

Re-invigorating community-led internet governance in Australia

Open, transparent, secure and stable

[Drivers and lead up to the national forum](#)

[Vicki Middleton - First Assistant Secretary, Department of Communication and the Arts](#)

[Tobias Feakin - Ambassador for Cyber Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#)

[Paul Wilson, CEO, Asia Pacific Network Information Centre \(APNIC\)](#)

[Alister Paterson, Head of Government Affairs and Strategic Advisor at auDA](#)

[Lyndsey Jackson, Chair, Electronic Frontiers Australia](#)

[Cheryl Langdon-Orr, Director, Internet Australia](#)

[Sylvia Cadena - Head of Programs, APNIC Foundation](#)

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Drivers and lead up to the national forum

At an international level, the [Internet Governance Forum](#) is a global multi-stakeholder platform that facilitates the discussion of public policy issues pertaining to the Internet - such as DNS security, encryption, domain management, cyber security, protection of children online and so on. Using a bottom up approach, the IGF facilitates discussions at trans-national level.

However, this requires that appropriate forums exist at the national and regional level.

From 2012 to 2017, Australia regularly held [Australian Internet Government Forums](#), auspiced by the Australian ccTLD administrator, auDA. The last #auIGF was held in 2016, after which operation of the #auIGF ceased as auDA undertook a review of their community activities.

Recognising the paramount importance of robust internet governance at a national level and the need for collaboration and cooperation between industry, academia, civil society and digital rights organisations, a working party - led by Internet Australia, the Asia-Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC), Electronic Frontiers Australia, auDA, with some financial assistance from the Department of Communications and the Arts - devised a workshop to re-invigorate the Australian internet governance community.

The pre-reading for the workshop succinctly summarised both the need for a multi-stakeholder to keep Australia's internet "open, transparent, secure and stable" - and the fact that there is currently no Australian national initiative focused only on internet government. It went on to

provide a briefing on multi-stakeholder engagement, how other nations are current engaged in internet governance activities, and put forward some aspirations for what a national dialogue on internet governance should entail, as well as the clear objectives of the workshop.

[Vicki Middleton](#) - First Assistant Secretary, Department of Communication and the Arts

Middleton outlined the importance of the ability for government to be able to rapidly gather all stakeholder views on internet governance in a clear and transparent way - and underscored how essential robust internet governance is to Australia's digital economy and communications.

This was set against the backdrop of increasing Chinese power in the region and globally, and the need to secure Australia's domestic interests.

Middleton went on to urge all attendees to embrace the multi stakeholder model, and acknowledged that this type of engagement model is difficult - it requires listening and active participation, but that the rewards were truly worth it.

"It takes grit and friction to make a pearl"

In championing a stronger internet governance community, she also highlighted Australia's desire for a seat on the prestigious [International Telecommunications Union](#) board - and that more certainty in the country's internet governance arrangements would aid that effort. The desire for a stronger voice in this forum is driven by other nations seeking to have an inordinate amount of control of the global internet.

[Tobias Feakin](#) - Ambassador for Cyber Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade'

Tobias Feakin opened with reference to the federal government's [Cyber Engagement Strategy](#), positioning [internet governance as a key pillar of the strategy](#). He echoed many of Ms Middleton's statements, advocating that an Australian position on internet governance is much stronger in international forums if that position has been socialised and endorsed by a broad multi-stakeholder community - the community gives Australia power and influence in those international forums.

He underscored the rapidly changing geopolitical environment, and the threats Australia faces in cyberspace, again highlighting the critical importance of Australia's internet infrastructure to national interests, and encouraged participants to think of creative ways to fund ongoing dialogue and community forums.

"Australia's international cyber engagement champions an open, free and secure cyberspace. Through comprehensive and coordinated engagement on cyber affairs, we will maximise

opportunities for economic growth and prosperity through digital trade. Australia will cooperate internationally to reduce the risk of cybercrime and promote peace and stability in cyberspace. We will advocate for multi-stakeholder Internet governance and respect for human rights and democratic principles online. We will partner to foster good cyber security practices and encourage the use of digital technologies to achieve sustainable development, particularly in our region."

- Executive Summary, Cyber Engagement Strategy

[Paul Wilson](#), CEO, Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC)

Paul outlined his experience at the 2016 United Nations-run [World Summit on the Information Society](#), highlighting that the importance of governance to the internet is non-negotiable, and that the global [Internet Governance Forum \(IGF\)](#) has given rise to regional and national models.

He underscored that internet governance is an ongoing, continual process - as new challenges emerge and morph over time - even more reason why Australia needs a strong internet governance community - to ensure that dialogue and awareness are maintained.

[Alister Patterson](#), Head of Government Affairs and Strategic Advisor at auDA

Alister stated that auDA were delighted to be involved in the process, and that they were looking forward to a sustainable roadmap for internet governance, and stood "ready to play their part", with a desire to build a "inclusive, innovative, constructive relationship" with the Australian internet governance community. He underscored the transition that auDA was going through currently, and the opportunity that participants had to shape Australia's internet governance approach.

[Lyndsey Jackson](#), Chair, Electronic Frontiers Australia

[Cheryl Langdon-Orr](#), Director, Internet Australia

Lyndsey, who alongside Cheryl and several other members of both EFA and Internet Australia - had worked with ACIG and others to help bring the workshop to fruition. They commented on the growing opportunity for change in this space, particularly in policy- and decision-making, for the structure and function for internet governance, noting that the forum was just a "starting point". Cheryl urged participants to try and reach a "collaborative consensus".

[Sylvia Cadena](#) - Head of Programs, APNIC Foundation

Sylvia provided an overview of the different internet governance forum models that run in the Asia Pacific region, and the funding models for them. In general, they have a multi stakeholder mix of government, industry and private funding.

Jordan Carter - CEO, InternetNZ

Jordan presented primarily on [NetHui](#), the New Zealand equivalent of the #auIGF, outlining how the program is designed to foster a sense of community, and is positioned to be very accessible to people from all walks of life. This year, the program is doing a regional roadshow to be able to reach people from rural areas. In the NZ model, InternetNZ foots most of the cost of the NetHui program.

One key takeaway from this presentation is that part of the success of NetHui is in the branding - it is specifically not branded as an "internet governance" event because this does not appeal to the intended audience - something the room agreed was a good thing.

Workshopping sessions

During the afternoon session, participants engaged in several workshop activities to further unpack and explore the problem space, possible solutions, budgetary requirements, funding and operational planning for future internet governance activities.

[Notes for this were captured separately during the workshop, I believe they will be circulated at a later time by Sandra Davey]

END REPORT