

MEDIA RELEASE – 1 November 2008

POLICE GATECRASH “MEMBERS ONLY” PIRATE OPERATION

Counterfeit Criminals Efforts to Avoid Detection Foiled by Police and Industry Investigators

On 31 October, New South Wales Police, assisted by investigators from the Australian Federation Against Copyright Theft (AFACT) and Music Industry Piracy Investigations (MIPI), raided a large DVD rental store in Sydney’s Homebush West where pirated movies and music DVDs were being sold to “members only.”

As a result of the raid, police seized over 17,500 pirated movie and music DVDs with an estimated street value of \$140,000 and a DVD burner operation consisting of 20 burners, along with computer equipment and printers. The DVD burner operation had the capability of producing over 500,000 pirated DVDs a year.

Movie titles discovered during the raid included illegal copies of “*Max Payne*”, “*Body of Lies*” and “*Babylon AD*”, all of which are currently showing in Australian cinemas and are not yet legitimately available on DVD. Pirated music CDs from popular artists such as “*Coldplay*” and “*Kylie*”, were also seized.

The raid follows an intensive investigation by Police and industry investigators, which confirmed the piracy operation was being controlled and managed from what appeared to be a legitimate DVD rental store. Industry investigators will allege that the store sold pirated DVDs ‘under the counter’ to “members” able to show an exclusive “membership” card.

“The tactics used by this DVD piracy syndicate show that the people behind it know what they were doing is illegal. However this raid shows efforts to hide pirate operations are futile; AFACT and the Police will find them and bring them before the courts,” said Neil Gane, AFACT Director of Operations. “Movie piracy robs local businesses of a livelihood as well as the capacity to both employ young Australians and help keep youth entertained and off the streets.”

“This underground operation shows the extent to which criminals will go to trade off the hard work of creators,” said Dean Mitchell, MIPI Investigations Manager. “Thieves who think they can avoid detection should reconsider”.

A man in his 40s is helping Police with their enquiries and is expected to be charged with offences under the Copyright and Trademark Acts.

Maximum penalties for copyright crimes are \$60,500 and/or up to five years jail per offence. Members of the public can help police identify and shut down film and music piracy operations by ringing Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or going to www.moviepiracy.org.au or www.mipi.com.au. Consumer guides to help members of the public identify whether or not DVD or CDs are pirated are available to view and download from www.afact.com.au and www.mipi.com.au.

About AFACT

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

Between June 2007 to June 2008, state and federal police conducted 67 raids involving movie piracy and seized over 934,000 pirated DVDs. They also seized 762 burners capable of producing over 19 million pirated DVDs a year.

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

AFACT Contacts:

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About MIPI

Music Industry Piracy Investigations Pty Ltd (www.mipi.com.au) is the anti-piracy organisation for the Australian music industry. MIPI represents close to 125 music labels through their association, ARIA and over 1,700 music publishers and songwriters through their association, AMCOS.

If you are aware of anyone engaging in piracy, you can report them using MIPI's toll-free piracy hotline on 1800 06 16 16 or by filling out the report piracy form available on MIPI's website at www.mipi.com.au/report_piracy/report.cfm.

MIPI Contacts:

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