

**Economic and Social Council**

Distr.: General

26 June 2007

Original: English

**Ninth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names**

New York, 21 - 30 August 2007

Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

**Economic and social benefits of the national and
international standardization of geographical names.****Australian Communities Online – using Geographic Names
as community domain names**

Submitted by Australia**

Summary***

Australia has over 27,000 communities living in cities, towns and villages spread across a land mass similar in size to Europe. Many of these communities are geographically isolated far from major centers and services. One of the simplest uniting factors for any community is their geographic name or place name. The World Wide Web offers an unprecedented means of global communication and an opportunity for communities to interact in a cohesive manner.

* E/CONF.98/1

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*** Full text of the paper is being issued in English only as E/CONF.98/20/Add.1.

In a world first, the Australian Domain Name Administrator (auDA) which is the Australian regulator of the World Wide Web, has created eight (8) new Geographic 2nd Level Domains (2LDs) which will serve the needs of a community of users that are not currently well served by the existing 2LDs. The aim is to provide an intuitive, standardised naming system to enable better access to local community, tourism and business information and to facilitate social and economic benefits to Australian Communities.

The 8 new 2LDs represent each State and Territory in Australia and all Community Geographic Domain Names (CGDNs) will be registered as 3rd Level Domains (3LDs) in the simple form of town / suburb.state / territory.au (eg. katherine.nt.au).

Policy and eligibility criteria have been established to ensure that the use of geographical names as domain names will benefit the community to whom the name belongs, as detailed in the body of the paper.

Significant community benefits are expected to be gained from this initiative, as a standard web methodology is introduced for each community in Australia.

Whilst it is still early days for this initiative, the goal is to have 100 communities up and running in the first year, increasing to 300 per annum over the following three years. This is a conservative but realistic target given existing resources and the unknown rate of take-up, however marketing and promotion and benefits realization should generate some considerable momentum.