

The RAAF TELSTECHs Association Current Status and Future Challenges

By

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ABSTRACT

The TELSTECHs association was formed for the purpose of remembering and recording details of the TELSTECHs mustering after it was disbanded by the Royal Australian Air Force in 1989. There were 691 TELSTECHs trained and deployed by the RAAF and a further many MECHs, RADTECHs, TELSRIGs, CETECHs, and SYSTECHs that worked in the capacity of the TELSTECH mustering.

When the Association was formed, the internet was new, and domain name and hosting companies had loose naming conventions. As it developed, the domain naming requirements became further defined and standards were set up. Through attrition, earlier approved but non-compliant domain names expired via a renewal process that prevented re-registration of non-compliant names.

ASIC, The Australian Securities and Investment Commission, requires the registration of charities, not-for-profit, and associations, to comply with various acts and to promote fair and efficient financial markets. Unregistered companies and associations can be prosecuted for undertaking financial transactions and non-compliant advertising. An association that exists, but is not registered with ASIC, or fails to follow the correct corporate processes, opens itself up to prosecution and fines.

This paper highlights a current predicament with the domain name registration and ultimately the hosting of the TELSTECH website. This paper also discusses the legal requirements for an association and the steps that must be taken to ensure that the Association complies with the existing acts. This paper highlights the link between the domain name compliance and the incorporation of the TELSTECH association. Finally it discusses the TELSTECH mustering as an entity, it's future, and succession planning activities for the long-term survival of the TELSTECH memory.

In Summary, a domain name change is required to enable the association to maintain a website. Acquisition of incorporated status is required to comply with the companies act. The TELSTECH Association should prepare some succession planning to safeguard the mustering memories. This paper suggests options designed to meet these obligations and create a legal TELSTECH's association.

Domain Name Registration

The initial part of publishing a website requires a web address. The current TELSTECH's website has the address www.raaftelsteachs.org.au. The domain name is "raaftelsteachs.org.au".

To obtain a domain name, a body applies to a domain name service. Anyone can request a domain name and if the domain name is available, for an annual payment, the applicant can own the requested web address for the period of the subscription. Fees are small and range from \$15-\$25. Domain name registration companies are many and varied and it pays to shop around.

The domain name requested must meet the rules of the .au Domain Administration Limited (auDA) but there is no limit or filter to what can be registered. Reputable domain name registration companies will refuse obviously obscene names, but others may not.

Currently the "raaftelsteachs.org.au" address is registered with a company called Webcentral. The domain name has been placed on a 'clientRenewProhibited' list, meaning that when the existing registration period expires, it cannot be renewed. This can be verified by doing a search via a domain name lookup site. The reason [raaftelsteachs](http://www.raaftelsteachs.org.au) has

been placed on a 'no renewal list' is because it contains the word 'RAAF'.

The auDA rules in Schedule F, section 2, of the Domain Name Eligibility and Allocation Policy Rules for the Open 2LDs (2012-04) state, to get a [.org.au](https://www.auda.org.au/policy/2012-04-domain-name-eligibility-and-allocation-policy-rules-open-2lds) domain name, you must adhere to the criteria listed, in that the name must be representative of the association and that you must produce documentation to apply for that name. The link below is to the auDA website.

<https://www.auda.org.au/policy/2012-04-domain-name-eligibility-and-allocation-policy-rules-open-2lds>

So clearly RAAFTELSTECHs aligns with the name, but there is no documentation available to apply for that name. Further on in this paper there is a discussion regarding that documentation. In short, the domain name [raaftelstechs.org.au](https://www.raaftelstechs.org.au) now has a finite life and will be deleted when the current registration expires on 9 Jan 2024.

Web Hosting Service

Every website requires a means of storing and hosting files and a web hosting service provides this function. Without going too deep, when the address is typed into an internet browser, files are retrieved from the hosts servers and appear in the browser. The associations current provider is HostPAPA. The association paid a tri-annual fee of \$200.32 for the service in 2020, which has excellent functionality, but is grossly underutilised.

The next renewal for HostPAPA is due on 3 August 2023. However, if it is renewed, when the domain name is cancelled in Jan 2024, the association will be paying for a service they are not using.

Registration as an Association

Currently the RAAF TELSTECHs association only exists unofficially. It is not a legal entity, corporation, or a company, and has no status with ASIC.

As mentioned above, one of the criteria required to apply for a [".org.au"](https://www.auda.org.au/policy/2012-04-domain-name-eligibility-and-allocation-policy-rules-open-2lds) suffix, according to the auDA rules, is that the association must be a *legal entity*, e.g. a non-profit, charity, association, and registered with ASIC. All the criteria can be found on the auDA website.

ASIC stipulates, as one of many requirements, that an incorporated entity name is unacceptable for registration if it *suggests a connection with an ex-serviceman's organization*. RAAF falls into that category.

[https://asic.gov.au/for-business/registering-a-company/steps-to-register-a-company/company-](https://asic.gov.au/for-business/registering-a-company/steps-to-register-a-company/company-name-availability/restricted-words-in-company-and-body-corporate-names/)

[name-availability/restricted-words-in-company-and-body-corporate-names/](https://asic.gov.au/for-business/registering-a-company/steps-to-register-a-company/company-name-availability/restricted-words-in-company-and-body-corporate-names/)

Further, there is an application fee of \$1,339 to appeal to use the Ex-Serviceman's organisation in the name with no guarantee of success.

<https://asic.gov.au/for-business/registering-a-company/steps-to-register-a-company/company-name-availability/restricted-words-in-company-and-body-corporate-names/>

Here we draw the strong legal link between registering a [".org.au"](https://www.auda.org.au/policy/2012-04-domain-name-eligibility-and-allocation-policy-rules-open-2lds) domain name that aligns with the correct non-profit status of a legal company whose name somewhat matches the domain name.

Under Schedule 6, ASIC will not allow 'RAAF' to be used in a corporate name, and Webcentral will not re-register [raaftelstechs.org.au](https://www.raaftelstechs.org.au) until proof of the association name is produced. Therefore, the domain for all intents and purposes is already lost.

For the Association to continue producing a website and collecting funds from members, a legal entity must be formed so that the privileges of a legal association can be adopted and enjoyed.

The TELSTECHs Memory

At the start of the association were some people that wanted to remember the Mustering and be able to bring together those who served as TELSTECHs.

That objective has been satisfied as evidenced by reunion attendees, email communications, and the ongoing interest of members.

Neil Hunter, as the founder of the TT association, might agree that it started off as a small group of mates getting together until it escalated to Neil spending many years developing the website, securing the domain name, and creating and maintaining a database of every TELSTECH.

At the time of writing, 691 TELSTECHs graduated as tradespersons. Time has taken 125 of those with 5 others of unknown status. Out of 561 remaining TELSTECHs, the Association has details of 285 and in contact with only 258, many of whom don't respond to emails.

Being mortal, it is fair to say that the number of TELSTECHs is never going to increase and anyone can predict with 100% certainty that in years to come the association's history, as it is, will not exist unless there is a method to preserve the TT mustering details.

Who Else Was Involved?

Not everyone had great war stories of TELSTECH's hey days. Some were posted to RADTECH postings for years while others dwelled in small workshops remote from the action. Some, like me, were there for a brief few years, remustered, or commissioned, or left the service. All experiences were different.

Industry has changed in the past 30+ years, as has technology, with contractors involved in board swapping and a throw-away society.

Whatever job the TELSTECHs did has long gone and with the diminishing pool of TELSTECHs after disbandment, the TELSTECH Association also needs to move forward with the goal of maintaining history. Without a future pool of new association members, the association will dwindle into non-existence.

Solutions

With the domain name lost by Jan 2024, and the web hosting service charging another \$200.38 for 3 years, of which the association can only use for 6 months, it is clear some action is required to maintain the website.

The association needs to get a new domain name that meets the criteria of auDA. This may take the form of **telstechs.org.au** or something very similar and cost between \$15 to \$25. However, to get the new domain name, the association needs to be registered with ASIC.

Once an association is formed legally, this not only entitles it to apply for a *.org.au* domain name, but it is eligible to apply for grants from government bodies and large corporations.

The last thing is hosting the website. This can be done free of charge using free utilities such as GitHub and Cloudshare. There is a significant technical challenge in this configuration however the key word is 'free', and after it is set up, it can be maintained and accessed from anywhere in the world by anyone with a small understanding of programming and the internet.

The final cherry on top will be to facilitate the ability of members to directly access the TELSTECHs database, the information it provides, and the ability to update any email or address changes, thereby keeping it current and decreasing the work of the few that toil in the background to maintain it.

Summary

The first course of action is to register the TELSTECH Association with ASIC under a name that represents the TELSTECHs association. In choosing this it cannot have words that contravene the act. This is a discussion

that needs to happen between the members prior to any further action with regards to the domain name and website hosting. There is a small annual fee for any association that ASIC charge. It is currently at \$285 per annum.

Once the Association name has been chosen to meet the rules and acts, it can obtain a relevant domain name which reflects the association name and function.

The strange twist is that the website can still hold the same information as it currently does irrespective of domain name. The domain name can be 'telstechs.org.au' but can be known as the RAAF TELSTECHs Association on the websites. Nothing changes. The email addresses will have to change as this was a function of the Host PAPA service.

The last consideration is succession planning, which is to ensure the Assn memory lives on. Once the last active TELSTECH passes, the domain name account will default, and the pages (read history) will be gone. To make the TELSTECH association immortal, to bolster numbers in the ranks, and to make the association more encompassing, there needs to be enlistment of successors who will maintain the site, or parts of it without compromising the TELSTECHs mustering. This painful part requires the onboarding of other associated musterings to continue the legacy.

If you, the reader, feel you have more to contribute to this paper or the association as an entity, please contact the author whose email is on the title page of this document.