

# **TELECOMMUNICATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2000**

## **AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS MINORITY REPORT**

### **The Bill**

The Telecommunications Legislation Amendment Bill 2000 (the Bill) sets up safety-net mechanisms for the management of Australian electronic addressing within the telecommunications regulatory framework.

### **Background**

The Australian Democrats support a self-regulatory approach to the management of the Internet, though recognise that a regulatory safety-net is required for the confidence in the regulation of the '.au' country code top level domain electronic addressing in Australia, considering past failed attempts at Internet self-regulation and the nascence of the Internet.

### **Issues**

The Australian Democrats recognise several issues or areas of concern which were raised in the inquiry including:

- (i) domain name register monopolies, competitive pressures and pricing;
- (ii) possible weakening of the preferred self-regulatory system by an underpinning safety-net; and,
- (iii) possible political interference in Internet regulation under the safety-net mechanism.

The Australian Democrats recognise these issues and support their further address.

However, we recognise that Bill does not seek to address monopoly, competitive pressures and pricing issues and therefore the Democrats do not object to the Bill on these grounds.

The Safety-net mechanism, as proposed by the Bill, has the wide support of user groups, industry and Government. The Australian Democrats support the establishment of a safety-net mechanism to protect au.DA.

The small number of submissions and the evidence to the Committee suggested that there was not serious concern amongst interested parties about the purpose or content of the Bill.

## **Conclusion**

The Democrats therefore endorse the purpose of the Bill, though reserve final judgement on the extent to which the system proposed may be improved, pending further investigation and discussions with interested parties.

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Senator Natasha Stott Despoja

Deputy Leader of the Australia Democrats  
Spokesperson for Information Technology