

Quarterly Public Policy Report

auDA's Public Policy Report – January to March 2024

Recap on the quarter

This year, governments and industry alike are grappling with the growth of AI, privacy challenges and how to best manage data. To explore these key policy areas, we hosted a webinar with Australian digital policy experts in February where we discussed policy and regulatory priorities domestically and internationally in 2024.

auDA also participated in consultation on Australia's Cyber Security legislative reforms, the UN Global Digital Compact and NETmundial+10. Read more about this activity below.

In this edition we cover in brief:

Domestic public policy matters	Internet governance and global policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upcoming tech trends• Cyber Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• APTLD85• ICANN79• Global Digital Compact• NETmundial+10

Domestic public policy matters

Upcoming tech trends

To set the tone for the new year, auDA invited some of Australia's foremost tech policy experts to reflect on 2023 and discuss what they think will be the main tech issues for 2024.

Our panellists were:

- [Simon Bush, CEO, Australian Information Industry Association \(AIIA\)](#)



- Kate Bower, Fellow, UTS Human Technology Institute and Consumer Data Advocate, CHOICE
- Frank Zeichner, CEO, IoT Alliance Australia.

Key issues discussed included the need for clearer governance and action on AI, the importance of secure data and the need for greater collaboration across government on technology policy.

[You can view the tech policy webinar here](#) and [read our 2024 tech policy forecast blog here](#).

Cyber security

On 22 November 2023, following the release of the Australian Government's [2023–2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy](#) (Strategy), the Government commenced consultation on proposed legislative changes that closed on 1 March 2024.

The proposed changes included:

1. Proposed new legislation
2. Proposed amendments to the existing *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018* (SOCI Act).

The proposed new legislation includes mandatory ransomware reporting and the establishment of a Cyber Incident Review Board. SOCI Act amendments include expanding the 'assets' definition within the SOCI Act to include business critical data-storage assets, new consequence management powers for the Minister of Home Affairs and power to enforce deficiencies in risk management plans.

The Government commenced further consultation that closed on 22 March 2024. It looked at the regulatory impact of three measures of the proposed new legislation (Measure 5: data storage and business critical data; Measure 6: consequence management power; Measure 8: remedy of risk management plans).

auDA's contribution:

auDA made a submission in response to the proposed legislative changes addressing seven of the proposed measures. Our submission supports the Government's effort to improve cyber security but notes some improvement opportunities. We recommend focusing on information sharing and trust building instead of a compliance-based approach. We also believe new measures should focus on shared learning and community safety rather than penalising victims of cyber attacks. auDA also requests clarification on how information collected from industry will be used and protected.



To discuss the Strategy, auDA co-hosted a webinar with the Cyber Security Cooperative Research Centre (CSCRC). The panel included Hamish Hansford (Acting National Cyber Security Coordinator), Brendan Dowling (Ambassador for Cyber Affairs and Critical Technology) and Rachael Falk (CEO of the CSCRC). [Read our blog about the Strategy webinar here.](#)

Internet governance and global policy

APTLD85

The Asia Pacific Top Level Domain Association ([APTLD](#)) held its 85th meeting in Goa, India from 19–22 February 2024.

APTLD is an organisation of country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD) registries in the Asia Pacific region and operates as a forum to exchange ideas, engage with other ccTLD managers and co-ordinate participation in global internet governance processes.

auDA's contribution:

auDA attended the meeting and contributed to a range of sessions, including a panel where we spoke about our approach to DNS abuse, and a session on ccTLD marketing that we moderated.

ICANN79

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) held a [Community Forum](#) in San Juan, Puerto Rico in March 2024.

ICANN79 was the first of the annual three meeting cycle for ICANN. The Community Forum Format structure includes time for internal work of the Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees (SO/ACs), cross-community interaction and plenary sessions on topics of community-wide interest.

Key topics discussed included DNS abuse, internet fragmentation, a discussion around the upcoming WSIS+20 review ([read about WSIS+20 in our blog](#)) and more.

auDA's contribution:

auDA is deeply engaged in several aspects of ICANN. auDA representatives serve on a number of 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 ICANN79 webinar in our blog.](#)

Global Digital Compact

The Global Digital Compact (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.

A stakeholder consultation led by co-facilitators of the GDC was held on 13 February 2024, and a call for written input was made later in the month, closing on 8 March.

On 1 April, the [Zero Draft](#) of the GDC was published, with negotiations slated for April and May.

auDA's contribution:

auDA is engaging in the GDC process in accordance with our commitment to advocate for the multi-stakeholder approach to internet governance. [We published a statement on the GDC consultation that you can read here.](#)

NETmundial+10

[NETmundial+10](#) seeks 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 aims to move the conversation forward on how to ensure the multi-stakeholder approach continues to be used to govern the digital world.

The event will take place in São Paulo, Brazil from 29–30 April 2024. [You can read the draft NETmundial+10 program here.](#)

The Secretariat has also released a [stakeholder consultation document on NETmundial+10 that you can read here](#). An outcomes document will be prepared for discussion at the event, based in part on the input from this consultation.

NETmundial+10 is a unique forum among many internet governance discussions in 2024, as it will provide a chance for the multi-stakeholder community to come together to discuss the global internet governance system itself, to strengthen internet governance for the future.



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 appointed to the NETmundial+10 High-Level Executive Committee (HLEC) that oversees the organisation of the event.

What we're reading

The following articles related to internet governance, digital policy and regulation caught our eye, and may be of interest for further reading:

Title: [Why we need multi-stakeholder internet governance](#) (Feb '24)

What's it about: This paper by the Council of European National Top-Level Domain Registries (CENTR) talks about the importance of the multi-stakeholder model of internet governance and the benefits. It also explains that a multi-stakeholder approach allows for the inclusion of more perspectives, which can lead to more robust outcomes. Finally, the article argues that a multi-stakeholder approach can help to keep internet governance neutral.

Why we are interested: The multi-stakeholder model is key to an open, free, secure and globally interoperable internet. It is important to raise awareness and articulate this, as our colleagues in Europe have.

Title: [Google's retiring of Internet archiving tool draws ire of China researchers](#) (Feb '24)

What's it about: Google is retiring its internet archiving tool. Google's cached links functioned as an internet archiving tool. Researchers used cached pages to view past versions of websites and deleted content. The article discusses the challenges this poses for researchers studying China's censored internet. China censors information critical of the government. Researchers worry that without access to cached pages, they will miss important information.

Why we are interested: Censorship threatens the open and free nature of the internet and inhibits the value it brings to societies. Understanding the extent of censorship is an important part of maintaining trust in the internet.



Title: [Gemini image generation got it wrong. We'll do better.](#) (Feb '24)

What's it about: Google's AI, Gemini, has powerful image generation and interpretation ability, however, attempts to ensure content produced was not offensive have backfired on Google. The safety features meant that reasonable requests, particularly those of historical events, produced inaccurate results. As a result, Google suspended Gemini's image generation.

Why we are interested: AI and image generation tools will increasingly become key parts of our digital lives. There's an ongoing balance to ensure we get full capability from these tools while keeping people safe. Debate on how to regulate AI continues, with a Senate Inquiry underway. As auDA noted in [our submission on responsible AI in Australia](#), regulators should adopt a human-centric approach towards innovation to unlock positive economic and social value.

Title: [What to look out for in the Zero Draft of the Global Digital Compact?](#) (Apr '24)

What's it about: The article breaks down the GDC zero draft explaining the context, submission themes and key things to look out for.

Why we are interested: As outlined earlier in this report, the GDC has the potential to shape the future of internet governance globally. The zero draft will form the basis for negotiations as the GDC is finalised.

Upcoming events

29–30 April 2024

NETmundial+10 (São Paulo, Brazil)

[More information on NETmundial+10 is available here.](#)

7 May 2024

Launch of auDA's Future Scenarios Project report (online)

What will the world look like in 2044? auDA will release its Future Scenarios Project Report, which presents three scenarios with starkly different views of a possible 2044. It is intended to help navigate ambiguity, manage future complexity and support strategic decision-making. [Register for the Scenarios launch webinar here.](#)



29–31 May 2024

CENTR Jamboree (Copenhagen, Denmark)

CENTR is the association of European country code top-level domain (ccTLD) registries. The CENTR Jamboree is a gathering of all CENTR's Working Groups, from Legal to Technical, from Security to Marketing, R&D and Admin.

10–13 June 2024

ICANN80 (Kigali, Rwanda)

The [ICANN80 Policy Forum](#) will be the second ICANN meeting for 2024. The four-day event is dedicated to policy, advice and technical work.

8–12 July 2024

APIGA (Seoul, South Korea)

The [Asia Pacific Internet Governance Academy \(APIGA\)](#) is a capacity-development program focused on Internet governance targeted at youths from the Asia Pacific (APAC) region.

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.

Webinars

Over the next quarter, 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.](#)



Open consultations – have your say

Agency	Consultation	Submission due date
Senate	Senate Select Committee on Adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI)	10 May 2024
House of Representatives	Inquiry into the Digital Transformation of Workplaces	21 June 2024

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