Quarterly Public Policy Report

auDA's Public Policy Report – April to June 2024

In this issue we cover some aspects of emerging tech trends, share auDA's recent submission to an Inquiry related to Australia's support of Pacific Island Countries, and report back on an exciting event we sponsored at Parliament in June. We also have news of two research contributions in the quarter - the *Digital Lives of Australians* report for 2024, and a thought-provoking report on plausible future scenarios for the communications environment.

As part of our ongoing contributions to multi-stakeholder internet governance, auDA also contributed to the ongoing negotiation of the UN Global Digital Compact (GDC), played a leading role in NETmundial+10, monitored the World Summit on the Information Society +20 Forum High-Level Event 2024 (WSIS+20) and preparations for the International Telecommunications Union's (ITU's) upcoming World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly 2024 (WTSA). Read more about these activities below.

Navigate to your topics of interest:

Domestic public policy matters	Internet governance and global policy
• **Emerging Tech Trends** • **Pacific Inquiry submission** • **ANU Tech Policy Design Centre - Tech Policy Futures 2024 event** • **auDA research released in the quarter**	• **auDA launches APIGA Australia** • **GDC** • **NETmundial+10** • **ICANN 80** • **IGF: MAG** • **WTSA** • **Technical Community Coalition for Multistakeholder Internet Governance (TCCM)** • **WSIS+20** • **CENTR Jamboree**

Domestic public policy matters

Emerging tech trends

In Q4 2023-24, several key tech policy trends emerged in Australia. There was a strong focus on generative AI, with policies aimed at integrating AI tools into various sectors to boost productivity and innovation. Telstra's [AI roadmap](#) is one example. The Australian government also agreed on a [National AI framework](#) to support the ethical use of AI and address its impact on the workforce.

Cyber security has remained a top priority for the Australian community, with new government initiatives to enhance online security for consumers and businesses, and efforts to address the growing number of cyber threats and data breaches. Consultation for the Government's [Statutory Review of the Online Safety Act 2021](#) also closed in June 2024. The review intersects with 15 other reform processes underway that aim to protect internet users from harmful content, with a focus on protecting young users.

Consultation - Support Australia's Alignment with Pacific Region's Priorities

On 15 May 2024, the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade resolved to have the Foreign Affairs and Aid Subcommittee conduct an inquiry into *[Australia's response to the priorities of Pacific Island countries and the Pacific Region.](#)*

The inquiry focusses on Australia's response to the priorities of Pacific Island countries and the Pacific region. It aims to identify key regional priorities, assess Australia's engagement and alignment with these priorities. It focuses on key areas such as regional stability, economic development, climate change, security, health, and education.

auDA's contribution:

auDA made a [submission](#) in response to the inquiry's terms of reference and general remit. Our submission supports the Government's effort to improve Australia's alignment with the priorities of the Pacific region. auDA believes enabling prosperity and sustainable development across the Pacific through programs that support digital transformation and uplift cyber resilience should remain a key area for the Government's regional development budget.

For more information about our submission, please [visit auDA's submission webpage.](#)

ANU Tech Policy Design Centre - Tech Futures event

The ANU Tech Policy Design Centre's annual Tech Policy Futures event, was held at Parliament House Canberra on 25 June 2024. The event convened politicians, officials, civil society advocates, industry leaders, innovators, and scholars to discuss tech policy, laws and regulations to promote future technology design, use and adoption.

auDA's contribution:

One of the features of Tech Futures was auDA's Future Scenarios Project Report (described above), which contains insights on three plausible future scenarios. The report enabled excellent discourse with event speakers discussing their view on what current and future tech policies could look like.

auDA was the sponsor of the event as supporting the innovation of others and the Australian digital transition are areas of interest for auDA.

auDA research released in the quarter

auDA regularly engages in critical research to understand and inform internet use and technology trends in Australia and shares those findings for public benefit. Our research informs auDA's policy goals as we promote the multi-stakeholder approach to internet governance domestically and internationally.

In May, auDA released its *Future Scenarios Project Report*. Through the project, we developed three scenarios that present different outlooks of what the world and its communications environment may look like in 2044. The scenarios challenge auDA's thinking and inform our strategic decision making. We encourage you read the report, watch our webinar and consider how the scenarios might help your own strategic planning in a rapidly evolving environment.

auDA also released our *Digital Lives of Australians 2024 report* in May. The fourth in our annual series, the 2024 research surveyed 1,500 consumers and 400 small businesses on how they value and use the internet. Key findings reveal:

- The internet is crucial for Australian society as 88% of working Australians say they rely on the internet to perform their job. Similarly, 78% of small businesses would struggle to operate without the internet
- Interest in Artificial Intelligence (AI) I is growing, with 39% of working Australians and 48% of small businesses believing AI tools will enhance employment prospects and business efficiency respectively
- Cyber threats are a major concern - 77% of consumers recall experiencing a cyber security threat or attack in the past year

- Despite recognising the importance of cyber security skills, only a small percentage of consumers (13%) and small businesses (24%) feel they have high capability in this area.

We launched the report via a stakeholder roundtable in partnership with the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) and the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia (COSBOA). Learn more about the event and hear from attendees in our video.

Internet governance and global policy

auDA launches APIGA Australia – a new Internet Governance Academy

auDA will host an inaugural youth internet governance academy in Melbourne on 20-21 November 2024. The Asia Pacific Internet Governance Academy Australia (APIGA Australia) is dedicated to developing the next generation of Australian youth leaders in the internet and digital ecosystem.

Run by auDA in collaboration with regional and global partners, the two-day intensive residential program will empower participants and arm them with the knowledge to engage in global discussions around the governance of the internet.

Applications close on Friday 16 August, and are available alongside more Information on the APIGA Australia website.

Technical Community Coalition for Multistakeholderism (TCCM)

The TCCM, announced in April, is a collaborative effort that includes auDA, CIRA, InternetNZ and Nominet as leading members to defend and strengthen multi-stakeholder internet governance. Its Statement of Purpose was shared in June. The TCCM brings together members of the global internet technical community to advocate for the importance of maintaining a multi-stakeholder model in internet governance, ensuring that diverse voices contribute to the development and management of internet resources. The coalition submitted a joint response to the GDC Zero draft earlier in March. A website will launch in August 2024.

Global Digital Compact

The GDC is a key initiative of the UN Secretary-General. It seeks to establish common ground on principles for a secure, free and inclusive digital future for everyone. The GDC is expected to be agreed by governments at the UN Summit of the Future in September 2024.

During the quarter, substantial work occurred on the GDC. On 1 April, the Zero Draft of the GDC was published. A revised Rev1 was released in mid-May after initial consideration by member states and stakeholder consultations. Rev2 was released in late June. A further, Rev3 of the GDC was finalised by the co-facilitators on 12 July and was proposed to member states under a silent procedure for approval (if no country objected, the text would be final), but countries broke silence and decided instead to continue negotiating aspects of the text.

auDA's contribution:

The issues of most concern to auDA throughout the negotiation have been around the internet governance sections and how follow-up and implementation will be done. auDA advocates for maintaining multi-stakeholder internet governance and supports GDC implementation and follow-up through existing internet governance institutions and processes.

auDA is engaging in the GDC process in accordance with our commitment to advocate the multi-stakeholder approach to internet governance. One example of our input is from March 2024, when auDA along with other ccTLDs lodged a joint submission on the proposed elements of the GDC Zero draft. You can read the submission here. auDA staff have also worked closely with Australian government officials to provide input and advice in an informal way as each revision of the text was published.

NETmundial+10

NETmundial+10 took place in São Paulo, Brazil from 29-30 April 2024. The event had several objectives: to reconfirm stakeholders' commitment to the NETmundial Internet Governance Process Principles from 2014, and to strengthen mechanisms and structures for multi-stakeholder internet governance. It aimed to move the conversation forward on how to ensure the multi-stakeholder approach continues to be used to govern the digital world.

The event garnered significant stakeholder attention. A Statement was agreed by acclamation at the end of the event. The event also included guidance for how to use multi-stakeholder approaches in internet governance and digital policy processes (the **São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines**, incorporated in the Statement), and messages for a range of other internet governance forums such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and the GDC.

auDA's contribution:

In our Internet Governance Roadmap released last year, auDA recommended a NETmundial-style event as a non-UN platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue on evolving the internet governance system in advance of the GDC.

auDA's Internet Governance and Policy Director, Jordan Carter, was a key member of the NETmundial+10 High-Level Executive Committee (HLEC) that oversaw the organisation of the event. auDA was represented at the event by CEO Rosemary Sinclair and Specialist Policy Adviser Annaliese Williams, alongside Jordan, to signal our strong support for the event and its work.

ICANN80

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) held a Policy Forum in Kigali, Rwanda in June 2024.

The Policy Forum at ICANN80 is the second meeting in ICANN's three-meeting annual cycle. It focusses on policy development work of Supporting Organisations and Advisory Committees (SO/ACs) including regional outreach activities.

Key topics included mitigation of DNS abuse using AI and Machine Learning, name collisions, Registration Data Request Service (RDRS), global policy gaps for ccTLDs.

auDA's contribution:

auDA is deeply engaged in several aspects of ICANN. auDA representatives serve on several ICANN committees, including the Country Code Names Supporting Organisation (ccNSO) and Nominating Committee.

We also hosted a webinar where we were joined by key members of the ICANN community. You can read key takeaways from the ICANN80 webinar in our blog.

auDA presence at other international processes and forums

IGF (MAG)

In June, the IGF's Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) convened the second Open Consultations for the IGF 2024. The MAG agreed the workshops to be held and started work on the main sessions for the event. Focus was on key governance issues facing the internet community, including progress in the GDC negotiation and the preparations for the WSIS+20 review. auDA's Jordan Carter, appointed to the MAG by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, was a key part of the drafting team pulling together the main sessions for this year's IGF to be held from 15 to 19 December 2024 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

WTSA Asia-Pacific preparatory process

In June, auDA participated in the Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) meeting hosted by the Australian Government to prepare regional proposals for the WTSA.

The WTSA sets the priorities for the ITU Telecommunications Standardisation Sector (ITU-T sector), shaping global standards and fostering international cooperation to support innovative communication networks and services. Proposals currently being discussed include those relating to AI standards, Metaverse, Digital Identity, critical infrastructure in cyberspace and naming, numbering, addressing and identification resources.

WSIS High Level Forum

auDA followed and participated in the [WSIS+20 High Level Forum](#), held at the end of May in Geneva. This event is a chance for the WSIS Community to stock-take progress against the WSIS Action Lines during the year. In 2024 the Forum focussed on the twenty-year review of WSIS happening next year (WSIS+20) and received high level representation and engagement as a result. Key players had the opportunity to highlight and present the work of the nascent [TCCM](#) of which auDA is a leading member.

What we're reading

The following resources related to internet governance, digital policy and regulation may be of interest for further reading:

[São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines: A breath of fresh air into digital governance debates](#) (May 2024)

What's it about: The article discusses the São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines, which aim to enhance digital governance debates. These guidelines advocate for inclusivity, transparency, and collaboration among diverse stakeholders in the digital and internet policy space. They offer a fresh perspective on how to manage and regulate the internet by promoting shared principles and best practices. The guidelines seek to address challenges such as digital inequality, cyber security and online rights while fostering a more democratic and effective governance framework.

Why we are interested: One of auDA's core functions is to advocate for the multi-stakeholder model of internet governance, which underpins a fair and open internet. The São Paulo Multistakeholder guidelines refreshingly promote a multi-stakeholder approach to internet and digital governance against a backdrop of increased debate around the future shape of internet governance.

[Australia's National Framework for assurance of artificial Intelligence in Government](#) (June 2024)

What's it about: Released on 21 June, the National Framework for Assurance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Government is designed to ensure that AI systems used by the Australian government are trustworthy, safe and accountable. This framework outlines principles and practices for the responsible use of AI, focusing on transparency, fairness and the protection of individual rights. It aims to build public trust in government AI applications and includes guidelines for the development, deployment and monitoring of AI technologies.

Why we are interested: Following consultation-initiated by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources in 2023, the Australian Government committed to ensuring the use of AI systems in high-risk settings is safe and reliable while use in low-risk settings can continue largely unimpeded. auDA submitted its response to the consultation and supports multi-stakeholder engagements and welcomes all stakeholders to participate in discussions around AI and other technologies. Responsible and ethical use of AI is linked with how the internet is governed and how users utilise the internet. Read our submission here. A crucial element of this agenda is the role of government as an exemplar in the safe and responsible use of AI which will trickle down to all industry stakeholders in Australia.

The Power to Govern Ourselves: (Multi)Stakeholders, States and Collective Action (June 2024)

What's it about: The article explores the interplay between multi-stakeholder and state-centric models in internet governance. It highlights the importance of collaboration among governments, civil society and the private sector to address global digital challenges effectively. The piece advocates for leveraging the diverse strengths of these participants to create a balanced and effective governance framework.

Why we are interested: auDA shares the view and supports the multi-stakeholder model is critical for of a free and open internet. The model, though imperfect, gives all stakeholders a voice and enables just government decision-making. A government-only structure might be good for authoritarian regimes, but it would be harmful to the internet and our digital future.

Upcoming events (Jul-Sep 2024)

21-23 August 2024
APrIGF (Taipei, Taiwan)

The [Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum](#) (APrIGF) will bring together the local multi-stakeholder community to discuss the theme: Evolving Ecosystems, Enduring Principles: Shaping Responsible Internet Governance.

30 August – 6 September 2024
APNIC and Pacific Internet Governance Forum (Wellington, New Zealand)
[APNIC 58](#) inclusive of the [Pacific Internet Governance Forum](#) will be held from 30 August to 6 September 2024. Workshops and partner meetings will be held from 30 August to 2 September followed by the conference from 4 to 6 September 2024. The conference brings together internet and networking experts, government representatives, industry leaders and other interested parties from around the region and beyond to learn, share ideas and experience, network with peers and develop policies related to Internet operations.

17–19 September 2024
APTLD 86 (Da Nang, Vietnam)
[APTLD](#) is the regional organisation for ccTLD (country-code Top Level Domain) registries in the Asia Pacific region. The organisation promotes information exchange and skills surrounding the internet domain names amongst members and provides a forum for policy discourse that impact the internet domain.

Webinars

Over the coming quarters, auDA is scheduled to host a series of webinars on public policy matters, debriefs on key internet governance forums and our research projects. [Keep track of our webinar and events schedule and register here.](#)

Contact auDA's Policy team via public.policy@auda.org.au for more information on our policy and advocacy initiatives and other related matters.