

CEO's Report

auDA Activities and Progress – 2004

The last 12 months can, perhaps, best be described as a time of consolidation for auDA. Two major policy reviews have taken place. The Names Panel has considered making some changes to the eligibility criteria and domain name licence periods. The Competition Panel has worked on the principle of competition at the registry level and developing a policy framework for the introduction of new second level domains from a registry services point of view. The final reports of both panels have now been completed and will be considered by the Board at the next meeting.

Over the last 12 months, 3 pilot projects have been run to test the viability of the geographic community names. The independent report on the pilots has raised some interesting sustainability issues that indicate the release of the names will require a level of facilitation, guidance and support that is beyond auDA's scope. The Board has agreed in principle to release the names and is currently considering a number of alternative methods to ensure the required community support can be provided. In the meantime, the Board has agreed to lift the prohibition on geographic place names in com.au and net.au and are considering various ways to manage that process.

We continue to work closely with our registrars to assist in the development of the industry. The number of registrars continues to increase albeit at a slower rate. We held a well-attended and successful second annual registrars conference at which it was encouraging to see vigorous debate on various issues.

We have started to take a more proactive role in the reseller area and are currently conducting a series of reseller web site audits to judge the level of compliance with auDA's basic reseller requirements.

Management of the closed domain, gov.au and edu.au, has settled down with both managing bodies beginning to find their feet. There are a number of issues in edu.au with certain states attempting to create their own registry systems. However we are working closely with AICTEC to solve these problems.

Throughout the year we have continued to pursue Domain Names Australia. We obtained judgement against the company and its director and their appeal against that judgement was dismissed. Our next court attendance will be to seek orders in respect to the class action.

The formation and funding of the auDA Foundation has been completed and we anticipate that the first call for grant applications will be made in early 2005.

The prudent management of auDA's finances and the increase in the number of domain names being licensed meant that during the year we were able to reduce auDA's domain name fee by 25% from \$10 to \$7.50. This means that since the start of the new regime in July 2002 the com.au and net.au wholesale price to registrars has dropped by a total of \$7.50. A further \$5 reduction in the price to registrars is due when the combined total of com.au and net.au domain names reaches 475,000. This is expected to occur in February 2005.

Thank you.