

Consultation Paper

auDA 2021-25 PROPOSED STRATEGY

July 2021



About auDA

.au Domain Administration Limited (auDA) is a not-for-profit organisation established by the Australian Internet community in 1997. It works with a range of stakeholders including industry, government and the Australian and international community, to develop and administer the rules for the .au country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD).

The .au domain name system (DNS) is part of Australia's critical infrastructure, and auDA has been endorsed by the Federal Government since 2001 to administer it in the public interest and ensure it is a safe, accessible and trusted Australian asset for all Internet users.

auDA represents Australia's interests internationally and operates under an agreement with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the international body responsible for coordinating the Internet's naming system.

auDA's Constitution governs how the organisation operates, including appointment and duties of Board Directors, and membership of auDA and its advisory committees. auDA recognises the critical importance of its role and the work it does for the benefit of all Australians and holds itself to high standards of corporate governance and integrity.

auDA's Terms of Endorsement from the Federal Government

Core functions

The .au domain administrator will undertake the following core functions:

- Ensure stable, secure and reliable operation of the .au domain space
- Respond quickly to matters that compromise DNS security
- Promote principles of competition, fair trading and consumer protection
- Operate as a fully self-funding and not-for-profit organisation
- Actively participate in national and international technical and policy namespace fora to ensure that Australia's interests are represented and to identify trends and developments relevant to the administration of the .au namespace
- Establish appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms.

About this document

This Consultation Paper outlines auDA's proposed 2021-25 strategy and invites submissions from the community.

It summarises auDA's strategic planning process through which auDA has determined its updated purpose and vision and its new proposed strategic program of work for the next four years.

The document sets out the consultation process and questions that auDA is seeking community feedback on. Consultation is open until 19 August 2021. More information is available on page 10.



Introduction from auDA CEO Rosemary Sinclair AM

The 35th anniversary of the .au domain and the 24th anniversary of auDA have provided the organisation time to reflect on the critical role auDA plays – and has played over time – in supporting Australians in their online social and business interactions. This role has never been more evident than over the last year, as Australia experienced a period of rapid technological uplift during the pandemic, which saw auDA connecting an additional 160,000 registrants to others through the .au domain.

Throughout this time, we have been hard at work analysing, discussing and actively determining our strategic future – how we best maximise the value we generate for Australians and the global Internet community through our work administering the .au domain.

In this Consultation Paper, you will read more about the detailed work behind the development of our proposed 2021-25 Strategy, understand our areas of strategic focus and the strategic projects through which we will achieve our purpose and vision.

Of course, our work is not done without consulting the community we support. We are strong supporters of multi-stakeholder processes and it is important that we hear from our stakeholders to ensure auDA's proposed 2021-25 Strategy reflects the views of the community auDA represents.

We are keen to hear your feedback, which will strengthen the work we do administering the .au domain for the benefit of Australians.

Our strategic planning process

We recognise that delivering the benefits of the .au domain comes with significant responsibility to the Australian community. We have undertaken a thorough, structured strategic planning process to carefully consider how we can best provide value for Australians into the future.

We have:

- Conducted eight internal workshops over 2020-21 with auDA staff and Board Directors to analyse key areas of auDA's operations and environment
- Hosted an interactive workshop at the 2020 NetThing Internet governance forum to gather early community insights into our strategy development
- Engaged with specialists across government, the technology and business sectors, domain industry bodies and other ccTLD administrators
- Considered the Terms of Endorsement from the Federal Government and consulted with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications.

This has enabled us to:

- Explore the changing regulatory, policy and technical factors that affect Australian Internet users
- Develop a thorough understanding of auDA's capabilities and the unique role we can play in today's economy and society
- Identify areas of opportunity where auDA can build value through our work administering the trusted .au domain for the benefit of all Australians
- Develop auDA's strategic purpose and vision and proposed program of work over the next four years.

Our next steps are to:

- Receive and consider submissions from our multi-stakeholder community and make use of its expertise and feedback to inform our final Strategy
- Consider any input from government on the Terms of Endorsement when finalising and implementing our Strategy, noting the Terms of Endorsement are expected to be reviewed by Federal Government and put out for public consultation soon
- Finalise the Strategy in consultation with the auDA Board.



Strategic environment and opportunities:

Working together with the registry, our registrars and our broad range of stakeholders, auDA's passionate and knowledgeable team administer a trusted, secure and reliable .au. As a result of our endeavours, the .au is in a strong position.

The current environment presents a number of opportunities for auDA in planning its future strategic direction.

Australians have engaged in the online environment for many years, however, our digital lives today look very different compared to five, ten or 24 years ago, when auDA was established.

Today, we know that [almost all Australians use the Internet](#) and much of our social and business activity takes place online. These **changes in online behaviours** are a result of incremental change over time as we have increased our reliance on connected devices for work, entertainment and information.

However, COVID-19 has been a catalyst for significant **digital transformation** – with many workplaces moving to full-time remote working overnight, businesses quickly building a digital presence in order to continue to reach their customers, and students moving from physical to virtual classrooms.

As a result, the risk of cybercrime has increased and **cyber security** has become an acute challenge, sparking policy and regulatory discussion across governments and the private sector. It also presents an opportunity for auDA to contribute to uplifting cyber security standards.

In setting its strategic direction, auDA must be cognisant of local and global challenges including the changing digital needs of Australian businesses and individuals, and the **growth of online platforms and marketplaces** enabling users to engage digitally without using a .au domain for web or email addresses.

Additionally, as the importance of cyberspace has increased, so too has debate about the **future governance of the Internet**. auDA is committed to increasing its multi-stakeholder engagement to ensure the sustained social and economic benefits that flow from a free, open, secure and global internet are supported and maintained.

Our strategy development was informed by:

Focus on strengths

- Administer a trusted, secure and reliable .au
- Passionate and knowledgeable team with constructive relationships with industry
- Organisation well positioned to invest in innovation

Opportunities for future achievement

- Grow a diverse and engaged member community
- Grow and maintain effective stakeholder relationships
- Build inclusiveness of the .au domain
- Contribute to increased cyber security resilience and collaborate to address cyberthreats
- Be recognised among peers as a best practice Country Code administrator
- Encourage innovation and growth in the .au domain

Current and future challenges

- Increasing number of online platforms means over time that users may rely less on domain names for web or email addresses
- Global multi-stakeholder internet governance challenged by state sovereignty
- Increased cybersecurity risk environment

Our proposed Strategy reflects the ways auDA seeks to respond to these strengths, opportunities and challenges:

- Enabled by an experienced, collaborative and agile team
- With an increased focus on innovation
- Growing trust through
 - Increased transparency and accountability
 - Multi-stakeholder engagement.

This will enable us to effectively continue to deliver a secure, accessible and trusted .au domain for all.

2021-25 PROPOSED STRATEGY

Our purpose

Administering a trusted .au for the benefit of all Australians, and championing an open, free, secure and global Internet.

A trusted .au is achieved by:

- Administering auDA policies openly and transparently, including through increased compliance activity to maintain the integrity of the .au domain
- A focus on technical efforts to reduce online harm through abuse of the DNS, including malware, botnets, phishing, pharming and related spam
- Engaging in multi-stakeholder processes and driving local and international policy discussions focussed on maintaining a free, open secure and global Internet
- Achieving international cyber security standards for auDA, the .au domain registry and auDA accredited registrars, and contributing to improved cyber security practice and adoption in the broad community.

An open, free secure and global Internet is:

- Set out as Australian government policy in Australia's International Cyber and Critical Tech Engagement Strategy
- Defined by auDA as:
 - **Open and global** – interoperable across borders and accessible to all
 - **Free** – people are not burdened by undue restrictions in their access to and use of the Internet
 - **Secure** – safe, reliable and resilient
- Critical to ensure the sustained social and economic benefits of the Internet can be realised and enjoyed at large by the local and international community.

Our vision

Unlock positive social and economic value for Australians through an open, free, secure and global Internet.

The pandemic prompted significant digital innovation and transformation throughout Australia.

We saw business and service delivery models move online, and online community connections grow. Sectors such as health, education, retail and small businesses migrated to digital channels in order to continuously engage with their end users.

As a result, auDA's work to champion access to an open, free, secure and global Internet increased in importance. We are proud to support this accelerated shift to online working, and enhancing enterprise and community connection to the .au domain. We will continue to respond actively.

Our strategic focus areas

We will fulfil our strategic purpose and vision through the completion of strategic projects that are aligned to our key focus areas and capabilities.

Trust

To deliver outcomes that promote and enhance the security and integrity of .au for the benefit of all Australians.

Innovation

To challenge ourselves every day to innovate and improve .au for Australia and to enable innovation by other stakeholders.

Multi-stakeholder engagement

The multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance underpins an open, free, secure and global Internet enabling .au to create value for Australia.

Individuals, industry, non-commercial interests and governments contribute on an equal footing in community-led policy making.

Our strategic capabilities

Our strategic capabilities will support auDA to deliver on its strategic purpose and vision.

People

Our people make the difference from driving our vision to delivering our value. We support them in their ambition for excellence in their field of expertise – technical, policy, stakeholder engagement and compliance.

Governance

We understand our responsibilities and commit to the highest standards of transparency and accountability in our activities.

Our strategic projects

Strategic focus

Trust

Objective	Activity
Drive down DNS Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Partner with industry to use Artificial Intelligence and other technologies to detect and report malicious domains
Drive up the integrity of the .au domain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Support registry, registrars and resellers with training, validation technology and auditing to improve the integrity of registry data
Drive world's best practice security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Raise the standards for security awareness and practice in the .au ecosystem working with the .au registry, registrars and resellersPartner to develop and deliver website security tools and solutions for Internet users

Innovation

Objective	Activity
Improve the utility of .au through launch of .au direct registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Introduce the .au namespace to provide increased choice for Internet users
Produce valuable insights from our data and community research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop and share insights from auDA's own data and auDA commissioned research into the experiences and expectations of .au users
Invest to enable innovation and research by others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Support investment in innovation by reigniting the auDA Foundation Community Grants Program, developing the auDA Industry Co-marketing and Innovation Fund, and establishing partnerships with research institutions

Multi-stakeholder engagement

Objective	Activity
Grow and diversify auDA's membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop and implement a leading member program for organisations and individuals, delivering strong value to members
Increase auDA's influence in multi-stakeholder Internet governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase participation in national and international policy discussion and decision-making processes and deepen engagement with others

Strategic capabilities

People

Objective	Activity
Build an organisation regarded as an Employer of Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Support our people in their ambition for excellence in technical, stakeholder engagement, multi-stakeholder policy and compliance with leading people and culture policies, practices, programs and professional development opportunitiesDevelop an innovative wellbeing program to attract and retain high calibre staff
Strengthen the trust and confidence our stakeholders have in us	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Work to strengthen our engagement with all stakeholders through information, innovation and engagement regularly measuring and reporting on indicators of trust and confidence

Governance

Objective	Activity
Strengthen transparency and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Report as appropriate for our organisation against the ASX Corporate Governance Principles as an independent benchmark for governance transparency and accountability
Adopt International best practice reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Adopt the guiding principles and content elements of Integrated Reporting by FY2024-25 in our corporate reporting to demonstrate the value auDA creates and maintains for stakeholders

auDA'S 2021-25 PROPOSED STRATEGY ON A PAGE

Purpose

Administering a trusted .au for the benefit of all Australians, and championing an open, free, secure and global Internet.

Vision

Unlock positive social and economic value for Australians through an open, free and secure Internet.

Strategic focus areas

Strategic capabilities

Trust

Innovation

Multi-stakeholder engagement

People

Governance

Strategic objectives

Drive down DNS Abuse
–
Drive up the integrity of the .au domain
–
Drive world's best practice security

Improve the utility of .au through launch of .au direct registration
–
Produce valuable insights from our data and community research
–
Invest to enable innovation and research by others

Grow and diversify auDA's membership
–
Increase auDA's influence in multi-stakeholder Internet governance

Build an organisation regarded as an Employer of Choice
–
Strengthen the trust and confidence our stakeholders have in us

Strengthen transparency and accountability
–
Adopt international best practice reporting

Terms of Endorsement from the Federal Government

Environment

auDA

A trusted, secure and reliable .au
–
Passionate and knowledge team and constructive working relationships with industry
–
Well positioned to invest in innovation

External environment

Increased innovation and digital transformation
–
Changing needs of Australian businesses and individuals
–
Contributing to increased cyber security and combatting cyberthreats

Consultation framework and questions

auDA seeks community feedback on its proposed 2021–25 Strategy. The below questions aim to stimulate ideas and comments about auDA's future strategic direction, so that auDA can utilise feedback from our members and community to inform our final Strategy.

Questions

In preparing a submission, auDA asks you to consider the following questions:

1 Does auDA's proposed 2021–25 Strategy establish a clear strategic direction for the organisation?

2 Will auDA's proposed 2021–25 Strategy support it to deliver on its unique role in the global domain name and Internet ecosystem?

3 Will auDA's proposed strategic projects adequately ensure it delivers on its proposed strategic vision by 2025?

4 Will auDA's proposed strategic capabilities adequately support the organisation to deliver on its proposed strategic purpose and vision by 2025?

How to make a submission

We ask that submissions address the questions above.

The preferred method for the receipt of submissions is via the online form available at auda.org.au/strategyconsultation.

The online form allows for submissions of up to 500 words per question (2,000 words in total).

Submissions of more than 2,000 words can be made by:

- Email at consultation@auda.org.au
- Post at auDA Strategy Consultation, PO Box 18315, Melbourne, VIC 3000.

Please note that following consultation, submissions will be made public and published on auDA's website.

Next steps

On the close of consultation on **19 August 2021**, auDA will collate feedback and use it to inform its final Strategy. In this process, it will also consider any updates from government on our Terms of Endorsement before consulting with the auDA Board.

Submissions will be published on auDA's website and the final auDA Strategy will be released in Q4 2021.



.au Domain Administration Ltd
www.auda.org.au

PO Box 18315
Melbourne VIC 3001
consultation@auda.org.au