CEO's Report
auDA Activities and Progress, 2001- 2002

When we met at last years' AGM auDA was 4 months into the new regime and I was tentatively suggesting that the transition had gone well and we appeared to be on track. Now, 12 months later I think it is clear that, on the whole, the systems and policies we have put in place are operating with a high degree of stability and acceptance.

Policy

We have bedded down the new policies and reviewed some of them already. We have had public consultations on both the whois policy and the change of registrar policy. As a result of those reviews some changes have been made. Currently we are finalising a review of the reseller policy and various other existing policies will be reviewed in the coming year.

We have also begun implementing the recommendations of the New Names Panel on geographic community names. We have formed and are facilitating a National Reference Group to bring about the introduction of the 8 new second level domains. The NRG comprises representatives of Commonwealth, State and local governments, the Geographic Names Board and the community generally. Significant progress has been made and there are currently 2 draft papers out for public consultation.

Registry

The registry is operating well and an increase in the number of com.au and net.au domain names from 268,000 on 1 July 2002 to over 350,000 has led to a reduction of $5 in the per domain name price charged to registrars.

The registry service levels required by auDA are set to world's best practice standards. AusRegistry continues to surpass these as well as refining and updating its systems and technologies. As part of their ongoing development they are finalising the upgrade of registry software from EPP V6 to EPP V9 and this is expected to be implemented during the first 6 months of 2004.

Registrars

From a base of 9, we now have 19 accredited registrars and over 700 appointed resellers. During the year, following feedback from registrars we reviewed and made some changes to the accreditation criteria. There have been a few relatively minor policy or code of practice breaches by registrars or resellers and we continue to actively monitor performance and adherence.

We dealt with a registrar ceasing to operate and the systems in place to cope with such an eventuality held up well causing as little inconvenience as possible to registrants. We completed the transfer of day to day management of edu.au from auDA to AICTEC and their registrar Education AU.

As with any relatively young industry there have been growing pains but we are encouraged that the industry is rapidly maturing and continuing to demonstrate a willingness to work closely with us for the benefit of the community as a whole. We held a very successful registrars conference earlier this year at which many issues were canvassed and I hope that we have demonstrated that whilst we cannot give registrars everything they would like, we do listen and make changes and adjustments where we can.

Registrants

The acceptance of auDA by the community and the level of knowledge about domain names and the policies that govern them continue to grow but there is still much work to do to ensure that registrants and potential registrants understand the system, their rights and obligations and have a sufficient degree of knowledge to ensure that they are not susceptible to scams.

The .au Dispute Resolution Policy has now been operating for over a year and there have been 11 published decisions. We anticipate and increase in activity as more domain names become subject to the policy.

Security

Security is a major issue and we are constantly monitoring and reviewing the structure of and redundancies within .au to ensure that it is as stable and secure as possible. In that respect we work closely with NOIE, ASIO and other government departments.

Finances

As you will have noted from the accounts, our financial position continues to improve. We operate within our budget overall and expect another surplus at the end of the current financial year. At that time we will have reached the second anniversary of the new regime and will analyse the costs and inflow of funds with a view to reducing the auDA domain name fee from its current level of $10 per name.

Future

We have worked hard to formulate a long term vision and goals for auDA and have now published the auDA Moving Forward report on our web site.

Thanks are due to the Board, who continue to give of both their time and intellect and to Jo and Elspeth for their tireless commitment to auDA and its goals and their willingness to turn up every day, work hard and, wherever possible, have fun.

I believe that this first year has demonstrated that the new systems are stable and secure and that the policies and framework of .au provide a competitive market place within which registrars and their resellers can successfully operate and the number of domain registrations can grow.

auDA is never going to be universally popular. The supply constituency would like us to focus on their needs and on representing them. The demand side wants greater consumer focus and for us to be tougher on registrars and resellers. The key to auDA being successful is to ensure a balance between those 2 competing goals whilst maintaining the stability, security and integrity of the system. I believe that we have achieved this during that last 12 months.

Thank you.