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MORE THAN 15,000 PIRATED DVD MOVIES SEIZED DURING RAID IN VICTORIA

Haul worth up to \$75,000 at street value

Melbourne: On 24 November, officers from the Mill Park Criminal Investigation Unit of the Victoria Police Force seized 15,000 pirated movie DVDs and a DVD burning operation consisting of 13 DVD burner towers and multiple printers during a raid on a residence in South Morang. The raid followed information provided to Crime Stoppers by members of the public.

It is alleged that the pirated movie DVDs were being sold for \$5 each and were being sold to buyers from the residence and via the Internet.

Following the raid, Neil Gane, Executive Director of the Australian Federation Against Copyright Theft (AFACT) said: "Yesterday's enforcement operation by Victoria Police in South Morang was demonstrative of how these lucrative illegal piracy operations spring up within local communities. Movie piracy threatens the livelihoods of 50,000 hard working Australians supported by the film and television industry, and we need to send the message through loud and clear that these crimes will not be tolerated."

Peter Sprott, Executive Director of Crime Stoppers Victoria said: "This is a very good example of how the general public can help stop this particular crime. Movie piracy takes away jobs and income from legitimate business and it could be happening in a flat or house near you."

Yesterday in Sydney, AFACT and Crime Stoppers hosted an event to destroy an estimated 780,000 pirated DVD movies, the result of NSW Police, Victoria Police and Federal Police operations to counter movie piracy. Also attending the destruction ceremony were local DVD store owners and Australian actors Susie Porter ("East West 101", "The Jesters") and Roy Billing, best known for his role as Aussie Bob Trimbole in "Underbelly", who said: "These criminals are taking away our livelihood... so to see them destroyed is a source of great glee."

Penalties for copyright crimes under the Commonwealth Copyright Act are a maximum of \$60,500 and/or 5 years jail per offence.

Members of the community can provide information on movie piracy to Crime Stoppers by calling 1800 333 000.

About AFACT

AFACT works closely with industry, government, police and educational institutions to address copyright theft and protect the interests of the film and television industry as well as the interests of Australian movie fans.

Australia's copyright industries are the 3rd largest contributors as a percentage of GDP in the world, second only to the US and UK.

In 2006/07 they contributed 10.3% GDP to Australia's economy [up 66% since 1996], represented 8% of our employment and generated 4.1% of total exports.

The film and TV industry in Australia alone contributed \$4.4 billion to GDP and supports 50,000 jobs, including small businesses under threat from movie and TV piracy, and independent cinemas, video rental stores and film and television producers across the country.

In 2007, the film and TV sector contributed an estimated \$1.8 billion in tax to the Australian Government.

In 2008, state and federal police conducted 51 raids involving movie piracy and seized 544,697 pirated DVDs. They also seized 488 burners capable of producing 12 million pirated DVDs a year with a potential street value of over \$61million.

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