



A secure .au

Keeping Australians
secure online



May 2025

The .au is managed by the .au Domain Administration (auDA),
proudly supporting Australians and Australian businesses online.



.au: an essential service on the internet

The .au domain name system (DNS) is operated by auDA and endorsed by the Australian Government to do so. Much like our water, electricity and telecommunications networks, the .au DNS is classified as critical Australian infrastructure within the communications sector due to its indispensable role in supporting our lives online.



The DNS is an essential service that operates over the internet and acts as the internet's directory. It does this by mapping numerical IP addresses which identify where a website or email server is hosted online to their corresponding human readable names (domain names). The seamless operation of the DNS allows internet users to quickly and accurately find and connect to websites and email addresses.

[Learn more about how the DNS works](#)

Given the .au DNS's vital role in Australia's society and digital economy, auDA takes its role delivering a stable, secure and reliable DNS seriously — supporting billions of daily queries and enabling Australians to connect, trade and access essential services with confidence.

Domain name
example.org.au



IP address
123.45.678.999

Each time someone visits a .au website or sends an email to an address that ends in .au, a **DNS query** is initiated. The .au DNS supports an average:

7 billion

queries per day

213 billion

queries per month



Websites



Emails



Education



Government



eCommerce



Health



Banking systems

A large proportion of .au queries originate from countries outside Australia, demonstrating that .au is not just relied on by Australians but is used worldwide.

.au DNS global query volumes highlights internet users' reliance on .au for online activities and its vital role in global internet infrastructure.

Top countries for .au DNS queries:



1. USA



2. Australia



3. Ireland



4. Sweden



5. Finland

A secure .au

The online environment is subject to criminal exploitation with the Australian Cyber Security Centre reporting one cyber breach every six minutes in 2024. To protect the integrity of .au and the broader digital ecosystem, auDA prioritises security and resilience of the .au DNS.

We do so by adhering to best-practice cyber security practices, ensuring transparent administration of .au Licensing Rules and proactively addressing DNS abuse (which is explained in more detail on page 5). This commitment is reinforced through strong partnerships with auDA accredited .au registrars, the .au registry

operator, industry partners, cyber security experts and government entities. In the case of .au registrars, auDA conducts an audit program, and all registrars must achieve, and comply with ISO 27001 certification for their Information Security Management System (ISMS).

A cyber resilient .au



We maintain **strong cyber defences** through:

Best practice standards

- ISO 27001 certification – global standard for information security management systems (ISMS)
- ISO 22301 certification – global standard for business continuity management systems (BCMS)
- Adherence to the Australian Signals Directorate's Essential Eight model to mitigate against security incidents, limit damage and recover systems
- Contractual agreements that ensure the .au registry operator and auDA accredited registrars adhere to security standards
- DNS Security Extensions (DNSSEC) to help ensure the authenticity of .au DNS information

Proactive cyber security

- Specialist third-party testing of our physical and network defences
- Crisis simulation, incident response, and business recovery exercises
- Proactive monitoring of evolving threats
- Ongoing updates to security practices
- Investment in auDA cyber security and incident response expertise.

Compliance with the *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018 (Cth)*

In our role as an operator of Australian critical infrastructure, auDA complies with the *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018 (Cth)*. This includes:

- Maintaining a Critical Infrastructure Risk Management Program (CIRMP) to proactively identify and address potential threats
- Providing an annual report to the Australian Government to demonstrate the effectiveness of our security measures
- Proactively reporting any security incidents.

These measures reinforce the strong protections in place for the .au DNS, ensuring it remains stable, secure and reliable for internet users.



auDA maintains robust .au Licensing Rules that govern .au domain names to support the integrity of the .au domain. The Licensing Rules set out the eligibility criteria .au domain name holders (registrants) must meet to register a .au domain name.

This includes a requirement for all registrants to have an Australian presence, which means they're subject to Australian laws. We carry out extensive activity to ensure compliance with the .au Licensing Rules and to limit misuse of .au domain names for online harm, including through:

- Validation of registrant eligibility to hold a .au domain name at registration, renewal and transfer by auDA accredited .au registrars
- Complaint handling processes with several points of review
- .au Dispute Resolution Policy (auDRP) to address competing legal rights to a .au domain name
- Suspension and cancellation of .au licences when false registration information is provided
- A proactive audit program to verify compliance with the rules.

Requests from enforcement bodies

As set out in the .au Licensing Rules, auDA responds to formal requests from enforcement bodies, including the Australian Federal Police, state-based police forces and consumer affairs bodies. Requests from enforcement bodies relate to .au domain name registrations associated with enforcement activity under the relevant body's legal remit.

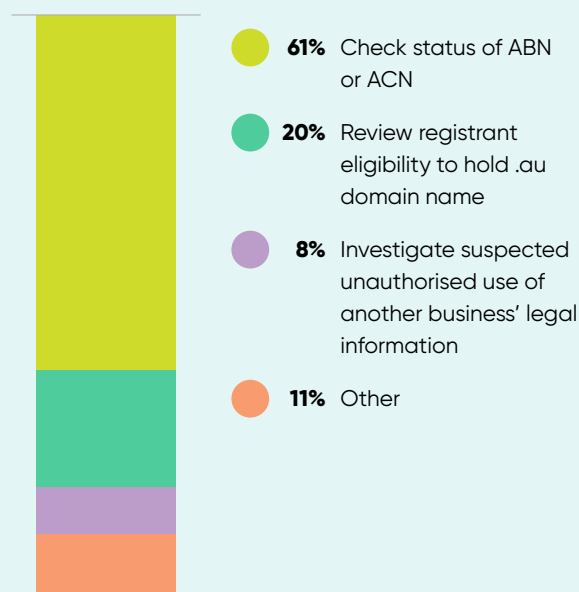
► Requests responded in 2024

76

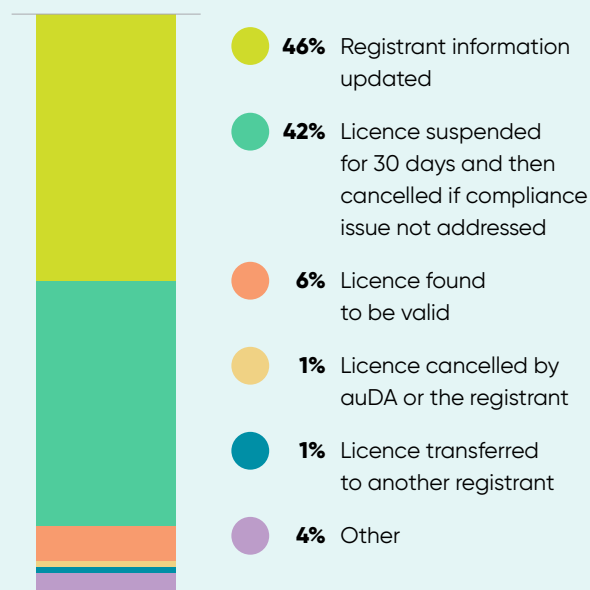
18,500+

Compliance audits completed in 2024

Compliance audits by audit reason



Compliance audits by outcome



Driving down (already low) .au DNS abuse levels



DNS abuse comprises five **categories of online harm** where domain names are used for malicious activity:



Botnets



Malware



Pharming



Phishing



Spam where the spam facilitates one of the other four categories

The .au domain is one of the most secure domains in the world and has some of the lowest levels of DNS abuse globally.

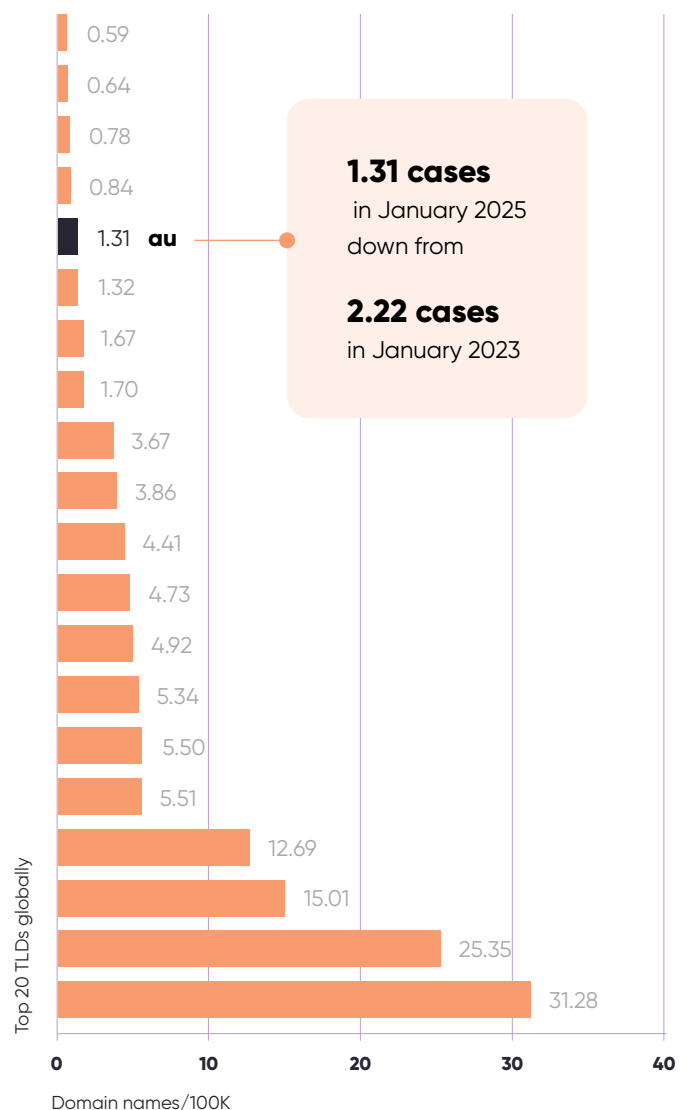
We work to reduce DNS abuse further by:

- Daily monitoring of more than 25 threat feeds that identify suspected DNS abuse in .au
- Initiating a review within one business day to address each instance of DNS abuse identified in .au
- Educating registrants on steps to rectify and avoid DNS abuse
- Collaboration with international bodies including the [NetBeacon Institute](#) and [ICANN DNS Abuse Standing Committee](#) on best practice identification and mitigation.

0.0002%

.au domain names with an instance of DNS abuse (as at December 2024)

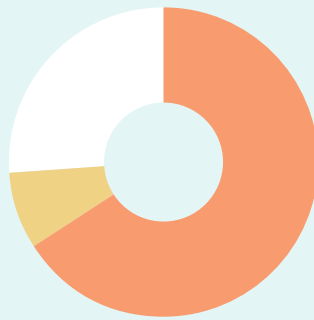
DNS abuse per 100,000 domain names under management¹



¹ Netbeacon, January 2025

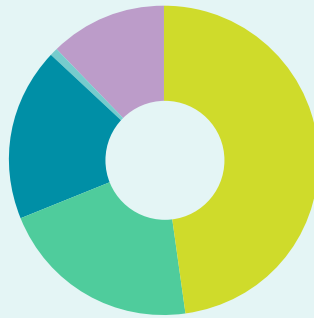
980+

DNS abuse reviews
completed in 2024



Nature of cases identified by DNS abuse reviews

- 66% Phishing
- 8% Malware
- 26% Other



DNS abuse audit outcomes

- 48% DNS abuse removed
- 21% 30-Day suspension
- 18% No DNS abuse present
- 1% Cancelled by auDA or registrant
- 12% Other

Staying secure online

Almost all cases of DNS abuse in the .au domain are a result of hacked small business and not-for-profit websites with compromised security.

auDA provides regular education to the small business community, as well as start-up hubs and universities across Australia, on how to improve online security practice and reduce instances of DNS abuse.



Learn about simple steps you can take to help **keep your website secure** from [DNS abuse on the auDA website](#).



If you see **suspicious activity** related to a .au domain name, you can report it to auDA by [submitting an enquiry on our website](#).

The strong security measures in place to protect .au support high levels of trust, making .au the go-to choice for small businesses and consumers to establish a credible online presence, and shop local. According to auDA research,

3 in 4

Australians are more likely to trust a business with a .au website.

Learn more about why .au is one of the most popular domain name choices worldwide in auDA's [Why .au? report](#).

About auDA

auDA manages the .au domain name system (DNS), which is Australian critical infrastructure that supports more than four million .au domain names and helps internet users navigate to websites and send emails with domain names ending in .au.

We are a not-for-profit community-based organisation endorsed by the Australian Government. Our purpose is to deliver a trusted .au for the benefit of all Australians and champion an open, free, secure and global internet. We support the needs of Australian internet users by:

- Delivering a stable, secure and reliable .au
- Implementing .au policy rules that are transparent, responsive and efficient
- Investing in the Australian internet ecosystem to improve the utility of the .au domain.

Through our stewardship of the .au domain and advocacy, we strive to uphold the multi-stakeholder model of internet governance and the social and economic benefits that flow from it.

To learn more about auDA or registering a .au domain name for your website or email address, visit www.auda.org.au.

Data is sourced from auDA unless otherwise indicated. auDA data sources referenced in this report are from:

- auDA compliance data, January–December 2024
- .au DNS nameserver data, July 2023–June 2024

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