

Future of “.au” domains remains uncertain - blueAPACHE

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We look at the discussion surrounding the future of .au domain names at the time of this update.

The self-regulatory body .auDA (.au Domain Administration) which manages web domains in Australia is set to hold a general meeting after a petition from members to vote on a number of motions, including a vote of no-confidence in auDA chief executive Cameron Boardman. The federal government has not given any comment on the issue. Earlier this year, the .auDA announced an assessment into how Australia uses domain names. The current “.com” in a web address could be removed amongst other changes. Once registered, a web address would be written as abc.au instead of abc.com.au. However, business owners have expressed concern on confusion about the new policy idea and unfair consultation process; where rollouts include having “contested domains”, forcing businesses to claim websites via a lottery system. Besides cost, many have raised worries that a website transition or change would be a challenge from a branding perspective.

“Consultation with these groups continues,” an .auDA spokesperson said.

Josh Rowe, former director of .auDA and one of the members who launched the petition, says he does not want .auDA “to fail”, nor does he oppose the idea of “.au” domain registrations for Australian businesses. Instead, his priorities remain with the consultation process around these issues. “One way this could be resolved is to restart the consultation panel. Just involve more people. Have more small business representatives, and just increase the number of people around the panel,” he says.

What is auDA and what does it manage?

auDA (.au Domain Administration) is the self-regulatory body that manages web domains in Australia.

Why is auDA holding a general meeting?

auDA is set to hold a general meeting after receiving a petition from members to vote on a number of motions, including a vote of no-confidence in auDA chief executive Cameron Boardman.

What proposed change to Australian domain names was announced by auDA?

Earlier in 2018, auDA announced an assessment into how Australia uses domain names, which could remove the “.com” portion of a web address. Once registered, a web address would be written as abc.au instead of abc.com.au.

What concerns have business owners raised about the proposed domain policy change?

Business owners expressed concern about confusion regarding the new policy idea and an unfair consultation process, including a rollout involving ‘contested domains’ that would force businesses to claim websites via a lottery system. Many also worried about the cost and branding challenges of

transitioning or changing a website.

What did an auDA spokesperson say about the consultation process?

An auDA spokesperson said, "Consultation with these groups continues."

Who is Josh Rowe and what is his stance on the .au domain issue?

Josh Rowe is a former director of auDA and one of the members who launched the petition. He says he does not want auDA 'to fail' and does not oppose the idea of '.au' domain registrations for Australian businesses, but his priority is improving the consultation process.

What solution does Josh Rowe propose to resolve the consultation issue?

Josh Rowe suggests restarting the consultation panel by involving more people, including more small business representatives, and increasing the overall number of people on the panel.

Has the federal government commented on the auDA domain name controversy?

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