

Afilias rolls out state-based domain infrastructure ahead of registry transition on June 30

Incoming domain name registry provider Afilias is this week finalising a series of new state-based infrastructure to support Australia's .au domain network.

It plans to transition to the new DNS infrastructure, which will be used by more than 3.1 million .au domain names, this coming weekend.

Afilias was appointed to take over the running of the country's registry services in December as part of domain administrator auDA's Registry Transformation Project. The services had previously been operated by Neustar/AusRegistry for more than 15 years.

Afilias Australia operations manager Patrick Donaldson told CommsDay that the new system had undergone significant testing for the past six weeks with a range of stakeholders. He also noted that the company had done 24 previous transitions in countries around the world, including the .org global domain.

Under the previous .au registry operation, nameservers to direct traffic to the correct .au web site were only located in Melbourne or Sydney. Afilias has been working to expand the number of nodes to eight, with one in each state or territory.

The cost of the upgrade is \$250,000 and according to Donaldson will add resilience, performance benefits and increased security.

DNS IS INTERNET'S HEART: "DNS infrastructure is the heart of the internet's ability to locate what you need and deliver it to your screen. This is why it is important to have new equipment designed to address today's reliability, resilience and security challenges," Donaldson said.

"The equipment is designed in such a way that even if one, two or even seven of the eight nodes in Australia went down, there would still be a server in Australia to ensure continuous operation of the .au domain," he added.

The new nameservers have been designed and built and will be operated by Afilias, with the physical infrastructure housed in datacentres in each state and territory. Afilias will manage everything from its new headquarters in Melbourne, which was opened in March.

The Afilias centre is located on the 35th floor of the new Melbourne Central Tower and houses its dedicated team for customer support as well as its domain security analysts, operations experts and sales, marketing and management staff.

In April it also announced that it had selected Equinix data centre services in Melbourne for its primary operations and Amazon in Sydney for back up and disaster recovery.

auDA CEO Cameron Boardman said the Registry Transformation Project aimed to establish a world class service for Australia's country code domains, noting that the .au domain was critical economic infrastructure for Australian businesses and government.

"This new infrastructure not only has state-of-the art capabilities, but the locations are more diversely distributed, making the entire network stronger and smarter. An improved internet experience when connecting to an .au domain locally, or from anywhere in the world, will cement trust in the Australian domain name," Boardman said.

The transition comes as auDA responds to a number of administrative issues, most notably its response to proposed reforms following a scathing Department of Communications and the Arts review of its management. It also has to hold a special general meeting at the request of members.

However, despite the turmoil Donaldson said that the issues had not impacted its moves to transition to the new system by July 1. He also noted that Afilias is currently hiring technical and support staff for its Melbourne office.