ARBITRATION
AND
MEDIATION CENTER

WIPO
WORLD
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ORGANIZATION

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION
Vinyl Group Media Operations Pty Ltd v. Package Computers Pty Ltd
Case No. DAU2026-0023

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Vinyl Group Media Operations Pty Ltd, Australia, represented by Ravens Nest Legal Pty Ltd, Australia.

The Respondent is Package Computers Pty Ltd, Australia, self-represented.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <rollingstone.com.au> is registered with Synergy Wholesale Accreditations Pty Ltd.

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on August 20, 2026. On the same day, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On the following day, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response confirming that the Respondent is listed as the registrant and providing the contact details. On August 26, 2026, the Center requested that the Complainant submit an amended Complaint. The Complainant submitted an amended Complaint on August 31, 2026.

The Center verified that the Complaint and amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the .au Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Policy" or ".auDRP"), the Rules for .au Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Rules"), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for .au Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Supplemental Rules").

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2(a) and 4(a), the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on September 8, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5(a), the due date for Response was September 28, 2026. The Response was filed with the Center on September 27, 2026. The Complainant submitted an unsolicited supplemental filing on September 30, 2026. On October 12, 2026, the Respondent submitted an inquiry to the Center asking whether it would be given an opportunity to respond to the Complainant's unsolicited supplemental filing, should the Panel decide to consider it.

The Center appointed Matthew Kennedy as the sole panelist in this matter on October 7, 2026. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

4. Factual Background

"Rolling Stone" is an entertainment and media publication founded in the United States of America ("United States") in 1967. Rolling Stone Licensing LLC of the United States is the publisher of the print magazine and its online companion associated with the domain name <rollingstone.com>. An Australian edition of Rolling Stone has been published since 1970 by various publishers and was relaunched most recently in 2020. Rolling Stone LLC of the United States holds the following Australian trademark registrations, which are both current:

- number 257179 for a stylized ROLLINGSTONE mark, registered from March 30, 1972, specifying goods in class 16; and
- number 1860936 for ROLLING STONE, registered on June 4, 2019, specifying goods and services in classes 9, 18, 25, 41 and 43.

Under a Licensing Agreement dated November 7, 2019, revised November 11, 2019, and amended on March 11, 2021 (the "Licensing Agreement"), Rolling Stone Licensing LLC (the "Licensor") granted licenses to The Brag Publishing Pty Ltd (the "Licensee") to use the above trademarks in connection with an edition of Rolling Stone in Australia and New Zealand, a website, social media accounts, and events. Clause 2.1(a)(i) provides that the licenses are "exclusive, limited, non-transferable, non-sublicensable, and non-assignable". Clause 14.3 provides that the Agreement, including the licenses contained therein, are personal to the Licensee. The Complainant guaranteed performance of the Licensee's obligations. By letter dated December 11, 2024, the Licensee gave notice to the Licensor that it exercised an option to renew the Agreement for five years to December 31, 2030. By letter dated July 17, 2026, issued under the letterhead of Penske Media Corporation but signed "for and on behalf of Rolling Stone LLC", the Licensor authorized the Complainant to file a complaint regarding the disputed domain name with the Center.

The Licensee and the Complainant are Australian companies. Both are now wholly-owned subsidiaries of, and have the same directors as, Vinyl Group Media Australia Pty Ltd, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Vinyl Group Ltd. The Complainant operates the Australian edition of Rolling Stone and associated media platforms. The digital version of the publication is available at "au.rollingstone.com".

The Respondent is an Australian company. It holds a portfolio of over 300 domain names, associated with the ShareAustralia network of websites. It also holds the domain name <geodomains.com.au>.

The disputed domain name was acquired by the Respondent on or about September 1, 2005 as part of a portfolio of 330 domain names that it won in the ".au" geographic domain name ballot. The price paid for the whole lot was AUD 315,810. The disputed domain name has resolved to a website since at least 2007. Originally, the website showed the disputed domain name as the title and offered free Rollingstone email addresses, local business advertising by Geo Domains, and a notice board for business / community announcements. The site showed links to advertisements by category, a Geo Domains logo, and a link to a Geo Domains Australian Geographical Domain Names Network website that offered geographical email addresses, subdomains, and business advertising. At the time of this proceeding, the website associated with the disputed domain name shows "ShareAustralia" in the header and is described as a "community website that allows users to share things in your local community". The site displays posts of an advertorial nature on a very wide variety of topics. Only the top six posts specifically concern Rollingstone, Queensland. The site links to a website for ShareAustralia, which offers advertising on websites associated with a list of over 300 domain names, almost all of which consist of an Australian place name in the ".com.au" or ".net.au" Second-Level Domain ("2LD"). While many are the names of populous places, some of the domain names

are rural or coastal locality names (e.g., Goodnight, Gregory, Julia, Jumbuk, Lucinda, Lucky Bay, Megan, Ponto, Port Campbell, Ruby, Sedan, Simson, and Topaz), of which some are also given names (e.g., Gregory, Julia, Lucinda, and Megan) or dictionary words (e.g. Sedan and Topaz), or both (e.g., Ruby). Other domain names on the list are dictionary words (e.g., national park, navigators, pyramid, racecourse, the heart, and the limits). According to the Complainant, the more general posts on the website associated with the disputed domain name are frequently repeated on websites in this network. At the bottom of its homepage, ShareAustralia displays the following text: "If you would like to partner with us, we are also open to many forms of partnership such as: investing in to our community/website, Subscribe your domain to use our platform, Purchase one of our domains, many others …"

The Parties agree that on April 17, 2024, the Complainant engaged a domain name broker to make an offer to buy the disputed domain name from the Respondent. On April 29, 2024, the broker advised that the domain name holder declined the offer and was willing to consider selling. The domain name holder gave the broker a range of prices within which its domain names were usually sold and requested a reasonable offer, if the broker's client was interested. On May 3, 2024, the Complainant repeated its offer directly to the Respondent. On the same day, the Respondent reiterated that it would only be willing to sell the disputed domain name if the Complainant proposed a price within the "business expectation" previously stated. It is not clear if the Respondent was aware of the Complainant's identity when approached directly.

A "rolling stone" is an idiom that describes a person who frequently changes jobs, homes, or life pursuits and leads an unsettled, nomadic life. See the Merriam-Webster dictionary at https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rolling%20stone.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name.

The Australian edition of Rolling Stone has a long publication history dating from 1970. Contemporary reports recorded average monthly sales of approximately 27,051 copies and average readership in March 2008 of approximately 301,000. The Australian edition's website now receives approximately one million monthly unique visitors, its associated social media channels have approximately 250,000 followers, and its print and digital editions reach approximately 255,000 readers. The ROLLING STONE mark has substantial international and Australian goodwill arising from decades of continuous global publication, extensive readership, significant digital audiences, and widespread recognition within the fields of music, entertainment, politics and culture. The Licensor reports that ROLLING STONE-branded publications reach a global audience of approximately 60 million people every month across its multimedia platforms. This footprint spans its legacy print editions, digital network, social channels, and international localized editions.

The Complainant contends that it has rights in the brand ROLLING STONE by virtue of Australian registered trademark rights, substantial Australian goodwill and reputation, and longstanding use in Australia. It is unclear whether the Respondent registered the disputed domain name before or after the Complainant acquired rights in the ROLLING STONE brand but that is of no importance. The disputed domain name is effectively identical to the Complainant's exclusively-licensed ROLLING STONE trademark.

The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name. The Respondent has no connection with the ROLLING STONE media brand or the Queensland locality known as Rollingstone. It is clear that the Respondent's website does not operate as an official ROLLING STONE media publication; a bona fide news reportage website or a music, entertainment, politics and culture analysis website. The Respondent's asserted geographic rationale is implausible when considered in the context of factors such as the Respondent's lack of genuine connection to Rollingstone, Queensland, the absence of genuine locality use, the existence of the commercial advertising network of which the disputed

domain name is but one of a large number of websites, the monetized structure of the site, and the speculative re-sale aspect of the portfolio and the Respondent's own "Geo Domains" branding. The disputed domain name forms part of a broader monetized network of geographic domain names operated for commercial gain.

The disputed domain name has been registered and subsequently used in bad faith. Based on the long-standing international reputation of the ROLLING STONE brand globally and in Australia, and the high profile of the brand extending far beyond the readership of the publications bearing the name, it is highly improbable that the Respondent would not have been aware of the name or mark when it obtained registration of the disputed domain name. The Respondent's portfolio of over 300 geographic and commercially significant domains establishes precisely a pattern of preventing trademark owners from reflecting marks in corresponding domain names in bad faith. The Respondent is using the disputed domain name to attract Internet traffic, to monetize user visits and to generate advertising revenue. The Respondent's website would rightly be described as a "shell" and appears to consist substantially of syndicated, replicated or generic content and exhibits characteristics commonly associated with monetized domain portfolio websites. Although the Complainant approached the Respondent with an offer to buy the disputed domain name, the tone of the Respondent's subsequent correspondence and price strategy are strongly indicative of a bad faith registration made for the purpose of transfer to a party in a position to pay excessively. The Respondent's price range should be viewed in the context of its use of the disputed domain name with one of over 300 websites that host essentially the same content.

In its supplemental filing, the Complainant accepts that the Respondent acquired the disputed domain name in September 2005 through the geographic names ballot as part of a portfolio of 330 geographic domain names. However, the domain names were not randomly selected or allocated; rather, the process required an application for the disputed domain name. The Respondent's evidence does not establish why it applied for the disputed domain name in the first place. The Complainant does not invite the Panel to speculate as to the Respondent's subjective motivation in selecting the disputed domain name in 2005. It is nevertheless relevant that the Respondent's portfolio includes a number of geographic domain names comprising words, personal names or expressions having readily apparent meanings and potential significance independent of the corresponding geographic locality.

The fact that the Respondent was entitled to participate in the geographic names ballot and lawfully acquired the disputed domain name through that process does not itself determine whether it has rights or legitimate interests. The Respondent is required to do more than identify a descriptive or geographic meaning. The question is whether its actual use of the disputed domain name is genuinely and bona fide directed to that geographical meaning, rather than exploiting the independent commercial significance of the ROLLING STONE mark.

The bad faith requirements of the auDRP are disjunctive. The panel in *Westralia Airports Corporation Pty Ltd v Package Computers Pty Ltd*, LEADR Case No. auDRP 07/08 found that the Respondent's subsequent use of a domain name was in bad faith. In the present case, the Respondent provides substantial evidence concerning its original acquisition but that does not determine the character of its subsequent use. The present website content raises a substantial question as to whether the disputed domain name is in fact being operated as a genuine community website or principally functions to provide a geographic character to substantially unrelated content. That question assumes particular significance where the disputed domain name is identical to the ROLLING STONE mark, which continues to possess substantial international and Australian commercial significance.

B. Respondent

The Respondent contends that the Complainant has not satisfied the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name and asks the Panel to deny the Complaint.

Notably, the Respondent accepts that the Complainant may establish the first element by relying upon its asserted trademark rights. However, similarity between a domain name and a trademark does not, by itself,

establish either the second or third elements.

The Respondent did not simply identify the disputed domain name in isolation and decide to register it because of the ROLLING STONE media business. Rather, the disputed domain name formed part of a much larger geographic domain name acquisition. The complete list of 330 domain names acquired contains a broad range of Australian suburb, locality, geographic, district, landmark and place-related names. Rollingstone is a geographic locality in Queensland (postcode 4816).

There is no evidence that on September 1, 2005, the Respondent acquired the disputed domain name because of the Complainant or Rolling Stone media. The documentary evidence shows that the Respondent acquired a portfolio of 330 geographic names. It would be inappropriate to infer a trademark-targeting purpose retrospectively from the reputation of the ROLLING STONE brand.

The Respondent relies on *Westralia Airports Corporation Pty Ltd v Package Computers Pty Ltd, supra*, regarding the domain name <perthairport.com.au>, which was also acquired through a competitive allocation process. The panel's decision in that case shows that the circumstances and legitimate business purpose of the acquisition are relevant to the assessment of rights and legitimate interests.

The existence of a large portfolio of domain names does not, without more, establish bad faith. In this case, the historical evidence demonstrates that the portfolio was assembled through a specific geographic domain ballot. This supports the view that the Respondent's business strategy is to own and commercially develop geographic domains. The Complainant has not established that the Respondent registers domain names corresponding to third party trademarks with the intention of exploiting those trademarks.

The Respondent did not initiate negotiations for the transfer of the disputed domain name. It had held the disputed domain name for 19 years before the Complainant approached it in 2024. A price expectation expressed in response to an unsolicited approach many years after registration should not be retrospectively treated as evidence that the disputed domain name was originally intended for sale to the Complainant.

The Respondent currently uses the disputed domain name in connection with an active website associated with its ShareAustralia network. It has not been operated continuously as an active website since 2005. The Complainant must establish that, after the original acquisition, the subsequent use itself satisfies the test for bad faith. Commercial use of a domain name, by itself, is not sufficient. The Respondent denies that it has intentionally represented that its website is owned, operated, endorsed, or authorized by the Rolling Stone media business. The Respondent further denies that its present geographic/community use was adopted for the purpose of exploiting the Complainant's mark. None of the circumstances in paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the auDRP has been established by the existence of the Respondent's portfolio.

6. Discussion and Findings

6.1 Procedural Issue – Unsolicited Supplemental Filing

The Complainant made an unsolicited supplemental filing in reply to the Response, prior to the appointment of the Panel.

The Rules provide for the submission of the Complaint by the Complainant and the Response by the Respondent. No express provision is made for supplemental filings by either Party, except in response to a deficiency notification or if requested by the Center or the Panel. Paragraphs 10 and 12 of the Rules in effect grant the Panel sole discretion to determine the admissibility of supplemental filings (including further statements or documents) received from either Party.

In this dispute, the Complainant asks the Panel to accept its supplemental filing on the ground that the Response introduced contemporaneous documents concerning the Respondent's acquisition of the disputed domain name in 2005, which were not available to the Complainant when the Complaint was filed, and relied

on a prior auDRP case concerning the Respondent.

The Panel notes that the Response provided evidence regarding the date and context of the Respondent's acquisition of the disputed domain name that was not available when the Complainant was filed and on which the Parties are able to agree. The supplemental filing comments on that evidence and was filed before the appointment of the Panel.

Therefore, in accordance with paragraphs 10(d) and 12 of the Rules, the Panel decides to exercise its discretion to accept the Complainant's supplemental filing and will take it into account according to its relevance, materiality and weight. Given the Panel's findings in Section 6.2 below, and in the interests of ensuring that the proceeding takes place with due expedition, the Panel does not consider it necessary to give the Respondent an opportunity to make a supplemental filing in reply.

6.2 Substantive Issues

Paragraph 4(a) of the auDRP provides that a complainant must prove each of the following elements:

(i) the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a name, trademark or service mark in which the complainant has rights;

(ii) the respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name; and

(iii) the disputed domain name has been registered or subsequently used in bad faith.

The burden of proof of each element is borne by the Complainant.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's name, trademark or service mark and the disputed domain name. See auDA Overview of Panel Views on Selected auDRP Questions, Second Edition ("auDRP Overview 2.0"), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown that Rolling Stone LLC has rights in respect of a stylized ROLLINGSTONE mark and a ROLLING STONE trademark, as the registered proprietor of both. However, Rolling Stone LLC is not a party to this dispute.

The Complainant provides a copy of the Licensing Agreement, which grants licenses to use both the above marks. The Licensor is Rolling Stone Licensing LLC, not the trademark owner, while the Licensee is The Brag Publishing Pty Ltd, not the Complainant. The Complainant asserts that it operates the Australian edition of Rolling Stone and associated media platforms pursuant to an internal agreement within the Vinyl Group of companies. No details are provided regarding that internal agreement. A sub-license or assignment appears to be contrary to the terms of the Licensing Agreement but the Complainant has presented a letter of authorization for it to file the Complaint. The letter was issued under the letterhead of Penske Media Corporation, which appears to be the ultimate holding company of the Licensor and the trademark owner, and was signed "for and on behalf of Rolling Stone LLC" (i.e., the trademark owner) although expressed as an authorization by "Rolling Stone Licensing LLC" (i.e., the Licensor).

The Complainant is not corporately related to the trademark owner but it is corporately related to the Licensee, which holds an exclusive license from the Licensor, which is corporately related to the trademark owner. Further information might have clarified these unclear and heavily redacted trademark licensing matters. However, noting the broader circumstances of the case as well as the findings in Section 6.2 below, the Panel is prepared to accept the stated authorization on behalf of Rolling Stone LLC that the Complainant holds rights in the stylized ROLLINGSTONE mark and the ROLLING STONE mark, as registered, for the purpose of the standing requirement of the auDRP.

The Complainant also asserts rights in the phrase “Rolling Stone” on the basis of “substantial Australian goodwill and reputation, and longstanding use in Australia”. This appears to be a claim of unregistered trademark rights. See auDRP Overview 2.0, section 1.3. If so, the Complainant does not demonstrate that goodwill arising from the use of “Rolling Stone” under license – including use by prior publishers – has accrued to itself, rather than to the trademark owner. In any event, the Complainant provides little evidence to substantiate the claim of reputation, which is not sufficient to show that the phrase has become a distinctive identifier associated with the Complainant or its goods or services in Australia. Accordingly, the Panel does not find that the Complainant holds unregistered trademark rights for the purpose of this proceeding.

Turning to the assessment of identity or confusing similarity to the registered trademarks, the Panel notes that the entirety of the stylized ROLLINGSTONE mark and the entirety of the ROLLING STONE mark are reproduced within the disputed domain name, except the design elements in the former and the space between the words in the latter, both for technical reasons. The only additional element in the disputed domain name is a 2LD extension (“.com.au”) which, as a standard requirement of domain name registration, may be disregarded in the assessment of identity or confusing similarity for the purposes of the Policy. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is identical to the marks for the purposes of the Policy. See auDRP Overview 2.0, sections 1.7, 1.10, and 1.11.1.

Therefore, the Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Given the Panel’s findings regarding bad faith under the third element of paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, it is unnecessary to consider the second element.

C. Registered or Subsequently Used in Bad Faith

The Panel notes that the third element of paragraph 4(a) of the Policy contains two requirements that apply disjunctively. A complainant must show either that the disputed domain name has been registered in bad faith or that it is being used in bad faith, but not necessarily both. In order to succeed in its claims in the present case, the Complainant must demonstrate that the Respondent knew, or should have known, of the Complainant and/or its mark at the relevant time and that the Respondent’s aim was or is to profit from or exploit the Complainant’s trademark.

As regards registration, the disputed domain name was acquired by the Respondent in 2005, long before the Australian registration of the ROLLING STONE mark in 2019, but after the Australian registration of the stylized ROLLINGSTONE mark in 1972, which is also covered by the Licensing Agreement. The Complainant does not rely on any foreign trademark registration. The disputed domain name is identical to the prior mark but the mark is also an idiom, not a coined term (see Section 4 above).

The Complainant submits that it is highly improbable that the Respondent would not have been aware of the name or mark when it obtained registration of the disputed domain name. However, there is little information on the record regarding the reputation of the brand at that time, 21 years ago. The Complainant notes that Rolling Stone magazine was founded in the United States in 1967 and provides a quote from Wikipedia, which reports that the Australian edition of Rolling Stone was launched as a supplement in 1970, that its readership peaked in 1994 and then “entered something of a phase in the wilderness” before it was relaunched in 2008. The Panel accepts the Australian circulation and readership figures as cited (i.e., average monthly sales in 2008 of 27,051 copies and average readership in March 2008 of approximately 301,000). There are no images of the magazine title on file and the Complainant does not confirm when, or if, the stylized ROLLINGSTONE mark was used prior to 2005 as registered in 1972. The Respondent does not operate in the same sector and there is no evidence that it had actual knowledge of the mark. In the Panel’s view, this evidence demonstrates that the Respondent may have been aware of the mark when it registered the disputed domain name in 2005, but not that it should have been so aware.

The Respondent offers a plausible alternative explanation for registering the disputed domain name, based on its meaning as a geographical name. Rollingstone is a locality in Queensland. The Respondent applied for and acquired the disputed domain name as part of a portfolio of over 300 domain names in the 2005 ".au" geographic names ballot. The Complainant submits that Rollingstone, Queensland is very small and that it is highly likely that the Respondent chose the disputed domain name not due to its significance as a location. However, it is not exceptional for names in the Respondent's portfolio to refer to small places (see Section 4 above). The Complainant submits that the Respondent chose a number of other names corresponding to small Australian localities that have other meanings and potential independent significance. The Panel confirms that the portfolio includes geographic names that are also common given names, dictionary words, or both, and some that are simply dictionary words (see Section 4 above). That does not imply bad faith in the registration of the disputed domain name for the purpose of the Policy. The Complainant does not identify any domain name in the portfolio of over 300, besides the disputed domain name, that is also a trademark. The Respondent's evidence shows that one domain name was identical to a business name (i.e., Perth Airport), which was also claimed as a common law mark in a prior auDRP case, but the panel in that case did not find that the domain name had been registered in bad faith. See *Westralia Airports Corporation Pty Ltd v Package Computers Pty Ltd, supra.* The Panel is unable to infer from these circumstances that the Respondent chose the disputed domain name with the Complainant's trademark in mind.

As regards use, the disputed domain name has resolved to an active website since at least 2008, ostensibly on the basis of its geographical meaning. Like the original version, the current website is presented as a community website, displaying posts of an advertorial nature. The top six posts concern Rollingstone, Queensland while the other 48 posts lack a specific connection to that locality, even some that are tagged #Rollingstone. The site is linked to the "ShareAustralia" network that offers advertising on websites associated with the Respondent's portfolio of over 300 geographic domain names. Advertising rates depend on whether a post is placed on a single site or on "all 300+" sites. The Complainant considers that the Respondent's website would rightly be described as a "shell" and that it raises a substantial question as to whether it is in fact being operated as a genuine community website. However, the posts on the site do not appear to be pretextual. A small place may generate fewer topics for posts. The advertising rate structure provides an explanation as to why many posts are not specifically related to the place indicated in the disputed domain name. The Complainant argues that the overwhelming commercial character of the Respondent's network is inconsistent with any genuine locality-based purpose. However, there is no reason why the monetization of user visits and generation of advertising revenue would prevent the network from being based on geographical (and dictionary) meaning. There is no evidence on record of the content of websites associated with other geographic names in the network, which might show whether the website associated with the disputed domain name is treated differently from them or whether the wider network operates as claimed. Accordingly, based on the record, the Panel does not find it more likely than not that the website associated with the disputed domain name is a sham.

The Complainant refers to prior auDRP cases where domain names were found to have been subsequently used in bad faith even where they were not found to have been registered in bad faith. In one such case, the respondent ceased to have a legitimate reason to hold a domain name when a planned business acquisition did not proceed. See *KFM Properties Pty Ltd v. The Trustee for the Painter Family Trust (trading as Best Western Great Ocean Road Motor Inn),* WIPO Case No. DAU2012-0023. In another case (involving the Respondent), the content of the website associated with the domain name changed significantly after receipt of a letter of demand. See *Westralia Airports Corporation Pty Ltd v Package Computers Pty Ltd, supra.* Those facts are materially different from the present case.

The principal change in circumstances in the present case concerns the Complainant's marks. The Licensor asserts that ROLLING STONE-branded publications now reach a global audience of approximately 60 million people per month across its multimedia platforms. The Australian edition of Rolling Stone has passed through different publishers since 2005, launched an independent website in 2014, disappeared in 2018, was relaunched by the Licensee in 2020 and renamed "Rolling Stone Australia / New Zealand" in 2022. The Complainant asserts that its website now receives approximately one million monthly unique visitors, that

associated social media channels have approximately 250,000 followers and that it reaches approximately 255,000 readers through its print and digital editions. There are now two registered marks. However, even if it is inferred that the Respondent should now know the ROLLING STONE mark, the website associated with the disputed domain name is still part of the same geographic domain name network. There does appear to have been a change in that network insofar as ShareAustralia is willing to sell domain names, besides offering the types of services that Geo Domains originally offered. However, the Panel is unable to find on the basis of the record that this change, which applies across the Respondent's network, since an unknown point in time, was motivated by the ROLLING STONE brand.

When the Complainant's broker approached the Respondent making an offer to purchase the disputed domain name in 2024, the Respondent replied with a price range within which it claimed that its domain names were usually sold and requested a reasonable offer, if the inquirer was interested. When approached directly, the Respondent reiterated that it would only be willing to sell the disputed domain name for a price within that range. The Panel considers this to be insufficient, of itself, to demonstrate bad faith on the part of the Respondent. See auDA Overview 2.0, section 3.1.1. The Complainant's approach was made 18 years after the Respondent acquired the disputed domain name and 16 years after the Respondent began using it actively as part of its geographic domain name network. Given the longstanding use that the Respondent continues to make of the disputed domain name, the Panel is unable to find on the basis of the present record that the Respondent is holding the disputed domain name primarily for resale to the Complainant or any other person.

For the above reasons, the evidence in the case file as presented does not indicate that the Respondent's aim in registering or using the disputed domain name was or is in bad faith.

Therefore, the Panel finds the third element of the Policy has not been established.

While the Complainant has not established its case here, noting inter alia the significant reputation of the Complainant and the ROLLING STONE mark, the Panel notes that should new evidence come to light (reasonably unavailable at the time of this Complaint) indicating that the Respondent's operation of the disputed domain name is a sham designed to mask an intent to take advantage of the Complainant's rights, or should the Respondent start making a new trademark-abusive use of the disputed domain name, the Complainant may be able to show new material grounds to justify the acceptance of a refiled complaint.

7. Decision

For all the foregoing reasons, the Complaint is denied.

/Matthew Kennedy/
Matthew Kennedy
Sole Panelist
Date: October 21, 2026