CEO's Report
auDA Activities and Progress – 2006

I am just going to run through some highlights of what has been happening in the last 12 months and what is coming up in the next 12 months. It has been a fairly hectic period of time for the small number of staff at auDA. We have finalised the Registry Licence Agreement for the new 4 year registry licence. The registry fee has reduced consequent on that, and we have also reduced our fee. The auDA fee is now $4.50 and it started off at the beginning of this whole thing, four or five years ago as $10, so there have been some fairly substantial reductions.

We have made some significant constitutional changes which are effectively being used for the first time at this meeting. We don't have Representative Class anymore, we now only have Demand and Supply, and there are a few other constitutional changes that have been made.

We have embarked on a fairly significant security and stability plan. Those of you who have been involved in the internet for a period of time will know that the internet structures have been built over many years using volunteers and traditionally in the country code Top Level Domain world, you get secondary servers for your country code from all sorts of places around the world on a volunteer basis. Our secondary servers have been provided to us for quite some considerable time by various institutions around the world which is fine except that, because they are volunteers, there are no service levels, we don't have access to the computers themselves and we don't know what other things are on those computers apart from our country code. So we have taken the decision to spend a significant amount of money, I think it's in excess of $1 million over the next 12 months, to change the way we do our secondaries and basically to run a series of secondaries around the world that are controlled by us. That doesn't mean we are going to have offices in locations around the globe but it does mean that we will have computer racks in data warehouses around the world and we will have remote access to those secondary servers.

As a result of policy reviews in the last 12 months, the most major change is probably the clarification of the close or substantial connection rule to allow registrations for the purpose of monetising the website. Monetisation of a website has never been a problem, if you are entitled to the domain name you can basically within reason do what you like. What we did was to clarify the policy that you can actually register a name and say that you have a close or substantial connection to that website because you intend to monetise the website.

We have introduced some more privacy measures for WHOIS. Those of you who have done a WHOIS search in the last couple of days will know that it now has a what's called image verification on the front of it and those of you who have done a search in the last 24 hours will know that it now also has a voice reading of the image verification for those who can't actually see the letters.

We have a new domain expiry period so those of you whose domain name expires while you are on a two week holiday, you are safe, you have got 30 days now instead of 14 in pending delete.

We launched .au Community Domains (auCD), to facilitate the new community geographic domain names, which we also launched.

We had the first round of grants from the auDA Foundation and that was a very successful. The Foundation gave grants of $275,000. I won't give you the details but if you are interested where the money went, all the details are on the website.

We held our first ever public board meeting which was quite an interesting experience and we will probably do that again, and we also launched the Let's Talk Net podcast.

What's coming up? We have a Names Panel starting in February or March. This is looking at all of the names policy from the bottom up. It's never difficult to find representatives of the supply side of the industry to sit on Panels. It is less easy to find true representatives of the demand side to sit on Panels. If anyone is out there who is on the demand side, I would encourage you to think about the possibility of being a panellist and think about maybe recommending some other people who can be on the Panel.

We are also going to finalise the formation of our Security and Stability Advisory Committee, an advisory committee to the board on security matters. We will be doing a review of the auDRP, the .au Dispute Resolution Policy. We are going to make some improvements to our complaints system; as you won't be surprised to hear, the relaxation of the policy rules tends to have a consequential increase on the number of complaints. We are also going run a review this year of the auDA funding model and have a look at ways that can maybe be changed. We are going to establish a knowledge base. There is a vast amount of knowledge in the heads of the people who work at auDA, what we need is a formal knowledge base. We'll also put in place some succession planning steps.

Thank you.