

2015 NAMES POLICY PANEL ISSUES PAPER, APRIL 2015

Overview – what this paper is about

This paper invites public comments on some of the main policies underlying the allocation and use of domain names in the .au domain space.

It has been developed by the 2015 Names Policy Panel, as part of a process which periodically reviews Australian domain name policies. The body which is responsible for these policies is .au Domain Administration Ltd (auDA). auDA's role is to administer the .au domain space on behalf of the Australian community, and it has appointed the current Panel to conduct the policy review.

In the course of the review so far, it has become clear to the Panel that the major issue under consideration is whether direct registration of domain names at the second level under .au (eg. myname.au) should be permitted, or whether the current policy of registration only at the third level (eg. myname.com.au) should remain. This paper canvasses the issues around direct registrations that have been identified by the Panel to date.

The paper also sets out some issues raised by the Panel in relation to current auDA policies governing the allocation of .au domain names at the third level.

Importantly, the Panel is still at an early stage of its deliberations and has not yet reached a consensus view on the issues under consideration.

We welcome your comments and suggestions, not only in response to the specific questions posed by the Panel at the end of each section, but also on any other issues that are relevant to the Panel's Terms of Reference.

How to submit your comments

There are two ways in which you can comment on the issues raised in the paper.

1. Send a written submission to:

Jo Lim, Chief Operations and Policy Officer, auDA

email: jo.lim@auda.org.au

fax: 03 8341 4112

All submissions will be posted on the auDA website unless clearly marked confidential.

The closing date for submissions is **Monday 1 June 2015**.

2. Complete the online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5XYL2WW>

Collected survey responses will be posted on the auDA website at the close of the public consultation period.

The survey will close at **midnight on Monday 1 June 2015**.

1. Background

In December 2014 the auDA Board established the 2015 Names Policy Panel to:

- review the policy framework underlying the allocation and use of domain names in the .au domain space; and
- provide recommendations to the auDA Board.

Full text of the Panel's Terms of Reference, a list of Panel members and minutes of Panel meetings to date, are available on the auDA website at <http://www.auda.org.au/policies/panels-and-committees/2015-names-policy-panel/>

The Panel is required to undertake at least two rounds of public consultation, to ensure that its recommendations to the auDA Board have been properly canvassed with, and informed by, key stakeholders and the general community.

Following this first phase of consultation, the Panel will publish its draft recommendations for further public comment before providing its final report to the auDA Board at the end of 2015.

2. Structure of the Australian Domain Name System (DNS)

The .au domain space is organised into a number of different second level domains (2LDs) which each have a particular purpose:

2LD	Purpose
asn.au	For Australian non-profit organisations, associations, clubs and special interest groups
com.au	For Australian commercial entities and traders
csiro.au*	For the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)
edu.au*	For Australian educational entities
id.au	For Australian individuals
gov.au*	For Australian government departments and agencies
net.au	For Australian commercial entities and traders
org.au	For Australian non-profit organisations, associations, clubs and special interest groups
act.au, qld.au, nsw.au, nt.au, sa.au, tas.au, vic.au, wa.au*	For Australian local community groups. Only Australian place names may be registered – eg. ballarat.vic.au and wollongong.nsw.au

*These 2LDs are excluded from the Panel's Terms of Reference.

In addition to specific eligibility criteria which apply in each 2LD, there are a number of general policy rules which apply to all .au domain names, including:

- 'first come, first served' – ie. no hierarchy of rights, or recognition of prior rights
- registrants must be Australian or registered to trade in Australia
- fixed two year domain name licence period
- registration for the sole purpose of resale is not permitted.

3. Fundamentals of the Australian DNS

The Panel suggests that there are some elements which are fundamental to the Australian DNS, and that any proposed changes to the Australian DNS should seek to preserve and even enhance these elements. Chief amongst these are that the .au space is for Australians – ie. individuals and entities who are not Australian (or not registered to trade in Australia) are not permitted to register a .au domain name.

The Panel is aware that the .au domain has a strong local and international reputation as a comparatively well-regulated and trusted space. This is in part due to the 2LD eligibility and allocation rules which require registrants to identify themselves and the reason why they are entitled to register a domain name, and in part due to the enforcement regime which imposes penalties for non-compliance.

The Panel is conscious that the .au domain space has evolved and developed over the past 15 years, and we need to be willing to make further changes, but be careful in our consideration of changes and their likely effects. The Panel's overriding concern is to ensure that any changes will facilitate the continued growth and development of the .au domain, but not at the expense of its perceived value.

4. Direct registrations under .au

The first issue under the Panel's Terms of Reference is:

Should .au be opened up to direct registrations (eg. domainname.au)? If yes, should there be any policy rules, and if so what rules?

4.1 Current situation

It has never been possible for people to register a domain name directly under .au (eg. myname.au). The .au 2LD hierarchy was created in the 1990s by the first administrator of the .au domain, Robert Elz, who adopted some generic Top Level Domain (gTLD) names – com.au, org.au, net.au, edu.au, gov.au – and added some uniquely Australian names – asn.au, id.au. Elz also determined that each 2LD should be for a different purpose – eg. com.au for commercial entities, org.au for charities, edu.au for educational entities and so on.

Elz's approach was in line with many other country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD) administrators in the early days of the Internet. However, over the past 15 years, a number of ccTLDs have moved from only registering domain names at the third level, to direct registration at the second level as well – including Canada (.ca), France (.fr), China (.cn), Japan (.jp) and Singapore (.sg). Most recently, the United Kingdom (.uk) and New Zealand (.nz) have made this change.

4.2 Timing issues

The issue of direct registrations under .au has been considered by different auDA Panels over the past 15 years, always resulting in a recommendation to retain the status quo. The current Panel believes that two recent changes in the global DNS landscape make this an opportune time for Australia to reconsider allowing direct registrations:

1. Two comparable jurisdictions¹ – .uk and .nz – have undertaken extensive policy review and public consultation processes, resulting in both of them opening up to direct registrations during 2014. The two countries adopted different implementation methods, but both placed a strong emphasis on rights protection for existing registrants – refer to Attachment A for further information.

The decision of .uk and .nz to open up their domain spaces continues an international trend in this direction. There is an argument for saying that .au should keep up with its peers, and if other ccTLDs have successfully managed the transition to direct registrations then there is no reason why we could not do the same. However, the Panel is clear that merely taking an "everyone else is doing it so why don't we?" approach without properly evaluating the benefits and risks of change would not be a responsible way forward.

2. Since 2013 more than 500 new gTLDs have been created and become available in the market, alongside the familiar existing gTLDs such as .com, .org and .net, with several hundred more to come over the next 12-24 months.

It is suggested that unprecedented competition from new gTLDs requires .au to be more responsive to global market forces. For .au to remain a strong and highly-regarded TLD we need not only to rely on its distinctive Australian identity and good reputation, but continue to innovate in order to counter the likely impact of hundreds of new gTLDs flooding the market. Whilst .au is currently very popular with Australian users, there is potential for new gTLDs to erode the brand equity in .au.

One possible indicator of the impact of new gTLDs is the annual growth rate in .au registrations, which was 12% at the end of 2012 before new gTLDs started to appear, and had halved to 6% at the end of 2014. However, there are a range of factors that affect domain name registration rates, so a decrease in growth rates alone should not be taken as evidence that people are choosing to register new gTLDs instead of .au domain names. The Panel notes that two new gTLDs with direct applicability to Australians – .melbourne and .sydney – have had a low take-up since launching in the past six months (at the time of writing there are currently approximately 5,900 registrations in .melbourne and 3,800 registrations in .sydney).

Perhaps the most significant effect of the changes in the global DNS landscape highlighted above, is that as Australian Internet users gain a better understanding of the DNS and become used to seeing many different types of domain name, they may be more receptive to – and demanding of – changes in the .au domain.

4.3 Flexibility and choice

One of the common arguments in favour of allowing direct registrations is that it will provide more flexibility and greater choice for people who want to register .au domain names. Domain names under .au would be shorter and arguably more memorable, ie. myname.au instead of myname.com.au. This might make .au domain names more attractive to people who have registered their domain name in another domain space, or who have never registered a domain name.

At present there is a clustering of choice and limited flexibility – registrants generally perceive particular spaces as being more appropriate for their purposes than others, whether constrained by the eligibility criteria, or influenced by popular usage. Overwhelmingly, com.au is the most popular

¹ Comparable to .au in the sense that .uk and .nz have similar per capita domain name registration rates and operate under an industry self-regulatory regime.

choice, accounting for approximately 85% of total .au registrations. It seems likely that direct .au domain names would also be a high-preference choice, and may also be regarded (or marketed) as more prestigious or "premium" domain names.

4.4 Clarity and confusion

While creating a new space would enhance choice and flexibility for registrants, the Panel notes that it might also increase confusion and reduce clarity for Internet users. It is suggested that users generally understand what the existing 2LDs mean and what they are for, whereas registrations directly under .au would not have the same intuitive meaning (at least in the initial transition period).

However, the current system has its own confusing elements, with two 2LDs for commercial entities and two for non-commercial organisations, while the id.au 2LD appears not to be well known or widely supported, despite the best efforts of the industry. It might be suggested that the simplest option would be to move the whole system to direct registration at the second level.

Whilst the existing 2LD hierarchy may have its flaws, the Panel is aware that we are not starting with a blank slate, and most other jurisdictions have retained existing 2LDs when they move to direct registrations at the second level. The challenge would be to create the simplest and most straightforward system, aimed at minimising user confusion.

4.5 Demand and marketplace issues

Another argument put forward in favour of direct registrations is that it would meet market demand. Specific markets for Australian domain names are in three groups:

1. Commercial, ranging from large corporate to SMEs and sole traders
2. Not-for-profits and other community sector organisations and groups
3. Individuals.

The Panel's view is that the first two groups appear to be well-served by the current .au structure – certainly, within Australia, the com.au and org.au spaces are well-recognised and relatively popular among their target audiences.

It is suggested that the third group, individuals, are not well accommodated within the current 2LD hierarchy, because the ABN requirement acts as a barrier for com.au/net.au registrations, and id.au is not attractive or well-known. Making direct registrations available to individuals may overcome this problem and lead to increased personal use of domain names in Australia.

It is not always necessary to demonstrate existing demand – many innovative new products and options are created in the absence of measurable demand. However, given the significant impact that this type of change would have, there needs to be at least evidence of likely demand. The Panel is reviewing the experience of other ccTLDs, and the growth rates in direct registrations since they were made available. Other forms of evidence of demand that the Panel is looking at include the number of back-orders that registrars receive for different kinds of domains, as that is an indication of the number of people who want to register a name that is already taken and therefore might be willing to register that same name in a new space.

The nature of the likely demand is also relevant. Many businesses may welcome the new opportunities for establishing an online identity and brand that a direct registration might offer them. On the other hand, it has been suggested that much of the demand would be for defensive registrations by existing registrants who feel compelled to protect their name – the Panel notes that currently, the majority of .uk direct registrations are held by the registrant of the matching co.uk

name. The Panel is aware that widespread defensive registrations would undermine the benefits of introducing direct registrations – not only would it be costly and inconvenient for existing registrants, and would also limit the availability of names to prospective new registrants.

However, the extent to which people feel they have to defensively register their name could be managed through policy rules and other remedies that are available for brand protection. The regulatory framework in .au may explain why defensive registration is not practiced widely by Australian registrants – eg. the majority of com.au registrants have not registered the matching net.au name, and to date there has been low take-up of .melbourne and .sydney names by registrants of .au names. One registrar who offers registrations in hundreds of different TLDs has advised that the average number of domain names in their retail customer accounts is approximately 1.6, suggesting that the majority of registrants do not defensively register their name in multiple spaces.

4.7 Security and stability

The purpose of opening up .au to direct registrations would be to increase the pool of available domain names for people to use for their online presence – typically, for website and email services. However, there are concerns that direct registrations could become de facto new 2LDs operated by "private registries", outside the .au infrastructure controlled by auDA. For example, the registrant of lawyers.au might set up a private registry and sell domain names (myname.lawyers.au) to the public.

The Panel notes that auDA's policy on the creation of new 2LDs explicitly excludes the operation of private or closed 2LDs, on the basis that the public benefit lies in making sure that all 2LD registries are properly operated and subject to the same service levels and consumer safeguards. It has been suggested that allowing people to use a direct registration as a de facto new 2LD would undermine auDA's new 2LD policy, run the risk of fragmenting the .au space and may threaten the technical stability and integrity of the Australian DNS.

4.8 Policy rules for direct registrations

If direct registrations were to be allowed, then the Panel needs to consider what policy rules would apply. In other words, who would be eligible for one of the new domain names, and what type of name would they be able to register?

The Panel believes that an "open slather" approach would undermine the integrity of the .au domain, and therefore there should be some form of restriction on direct registrations, even if only a basic local presence requirement to maintain the Australian identity of the space.

One approach might be to apply existing 2LD policy rules to direct registrations. Whilst it would not be possible to apply all the rules together, given the rules are not the same in each 2LD, it would be possible to apply a combination of 2LD rules. For example, in order to register directly in .au, a registrant would need to meet one of the 2LD eligibility criteria (eg. ACN or ABN). This would have the advantage of maintaining consistency and not introducing any new eligibility criteria, but would exclude people who are currently ineligible for a .au domain name. In addition to the issues raised above in relation to individuals, the Panel is considering whether there are particular groups with a national identity that do not logically fit within any of the existing 2LDs, such as the Kulin nation and other indigenous tribes.

At present, each of the 2LDs has rules relating to what kinds of names can be registered. The requirement for a domain name to be an exact match, acronym or abbreviation of the registrant's name, or show a close and substantial connection to the registrant (including domain monetisation), is fundamental to the current system. The simplest approach, for the sake of consistency and to

reduce user confusion, would be to apply the same rules to direct registrations. However, there may be an argument for differentiating direct registrations from 2LD registrations, by making the rules either more restrictive or more relaxed. A more restrictive policy would necessarily limit the potential for growth and might therefore undermine the purpose of opening up the .au space in the first place. A more relaxed policy might lead to higher risks of cybersquatting and inappropriate registrations, resulting in a dilution of the .au brand and reputation.

4.9 Implementation issues

Consideration of potential implementation mechanisms for opening up .au to direct registrations is outside the scope of the Panel's Terms of Reference. However, the Panel is conscious that if direct registrations were to be implemented by auDA, then the impacts on existing .au registrations would need to be carefully considered, and it would be important to ensure that there is adequate rights protection and dispute resolution. The Panel notes that the experiences of other ccTLDs in handling the transition to direct registrations would be invaluable, should this be implemented in .au.

Comment: Direct registrations in .au

The Panel invites comments on whether or not .au should be opened up to direct registrations.

In particular, the Panel is interested in what people think about the following questions:

- do new gTLDs pose a threat to the “.au brand”?
- is there evidence of any market demand for direct registrations?
- what types of registrants/users would benefit from direct registrations?
- what policy rules should apply to direct registrations?
- what issues would need to be taken into account as part of the implementation process?
- should .au follow the example of other ccTLDs like .uk and .nz?

5. 2LD eligibility and allocation policy rules

The second issue under the Panel's Terms of Reference is:

Should the eligibility and allocation policy rules for asn.au, com.au, id.au, net.au and org.au be changed? If yes, what changes should be made?

5.1 Current situation

The current policy rules for asn.au, com.au, id.au, net.au and org.au (known as the “open 2LDs”) have been in place, mostly unchanged, since 1 July 2002.

The Domain Name Eligibility and Allocation Policy Rules for Open 2LDs (2012-04) set out three types of rules:

- General policy rules that apply to all 2LDs, eg. “first come, first served” and a fixed 2 year licence period
- Eligibility criteria that apply in each 2LD, eg. commercial entities are eligible for com.au and net.au, not-for-profit entities are eligible for asn.au and org.au, individuals are eligible for id.au

- Allocation rules that apply in each 2LD, eg. exact match, abbreviation or acronym, or “close and substantial connection” rule (which includes domain monetisation in com.au and net.au).

The policy rules are further elaborated in the Guidelines on the Interpretation of Policy Rules for the Open 2LDs (2012-05), including the different types of official identifier required for a registrant to establish their eligibility – eg. ACN or ABN for a com.au and net.au domain name.

5.2 Domain name licence period

auDA’s 2010 Names Policy Panel recommended that the fixed two year licence period be changed to a variable 1-5 year period (ie. registrants could choose to register their domain name for 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 years). This recommendation is currently on hold and is due to be considered by the auDA Board at the time of the next registry tender process (scheduled for 2017). This is because changing the domain name licence period has implications for the revenue models of both auDA and the registry operator.

Members of the current Panel are generally supportive of the 2010 recommendation, to provide enhanced flexibility and choice for suppliers and consumers alike. It is suggested that even greater flexibility and choice would be achieved by following the example of .nz, which allows registrations from one month to 10 years.

5.3 ‘First come, first served’ and ‘no hierarchy of rights’

‘First come, first served’ and ‘no hierarchy of rights’ mean that the first person to register a domain name is entitled to keep it, and otherwise no one has a better right to a domain name than anyone else².

Panel members are considering whether there may be an issue with the way these principles apply to expired domain names. There can be strong demand for registered domain names that are due to expire, especially generic names which are regarded as particularly valuable or useful for people trying to establish a leading online presence. In the early days of the DNS, a person who was interested in registering an expired domain name would wait for it to drop from the registry and then “hand-register” (manually register) it through a registrar. In recent years however, the use of commercial back-order and drop-catching services has facilitated the automatic registration of expired domain names as soon as they are dropped from the registry, making it increasingly difficult to hand-register an expired domain name.

There is a belief that the existence of these automated services is not well known outside the industry, and that people who do not know about these services are at a disadvantage when trying to register expired domain names. One suggestion is to provide an official waiting list service for people to reserve or pre-register a domain name, so that if it expires they are given an opportunity to register the domain name before it becomes available to the public through registrars in the normal way. Another approach would be to provide an official alert system for people who are interested in a domain name, so that they receive notification when a domain name expires and can take their own action to secure the domain name.

5.4 2LD eligibility criteria

The Panel notes that under current policy, it is possible for some entities and individuals to register their name in more than one 2LD – eg. incorporated associations and companies limited by guarantee are eligible to register in com.au and net.au, as well as org.au and asn.au.

² Subject to the .au Dispute Resolution Policy and other applicable auDA Published Policies.

It is suggested that the 2LD eligibility criteria could be made mutually exclusive. This would narrow the options for some registrants, but would serve to reinforce the different purposes of the 2LDs – ie. commercial (com.au and net.au), non-commercial (org.au and asn.au) and individual (id.au).

5.5 'Close and substantial connection' rule

The 'close and substantial connection' rule allows registrants in .au to register any name, provided that there is some sort of discernible relationship between the domain name and the registrant – eg. the domain name refers to a product or service of the registrant. In recent years the close and substantial connection rule has been expanded in com.au and net.au to allow registration for the purpose of domain monetisation, provided that the registrant complies with certain conditions³.

The original rationale for the rule was for the benefit of Internet users who want to find things easily and trust that "it does what it says on the tin", and to discourage cybersquatting. Panel members have questioned whether the rule continues to serve any purpose or public benefit, noting that the rule is open to interpretation and may form a barrier to entry for registrants who don't understand the meaning of 'close and substantial connection'. On the other hand, the rule has been in place since 2002 and the number of .au domain name registrations has continued to increase year on year (from approximately 280,000 in 2002 to 2.9 million at present), suggesting that it is relatively well-understood and accepted by .au registrants.

5.6 Business name registrations

One of the eligibility criteria for com.au and net.au domain names is a registered business name and number. On 28 May 2012, the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) took over the registration of business names from the states and territories. This resulted in changes to the format of business numbers (previously known as "RBNs"), and the Panel is aware that it has caused some problems in relation to registrants whose business details are out-of-date and/or cannot be verified by the registrar. The Panel considers that this issue should be addressed in the next iteration of the policy rules and guidelines.

Comment: 2LD eligibility and allocation policy rules

The Panel invites comments on the 2LD eligibility and allocation policy rules including, but not limited to, the issues outlined above:

- should the domain name licence period remain fixed at two years?**
- should the principles of 'first come, first served' and 'no hierarchy of rights' be retained?**
- should the current 2LD eligibility criteria (ie. restricting com.au/net.au to commercial entities, org.au/asn.au to not-for-profit entities, id.au to individuals) be modified?**
- is the 'close and substantial connection' rule desirable?**
- what changes are required to address the new practice regarding business name registrations?**

³ The domain monetisation conditions are that 1) the content on the website to which the domain name resolves must be related specifically and predominantly to subject matter denoted by the domain name; and b) the domain name must not be, or incorporate, an entity name, personal name or brand name in existence at the time the domain name was registered.

6. Other 2LD policy rules

The third issue under the Panel's Terms of Reference is:

Should the policy rules relating to the reserved list and misspellings be changed? If yes, what changes should be made?

6.1 Current situation

In addition to the core domain name policy rules, two other auDA policies also govern the types of domain names that people can register in the open 2LDs:

- Reserved List Policy (2014-06) – prohibits the registration of words and phrases restricted under Commonwealth legislation, without requisite authorisation
- Prohibition on Misspellings Policy (2008-09) – prohibits the registration of misspellings of entity, personal and brand names.

The Panel considers that these policies continue to be relevant and effective in maintaining the integrity of the .au domain space, and does not consider that they need to be changed. However, the Panel is open to considering any issues that people wish to raise as part of this public consultation process.

Comment: Other 2LD policy rules

The Panel invites comments on the policy rules relating to the reserved list and misspellings.

Comment: General .au policy

The Panel invites comments on any other aspects of .au policy relevant to its Terms of Reference, which have not been raised in this paper.

Glossary

Term	Definition
2LD	Second level domain, ie. a name at the second level of the .au domain name hierarchy (eg. com.au)
ABN	Australian Business Number
ACN	Australian Company Number
auDA	.au Domain Administration Ltd, the administrator of the .au DNS
ccTLD	Country Code Top Level Domain (eg. .au for Australia, .nz for New Zealand)
DNS	Domain Name System
Domain monetisation	The practice of registering domain names in order to earn revenue from advertising
gTLD	Generic (or Global) Top Level Domain (eg. .com, .info, .sydney, .melbourne)
RBN	Registered Business Number
Registrant	An entity or individual that holds a domain name licence
Registrar	An entity that register domain names for registrants and is accredited by auDA
Registry operator	An entity that operates the central registry database of domain names
TLD	Top Level Domain

Implementation of direct registrations in .uk

Direct registrations in .uk launched at 08.00hrs on 10 June 2014.

Rights of existing registrants

Domain names that were registered before 23.59hrs on 28 October 2013 have rights to the equivalent new .uk domain, provided there was no other corresponding co.uk, org.uk, me.uk, ltd.uk, plc.uk or net.uk registered.

Where there are two or more domain names that are the same, the co.uk will be offered the .uk equivalent. Where there is no co.uk, the org.uk will be offered the new .uk equivalent. Where there is no co.uk or org.uk, the me.uk will be offered the new .uk equivalent.

All co.uk domains registered after 28 October 2013 and before 10 June 2014 will also have rights to the .uk equivalent, as long as there is no 'clash' with any existing domains meeting the criteria above.

The .uk equivalent will be automatically reserved for the eligible registrant for free for five years from the launch date (as long as the registrant keeps their current domain name registered). If the registrant does not register the .uk equivalent within the five year reservation period, the domain name will become available to anyone who wants to register it.

New .uk registrations

In order to register a new .uk domain name, the following requirements apply:

- any person may register within .uk
- where a registrant address is not within the United Kingdom, a UK address for service must also be supplied
- PO Box addresses (or equivalent services) are not permitted
- the sale of third level registrations to unrelated third parties is not permitted.

For more information see www.dotuklaunch.uk and www.nominet.org.uk

Implementation of direct registrations in .nz

Direct registrations in .nz launched at 13.00hrs on 30 September 2014.

Rights of existing registrants

Preferential Registration Eligibility (PRE) gave some registrants the eligibility to either register or reserve the .nz equivalent of their existing co.nz, org.nz, net.nz etc. domain name. Two groups of registrants were eligible for PRE:

- registrants who registered a .nz domain name prior to 09.00hrs on 30 May 2012 - depending on their situation, these registrants could be classified as either "Preferential Registration or Reservation (PRR) status" or "Conflicted status" (see below)
- registrants with a unique .nz domain name that was registered between 09.00hrs on 30 May 2012 and 15.00hrs on 11 February 2014.

“PRR status” means the registrant is automatically eligible to register the .nz equivalent, or reserve it for up to two years at no cost. The deadline for PRR was 30 March 2015 (ie. six months after launch), and any domain names not registered or reserved during the PRR period are now available for registration on a first come, first served basis.

“Conflicted status” means the domain name has been registered to different registrants in at least two second levels, and so the .nz equivalent will be unavailable for registration until the conflict is resolved. Parties are encouraged to resolve the conflict privately between themselves, or the .nz Domain Name Commission offers a free mediation service. There is no timeframe for conflict resolution; the domain name simply remains unavailable until the conflict is resolved.

New .nz registrations

Anyone can register an available .nz domain name, so long as they are identifiable individuals over 18 years of age or a properly constituted organisation. They do not need to be based in New Zealand.

For more information see www.anyname.nz and www.dnc.org.nz