



SUBMISSION TO AUDA FOR AND ON BEHALF OF C-BALLARAT LIMITED AND THE CITY OF BALLARAT

BACKGROUND OF SUBMITTING ORGANISATIONS

c-Ballarat Limited is a non-profit organisation. Its Board, all volunteers, comprises leaders within the community of the Ballarat region with proven track records in combining expertise in ICT with community outcomes and objectives.

The mission of this organisation is to *assist in the promotion and coordination of ICT development in the Ballarat Region.*

Its goals are:

- To increase utilisation of ICT by individuals and families in the Ballarat region
- To stimulate the increased participation of business and industry in effective utilisation of ICT
- To promote the recognition of Ballarat as an ICT innovator

The vision of the organisation is *to be recognised as a leading influence in the effective utilisation of ICT by the Ballarat community*

Its guiding principles are listed as follows:

- Educator in ICT best practices.*
- Champion equitable participation in ICT.*
- First point of call for ICT innovation with referring functions.*
- Selective participation in the incubation of ICT initiatives.*

The University of Ballarat and the City of Ballarat have played a pivotal parts in the development of the region as a "Silicon Gully" and have had significant success in a change of culture towards this objective, not only in terms of attracting ICT activity here, but also in facilitating the integration of ICT into the wider populations of the region as a part of the everyday lives of communities here. The University, in conjunction with the City, established the Ballarat Technology Park, on which it operates an IT Incubator, the Greenhill Enterprise Centre. IBM Global Services and of late, the State Revenue Office are major IT developments on the Park with more to come.

The University has also contributed significantly to connectivity between the Ballarat region and the communities along the Western Highway into the Wimmera. It also initiated and manages the Community Enterprise Centres under the Regional Connectivity project, which are dotted across Western Victoria and the Wimmera.

The City has effectively integrated the pursuit of ICT into overall strategic policy and thinking in the region and has, with its partnership with c-Ballarat Limited, taken a major role in the facilitation and development of policies and projects that integrate ICT into the everyday lives of the Ballarat communities.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL?

This proposal refers to geographic 2LDs.

THE NAME(S) OF THE 2LDs

The proposal is two tiered. The first tier is in respect of 'statename.au' (ie vic.au, nsw.au etc.). The second tier is in respect of '*placename.statename.au*' (ie. *ballarat.vic.au*, *orange.nsw.au*)

It our submission that **statename.au** should be granted as a closed 2LD to the respective Governments of each State and Territory, or a registration body representing each State Government.

The granting of the statename.au domain to each respective State Government should be granted with the condition that councils or local government authorities are granted registration of the placenames under that 2LD, as described above. In some cases, local government authorities may carry multiple placename domains under their control.

THE RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THE 2LDs

Over the last 2 years, communities in many regions, actively assisted by Sate and Local Governments, have embarked upon community based online projects, for the creation of community portals, e-commerce engines procurement platforms. Tourism, agriculture, local business, employment and environmental issues have often been represented in these projects.

Part of the difficulty of providing adequate recognition of these sites and projects on the 'Net has been trying to find a suitable domain name for the same. In many cases, 2LDs with country extensions (.au in this case) and placenames in them have either been registered by commercial providers in the days when there was no regulation, or have simply been refused after it was decided that placenames should not be included in the list of available domain names in Australia.

In the case of .TLDs, many placenames were taken by commercial organisations both in Australia and overseas. There are also numerous cases where TLDs registered with Australian placenames or variants thereof where it would appear that they have been "cybersquatted".

This has meant that commercial alliances needed to be struck between community representative organisations such as local councils and NGOs and the relevant commercial providers, in some cases, at substantial cost.

In many cases, it will have been inappropriate for local councils to extend their own domain names (such as *placename.vic.gov.au*) for any purposes other than those in respect of government organisations directly themselves.

Given that there are numerous (especially regional and rural) communities where business, local government and community organisations collaborate comprehensively in e-commerce, tourism and community portal and website projects, it is submitted that it is manifestly appropriate for each town in Australia to be able to utilise its own uniquely identifiable domain name for community purposes.

In the case of the 2LD itself, it is submitted that broader and perhaps more generic use of **statename.au** is of great value to statewide initiatives with a distinct geographical focus, such as tourism, education, health and statewide NGO operations relating to conservation and environment.

THE INTENDED USERS OF THE 2LD (INCLUDING REGISTRANTS AND NON-REGISTRANTS WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE 2LD)

statename.au - as intimated above, the relevant State or Territory Government would have control over the registration of these 2LDs. The potential registrants who would be users of the 2LD would include community-based initiatives (such as the community portal and e-Commerce engine being developed under a State Government initiative in Ballarat), joint community based projects between government and NGOs, tourism organisations and cultural troupes.

placename.statename.au - under the mandate given above, the State Government registering authority would be given the right to grant the use of this 2LD with placenames, to Councils and local government authorities with jurisdiction over those names the places refer. The purpose of this grant would be in respect of specific parochial projects and community initiatives that run beyond pure governmental parameters.

In terms of non-registrants, it would mean that many members of the community pursuing probative projects and initiatives will have greater freedom to list their projects under identifiable geographical domains. It is likely that local portal projects and directories will be further encouraged.

**A STATEMENT ADDRESSING THE SELECTION CRITERIA;
THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA THAT WOULD APPLY IN THE 2LD
THE POLICY RULES THAT WOULD APPLY IN THE 2LD**

As a closed 2LD, each State and Territory Government would be in charge of setting out common and consistent guidelines for use of *statename.au*. It is suggested that a national sub-committee, auspiced by AudA, be made up of a representative of each Government and that this committee be responsible for developing consistent rules and criteria.

Eligibility for use of the generic 2LD would be in the hands of each State and territory Government, but it would be centred on the geographic or other relevance of the State reference (eg www.portals.vic.au, www.tourism.vic.au, www.festivals.vic.au, www.greatbikeride.vic.au). It would also be the case that the applicant for the URL must prove community benefit or that it is a community based and focussed initiative. This does not rule out applications by commercial organisations, but they must clearly mandate them to these criteria.

Control over parochial issues will be ensured through this model. For example, it may be possible to register *greatoceanroad.vic.au*, but several councils are located along the Great Ocean Road. This is not a placename as such, but there is clear community benefit to the regions concerned and the State Government will be able to develop a common policy over the use of the name.

State Governments would be mandated to licence or lease *placename.statename.au* to the councils and/or local government authorities for use in geographically identified community based initiatives, such as regional portals and e-commerce facilities. Those local authorities would be charged with direct trusteeship over the names.

It is also submitted that the granting of *placename.statename.au* to councils and/or local government bodies would be subject to the adherence to guidelines procedures set by the State Government body. A failure to meet these requirements and the State Government body should be placed in a position where it may withdraw the domain from the council or local government authority and operate the same itself or through appointed agents/representatives on behalf of the community in that region.

WHETHER THE 2LD IS OPEN OR CLOSED

IF CLOSED, AN INDICATION OF WHY THE 2LD SHOULD BE CLOSED RATHER THAN OPEN AND WHAT VALUE IS ADDED BY IT BEING CLOSED.

It is submitted that most of these questions have been answered in the discussion set out above. Additionally, it is submitted that potential abuse of place names in 2LDs has historically been one of the reasons why the original registrars of the current 2LDs clamped down on the use of the same. Keeping the proposed 2LDs closed ensures continuing control for the benefit of the geographical communities concerned across the Nation.

IF CLOSED, THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF POTENTIAL REGISTRANTS IN THE 2LD

It is hard to estimate the numbers of potential registrants, but is anticipated that with strict controls over their use, both tiers of the proposed 2LD would be limited.

IF CLOSED, THE FUNDING MODEL FOR 2LD OPERATIONS

IF CLOSED, THE PEAK BODY THAT WOULD MANAGE THE 2LD.

It is submitted that the funding model for this particular regime is not onerous or substantial. As such, the IT Departments of all State and Territory Governments should be able to provide administration over the governance of the 2LD within their budgets. It is also submitted that should the State or Territory Government in question the need to do so, an application to NTN may well be considered to be appropriate.

In the case of *placename.statename.au*, it is submitted that the Councils or Local Government Authorities should be capable of exercising jurisdiction over the same. They should be mandated with trusteeship over the same that should not be released or transferred to any other body. If, as recommended above, they are granted a licence or lease of the same, then the relevant State Government authority will be able to withdraw the name from the control of the Council or Local Government Authority if the need arises.

SUPPORT FROM THE INTERNET SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

I am authorised by the Internet Society of Australia to note here that the Board of the same supports in principle the introduction of *statename.au* and *placename.statename.au*

George Fong

Submitted for and on behalf of :

c-Ballarat Limited - ACN 096 427 208

and

The City of Ballarat

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