

## Register your .au business domain suffix before 20th September

**Business owners have until 20th September 2022 to register their new .au domain suffix before it is made available to the general public. Failure to do so may result in significant damage to the business brand at best and could even cause genuine customers of the business to be scammed by cyber-criminals seeking to impersonate the business.**

The shorter au direct domain name suffix was first made available by [Australia's top level domain administrator](#) back in March of this year. If you're confused about the difference, the new 'direct' domain name suffix shortens URLs and makes them easier to remember by removing the .com, .org, .net etc. component of the domain name. So for example, where a business may currently be using the domain name **www.mybusiness.com.au** it can instead simply use **www.mybusiness.au**.



In many cases an existing business will continue using its well-established internet URL, however most businesses will also want to register a .au direct domain name for one significant reason - to ensure that no one else registers it. It's about protecting your brand.

Significant brand recognition is generated from the website of a business. Aside from the more obvious applications such as online sales and marketing, a website often functions as an online brochure for a business. Even if a business is not active in online sales, its website is often the first place a person goes to find out more about the business and what it does. As direct .au suffixes become more popularly used as top level domains for businesses, '.au' and '.com.au' will become interchangeable in the minds of people searching for a business online. What happens then if someone else has secured the .au domain name for your business? People looking for your business could end up somewhere else entirely.

It's bad enough that potential customers may be lost by going to the wrong site. Even worse however is the possibility that a cyber-criminal might register that .au domain and set up a site that impersonates your own business. This could then be used to scam customers.

Once the 20th September 2022 deadline passes, it becomes more likely that opportunistic individuals will attempt to register unclaimed .au domains for existing business names. At the very least, even if the domain is never actually used, they may be able to demand an extorted price for legitimate business owners to re-acquire a .au domain. However it could be much worse for you and your customers if they then take advantage of that domain to replicate your business website and use it for more sinister purposes. At this stage no clarifying information has been released as to how the .au Domain Administrator will resolve a situation where a legitimate business loses its .au web address to a scammer.

There is however a [process for resolving contested domain names](#) during this priority period up to 20th September. Businesses that have existing .au domains (.com.au, .net.au, etc) can apply to register for the

associated .au direct domain name, usually through their current domain name registrar/host. If there is no conflict and the .au direct domain name matches their existing domain name, they can then secure the .au direct name for a period of their own choosing. If there is a conflict with another holder, the name is allocated based on a priority system for one year while the contest is resolved. It's worth noting though that if you hold multiple suffixes for the same name (say .com.au and .net.au), a conflict may show with yourself. You'll still only get the .au direct name for one year, but you will need to actively release the claim from the other registrations. It sounds complicated, but your domain name registrar and/or host should be able to help you.

This is not our area of expertise, but it may be important for your business, so we encourage you to speak with your web developer, domain name host or the person who handles your online presence.

**Once again, the priority registration period finishes 20th September 2022, so you only have another month to register your interest in the .au direct suffix that matches your existing name before it is then made available to the public at large. More information can be found at the [.au Domain Administrator website](#).**

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