

Quarterly Report

2021 – Q2

April
May
June





Rosemary Sinclair AM
auDA Chief Executive Officer

From the CEO

The second quarter of 2021 marked several important milestones for auDA and the .au domain. Most significantly, in April the new .au Licensing Framework launched.

Refinements to eligibility and allocation rules, higher standards of validation and improved industry-wide security set us up to deliver a more secure, more reliable .au and for further innovations in the domain.

Launching the new Framework and implementing Phase One of the new rules represents the most substantial update to the policy rules in the .au domain in 20 years. It is the result of extensive consultation,

engagement and hard work. My thanks to everyone in the .au ecosystem who contributed to the development of the new rules and their successful implementation, including the 2015 Names Policy Panel and the 2017 Policy Review Panel, which developed the policy recommendations that led to the new Framework.

With the new Framework guiding us forward, this quarter we also took a moment to reflect on how far we have travelled. 23 June marked 24 years of auDA. Known then as the Australian Domain Name Administration (ADNA), there were only several thousand .au domain names under management. Contrast this with June 2021 when we reached more than 3.34 million registered .au domain names, with some 3 million in the com.au namespace. This significant growth reminds us why it is important to continue to innovate and transform – to keep pace with the changing needs of Internet users and to deliver value to an increasingly digital Australian society and economy.

Other important activity over the quarter included an ever-present focus on cyber security to further enhance our trusted .au domain, work with registrars on their increased validation and security requirements and the appointment of our Chief Operating Officer Bruce Tonkin to the Domain Name System (DNS) Abuse Institute Advisory Council.

As always, we also engaged widely with the multi-stakeholder community. We:

- Hosted our first Associate Member events for 2021 and commenced planning for upcoming opportunities to hear from our members
- Held the first meetings of the General Advisory Standing Committee (GASC) and Technical Advisory Standing Committee (TASC) for 2021
- Finalised new Charters with [GASC](#) and [TASC](#), enabling the continued provision of valuable advice to the auDA Board
- Attended NetThing committee meetings to begin preparations for its Internet Governance Forum in November 2021, which auDA is sponsoring
- Hosted a Board Industry networking evening, providing auDA Directors an opportunity to meet with industry guests to discuss how we can work together to support Australians through the Internet



1.

- Sponsored the inaugural Council of Small Business Organisations Australia (COSBOA) Director’s Cut event, which highlighted the role of digital connectivity in supporting small business resilience during the pandemic, and the B&T Women Leading Tech Awards, which celebrated the importance of diversity and innovation
- Facilitated an engaging and important discussion between experts on cyber security at the Committee for Economic Development Australia (CEDA) State of the Nation Forum, more on page 12
- Engaged in a range of international fora, including the 71st meeting of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), which you can read about on page 14.



2.

Turning our attention to Q3, the auDA team is continuing to partner with registrars on the new Licensing Framework. The work we are undertaking together will enable us to prepare for rolling out future phases, which will enhance the utility of the .au domain for Australians.

We are also consulting on the auDA 2021–25 Proposed Strategy, which sets our strategic direction and focus areas over coming years. I welcome feedback from our multi-stakeholder community that will strengthen the work auDA does on behalf of all Australians and Internet users.



3.

1. Rosemary Sinclair with Alice Williams, winner of the B&T Women Leading Tech Entrepreneur/ Founder of the year award, and MC Rae Johnston
2. auDA Chair Alan Cameron opening the auDA Board Industry evening in Melbourne
3. auDA is seeking community feedback on its 2021–25 Proposed Strategy

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In the spirit of reconciliation we acknowledge 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 today.

Policy and compliance update

On 12 April 2021, the new .au Licensing Framework launched to maintain a trusted, secure .au that meets the evolving needs of an economy and society undergoing a rapid digital transformation.



.AU LICENSING FRAMEWORK

Many stakeholders contributed to the development and implementation of the new Framework:

- **auDA staff**
- **Policy panels**
- **auDA members**
- **Registrars**
- **Registrants**
- **Domain industry**

The launch of the new .au Licensing Framework was the culmination of many years of consultation, preparation and training for the auDA team, registrars and broader .au domain industry stakeholders.

Phase One, which took effect on 12 April, introduced new rules for the com.au, net.au, org.au, asn.au, edu.au and state and territory namespaces. It included changes to safeguard the reputation of the .au as reliable, secure and trusted, such as:

- **Eligibility and allocation rules** for some namespaces (com.au, net.au, org.au, asn.au and state and territory namespaces)
- **Terms and conditions** for .au domain names
- The **complaints and suspensions/cancellations** processes
- The rules for **sub-domains** and **third-party use** of .au domain names.

The new Framework also introduced global standards for **best practice security** through the new Registrar Agreements, which require registrars to achieve ISO 27001 certification. Read more about security at auDA on page 11.

From 12 April, we have been focussed on supporting registrars to further embed the changes through new processes and systems.

One such system is the **.au Domain Investigation Tool (.auDIT)**. .auDIT allows registrars to review the registrant information associated with domain names (including registrant name and eligibility information) to check compliance with the .au rules, identify areas of non-compliance and determine steps to address non-compliance. This complements registrars' current validation processes and will contribute to improved compliance for .au domains. During the quarter we shared the tool with a sample group of registrars for testing. It is scheduled to be rolled out to all .au registrars in Q3.

We have also been working with registrars on embedding the new complaints handling processes, whereby registrars are the first port-of-call, and continuing work on **registrar Validation Plans and Baseline Security Assessments** to uplift industry-wide standards.

Ensuring these processes and systems are correctly implemented is an important step in preparing the industry to support future phases relating to the id.au namespace, direct registration (such as getyour.au) and internationalised domain names (such as 例如.au).

The new rules apply to all domain name licences created, transferred or renewed from 12 April 2021. Licences that have not yet expired or been transferred are subject to the legacy policies until the end of their current licence period.

To help registrants understand whether the new rules or legacy policies apply to their licensed domain names, we released the .au licensing version tool, which you can find on the auDA website: www.auda.org.au/tools/licensing-version

Our members

Our Q2 Associate Member events allowed us to hear directly from members, share updates on the .au domain and facilitate engaging discussions about the future of the Internet.



During the quarter, we hosted our first member events of the calendar year. The events took place in Melbourne and Sydney, bringing the membership community together in-person for the first time since the pandemic began. Both events were also live streamed, allowing members to participate virtually.

auDA CEO Rosemary Sinclair AM, Chair Alan Cameron AO and Chief Operating Officer Bruce Tonkin presented about the value of a trusted .au domain, multi-stakeholder Internet governance in Australia and abroad, and provided an auDA operational update. Following the presentations, members continued lively discussions with each other and with auDA staff and Board Directors.

You can [read](#) and [watch](#) more about these events, including what our members had to say, and read [Rosemary's remarks](#) about the importance of multi-stakeholder governance in supporting an open, free and secure Internet on [the .au blog](#).

Preparations are underway for upcoming events, which will be a mixture of virtual events and face-to-face, COVID-19 restrictions permitting. We are also preparing our 2021 member survey, which we will send out to all our members in Q3. Capturing member insights helps us to continue shaping and enhancing our membership program.

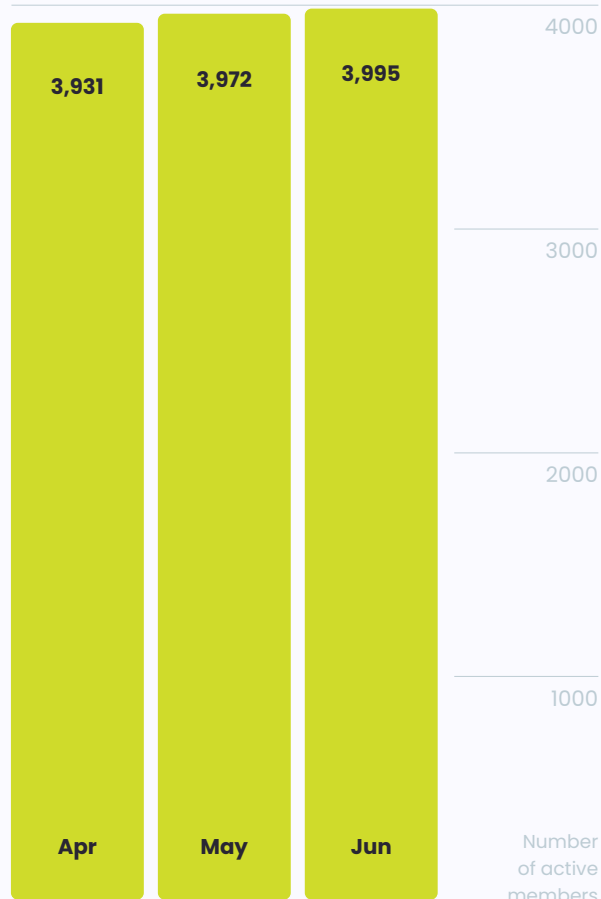
To get involved in the auDA membership program, visit auda.org.au/join to sign up free of charge. You can also follow us on social media and check your monthly member e-newsletter to hear about upcoming events.



From top: auDA Chair Alan Cameron and auDA Chief Operating Officer Bruce Tonkin speaking at the April 2021 member event

auDA Associate Membership grew to 3,995 in June 2021, from 3,879 in March 2021 and 3,386 in June 2020.

Associate membership growth



Actuals as of 30.06.2021

Associate membership by state

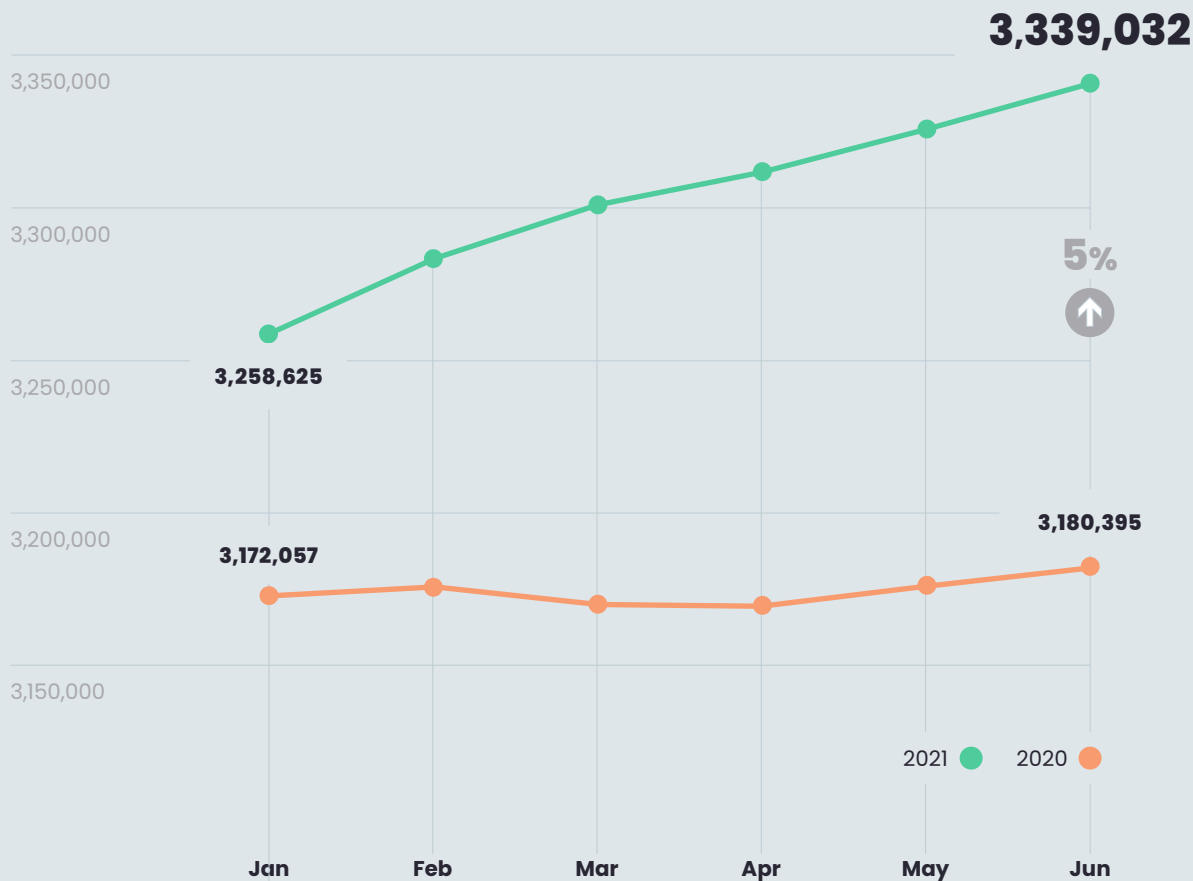
- International 9
- NT 35
- Tas 62
- ACT 112
- SA 186
- WA 341
- Qld 722
- NSW 1243
- Vic 1285

Associate membership by industry

- 37 Domain investor
- 64 Media
- 76 Manufacturing
- 86 Not-for-profit
- 88 Legal
- 97 Student
- 98 Construction
- 103 Web hosting
- 104 Government
- 110 Healthcare
- 115 Telecomms
- 128 Finance
- 154 Education
- 158 Other
- 198 Marketing Comms
- 227 Registrar
- 399 Web development
- 747 Did not disclose
- 1006 Technology

.au registrations

Domains under management

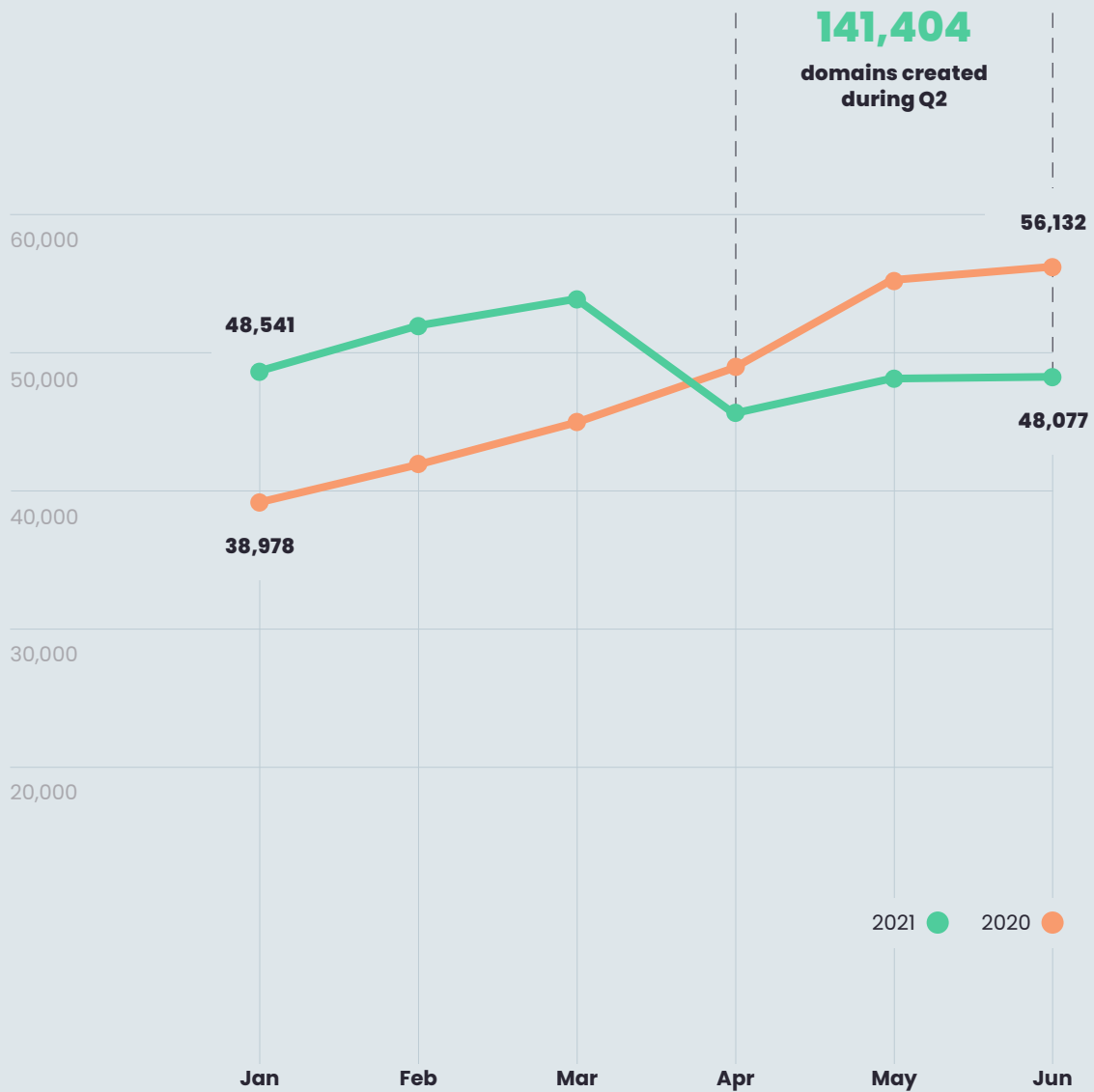


Australia's digital economy was a driving force behind another quarter of growth for the .au domain.

.au domain names continued a trend of growth this quarter, reaching 3,339,032 domains under management in June 2021, a five percent increase on June 2020.

This growth is underpinned by the com.au namespace, which continues to be in high demand for Australian businesses. With an increase of almost six percent year-on-year, the number of registered com.au domain names surpassed 3 million for the first time in June 2021. The namespace makes up 90 percent of all .au domains under management and continues to represent value for new and existing businesses establishing a local, trusted online presence.

New domains created



	Jun 2020	Jun 2021	YoY%
com.au	2,845,641	3,007,531	5.7%
net.au	223,423	217,508	-2.6%
org.au	73,243	74,949	2.3%
id.au	12,415	12,844	3.5%
asn.au	3,200	3,121	-2.5%

During the quarter, there were 141,404 new registrations. This is a 12 percent decrease from Q2 2020, which has resulted from the surge in registrations last year as COVID-19 restrictions that took effect around the country and subsequent levelling out of demand, including over the 2021 Easter period. However, it represents continued positive growth and is 14 percent higher than the same quarter in 2019.

Security

We take a continuous improvement approach to strengthening our security defences and we promote global best practice for the .au domain industry.

Global best practice security

ISO 27001 is an international standard that sets out global best practice for information security management systems. Maintaining an ISO 27001 certification requires organisations to pass annual ISO surveillance audits and complete recertification every three years. auDA received its ISO 27001 certification in May 2020. In Q2 we completed our annual ISO surveillance audit and met all our obligations.

The Registrar Agreements under the new Licensing Framework require registrars to become ISO 27001 compliant, which will uplift security across the .au domain industry for the benefit of all .au domain registrants. Over the quarter, we continued to support registrars to complete Baseline Security Assessments and progress their security capabilities to achieve ISO 27001 certification.

Business resilience

During the quarter auDA was involved in several business resilience initiatives to continue to strengthen the reliability and security of the .au domain.

auDA Chief Technology Officer Adam King participated in a Disaster Recovery exercise performed by the .au registry operator, Afilias Australia. Disaster Recovery exercises allow organisations to plan and test preparedness for managing crisis events and recover from interruptions. Afilias regularly perform these exercises, enabling continued improvement and familiarity in a live test environment.

auDA also joined a discussion on Business Continuity Plans and Disaster Recovery for the communications sector with a range of national stakeholders. As the operator of critical infrastructure that underpins Australia's digital society and economy, we are regularly involved in national level discussions about impacts to the Internet and auDA's response and recovery plans.

Australia's critical infrastructure

We have continued our engagement with the Commonwealth government about the *Security Legislation Amendment (Critical Infrastructure) Bill 2020*. The Bill sets out new requirements for critical infrastructure providers, such as auDA, to safeguard the nation from cyber attack.

We are actively consulting with relevant government stakeholders on the Bill related to the .au DNS, including accepting an invitation to appear before the Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS) in July 2021. The PJCIS provides parliamentary oversight of intelligence and national security bills and legislation, and will produce a report on the Bill for the Australian Senate to consider.

We also continue to provide regular information to registrars and other Australian Top Level Domain (TLD) registry operators (including .cc, .nf, .cx, .sydney, .melbourne) on the proposed reforms.

Rising importance of security awareness

Policy makers and business leaders are increasingly focussed on addressing rising cyber threats. We recognise the importance of best practice cyber security and are dedicated to using our expertise to uplift cyber security among Internet users.

In June, CEO Rosemary Sinclair [hosted a panel discussion](#) between Home Affairs Minister, The Hon. Karen Andrews MP, the

Commonwealth Bank’s Chief Information and Security Officer (CISO) Keith Howard and AustCyber’s CEO Michelle Price at State of the Nation forum in Canberra, hosted by CEDA. The panellists discussed the importance of increased cyber awareness in schools, universities, small businesses, boardrooms and governments across the country and agreed cyber security is one of the most critical issues facing Australians today.

1. auDA CEO Rosemary Sinclair pictured with Home Affairs Minister Karen Andrews, Commonwealth Bank CISO Keith Howard and CEDA Chair Diane Smith-Gander at the 2021 CEDA State of the Nation forum
2. Rosemary delivering opening remarks ahead of the panel discussion



Registry operations

auDA and registry operator Afilias Australia continue to deliver a reliable .au domain that quickly and accurately connects Internet users worldwide to websites and email services that use the .au domain.

Service level name	Expected	Apr	May	Jun
Overall DNS Availability	100%	100%	100%	100%
DNS availability per Anycast node				
q.au	99.9%	100%	100%	100%
r.au	99.9%	100%	100%	100%
s.au	99.9%	100%	100%	100%
t.au	99.9%	100%	100%	100%
DNS update delay time – % of updates within 5 mins	96%	99.97%	99.95%	99.87%
Cross network name server round trip time	300ms	57ms	60ms	60ms
DNS Round Trip Time (RTT) – % processed within 250 ms	95%	100%	100%	100%
WHOIS service availability	100%	100%	100%	100%
WHOIS update delay time – % of updates within 5 mins	96%	99.91%	100%	100%
WHOIS Round Trip Time (RTT) – % processed within 1 sec	95%	99.99%	100%	100%
EPP service availability	100%	99.98%	100%	100%
EPP Round Trip Time – % of queries processed within 500 ms	95%	99.81%	99.94%	100%
EPP Round Trip Time – % of changes processed within 1 sec	95%	99.96%	99.99%	100%

Measure name		Apr	May	Jun
Overall DNS Availability		100%	100%	100%
DNS availability per Anycast node				
a.au (auDA)		99.99%	100%	99.98%
c.au (Cloudflare)		100%	100%	100%
d.au (Cloudflare)		100%	100%	100%
m.au (Neustar)		100%	100%	100%
n.au (Neustar)		100%	100%	100%
q.au (Afilias)		100%	100%	100%
r.au (Afilias)		100%	100%	100%
s.au (Afilias)		100%	100%	100%
t.au (Afilias)		100%	100%	100%
DNS Round Trip Time (RTT) – % processed within 250 ms		100%	99.95%	99.99%

International engagement

We champion multi-stakeholder governance, which includes engagement with the International Internet community to advocate for an open, free and secure Internet.

DNS Abuse Advisory Council

In May, auDA's Chief Operating Officer, Bruce Tonkin, was appointed to the DNS Abuse Institute's newly formed [Advisory Council](#), joining a range of international Internet and cyber security experts. The Advisory Council is responsible for providing independent guidance, insights and critique on initiatives and projects run by the DNS Abuse Institute, which have far-reaching impacts on the ongoing security of the Internet.

His appointment is further recognition of auDA's expertise in administering a secure .au domain and commitment to work with the multi-stakeholder community in Australia and abroad to ensure a secure, global Internet.

Engagement with ICANN

auDA staff attended the virtual ICANN71 meeting on 14–17 June. ICANN operates through [multi-stakeholder governance](#) and brings together governments, industry, civil society and technical stakeholders to participate in discussions and decision making related to the DNS.

ICANN71 covered topics including DNS abuse, the impact of proposed legislation from the European Commission on ICANN's policy development and maintaining effective multi-stakeholder governance in the evolving Internet ecosystem.

A session hosted by the ICANN At-Large Advisory Committee discussed how country-code Top Level Domain (ccTLD) administrators each respond to unique, local circumstances, resulting in diverse governance models across different regions. For example, European ccTLDs favour not-for-profit organisations, in Latin America and the Caribbean, ccTLD managers are often academic institutions, African ccTLDs

are generally for-profit entities, while most in the Asia Pacific are managed by the government. Notwithstanding these differences, the majority of ccTLDs work constructively in the multi-stakeholder environment to serve their local communities. Find out more about ICANN71 [here](#).

During the quarter, auDA also attended meetings of the country-code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) Internet Governance Liaison Committee (IGLC). The IGLC encourages involvement of ccTLD managers in Internet governance issues. It has been progressing strategic planning to determine priority topics for the year ahead and considering how best to boost collaboration across the ICANN community.

Presentation with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)

In June, auDA's Compliance Manager Steph Viljoen joined a virtual WIPO presentation on [domain name dispute resolution services](#), which help to keep the .au domain trusted and reliable. WIPO is one of two .au dispute resolution providers. It is based in Geneva, Switzerland and manages around 30–50 .au disputes per year. The session was attended by more 500 attendees from around the world.

Complaints and dispute resolution

Education and awareness raising activity has contributed to greater understanding of the .au licencing rules and effective .au compliance.

Enquiries received by auDA’s Compliance team decreased by almost 20 percent in Q2 compared to the previous quarter, resulting from:

- auDA and registrar communication activity raising awareness and understanding of the new .au licencing rules
- auDA’s quick response and awareness raising following phishing attacks.

Complaints remained relatively steady from Q1, and in April we announced the [appointment of the Licence Review Panel](#)

(LRP), which provides an external point of escalation for complaints under the new .au rules.

We responded to 26 requests from enforcement bodies to address suspected misuse.

We also conducted more than 530 proactive audits of .au registrations as part of our ongoing program of work to raise compliance with the licencing rules and enhance trust in the .au domain for Internet users.

Updated on 6 October 2021: Previously reported law enforcement requests included formal requests from law enforcement agencies plus related cases. Following a review, the category has been updated to enforcement body requests and includes only formal requests from enforcement bodies including law enforcement, consumer affairs and fair trading. Related cases have now been reclassified as audits.

1082 Enquiries



554 Complaints



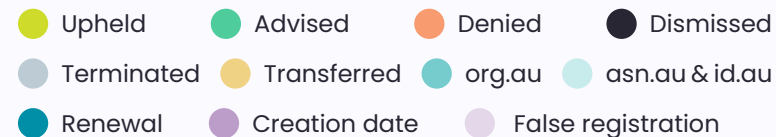
26 Enforcement body requests



9 Disputes



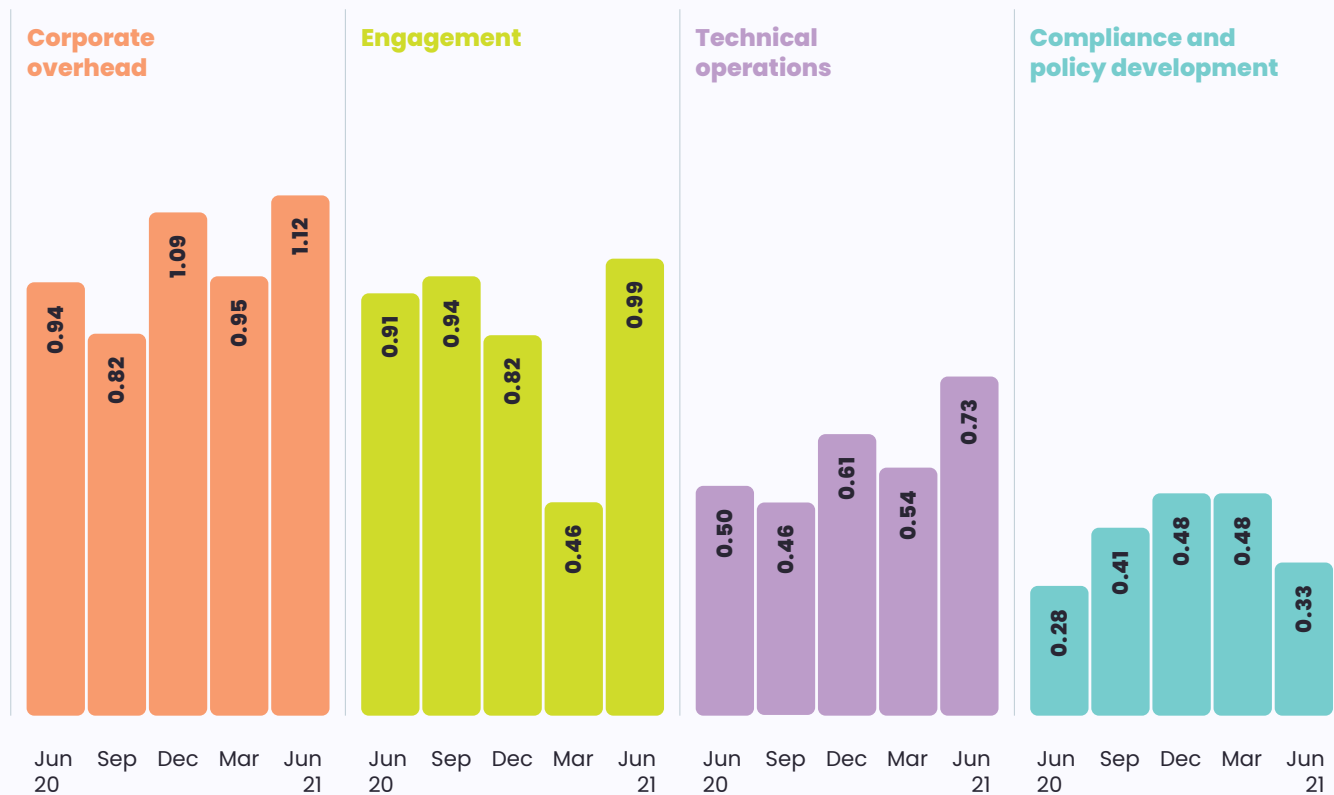
673 Audits



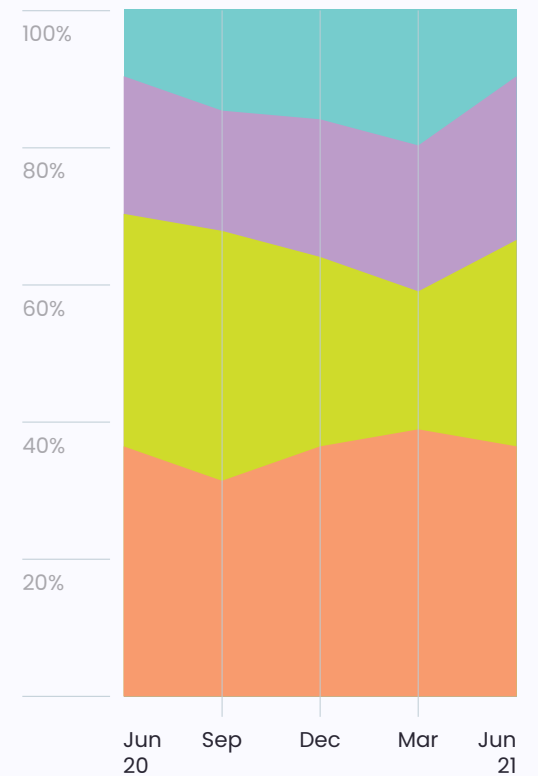
Financials

We hold ourselves to high standards of transparency and accountability and administer the .au domain in a cost efficient manner.

Operational costs quarterly \$M



Operational costs quarterly %





.au Domain Administration Limited

A.B.N. 38 079 009 340

www.auda.org.au