

## **MEDIA RELEASE – 26 February 2008**

### **BALLINA MOVIE PIRATES STRIPPED OF BURNING EQUIPMENT AND FINED \$9,000**

On 21 February, at Ballina Magistrates Court in New South Wales, copyright pirate brothers Stephen and Michael McCarthy were convicted on a number of copyright offences, and were ordered to hand over thousands of dollars worth of computer equipment and fined a total of \$9,000 plus court costs.

Stephen McCarthy, from Ballina, was fined \$5,000, and Michael McCarthy, from Alstonville, was fined \$4,000. Together, they had been running a sophisticated DVD piracy operation with a website that offered hundreds of film, music and software titles for sale nationwide. The 14 DVD burner operation had the capacity to produce over 350,000 pirated DVDs a year.

Commenting on the conviction, Neil Gane, Director of Operations for the Australian Federation Against Copyright Theft (AFACT) said: "This case proves that movie pirates will face the full force of the law no matter where they try to set up their criminal operations. Whether in big cities, or small country towns, movie thieves threaten the legitimate businesses of local cinemas and DVD stores, and their illegal activities will not be tolerated."

Sabiene Heindl, General Manager, Music Industry Piracy Investigations (MIPI), said: "People who illegally trade on the fruits of others' creativity in the form of music, film or software are simply thieves. The commitment of the NSW Police working hand in hand with industry groups, shows that copyright criminals will be brought to justice no matter where they reside or their methods of distribution. The Australian music industry welcomes the Court's clear deterrent orders that the McCarthy brothers forfeit thousands of dollars worth of their computer equipment that was involved in the commission of copyright theft."

On 21 March 2007, NSW Police, assisted by investigators from AFACT and MIPI raided two residential locations in Ballina and seized over 5,000 optical discs and computer equipment used to manufacture the illegal discs.

## **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.

In 2007, state and federal police conducted 85 raids involving movie piracy and seized over 585,000 pirated DVDs. They also seized 459 burners capable of producing over eleven million pirated DVDs a year with a potential street value of over \$57 million.

AFACT acts on behalf of the 50,000 Australians directly impacted by copyright theft including independent cinemas, video rental stores and film and television producers across the country. AFACT has its own anti-piracy hotline: 1800 251 996.

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## **About MIPI**

Music Industry Piracy Investigations Pty Limited ([www.mipi.com.au](http://www.mipi.com.au)) is the anti-piracy organization for the Australian music industry. MIPI represents small and large record labels through their association, ARIA and singers, songwriters and music publishers through their association, AMCOS.

MIPI has its own anti-piracy hotline: 1800 06 16 16.

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