmp](https://auda.org.au/cmp)

## Feedback

Feedback or questions about this guide can be directed to [cmp@auda.org.au](mailto:cmp@auda.org.au).

# Thank you.