

MEDIA RELEASE – 21 MARCH 2007

TIP-OFF CLOSES DOWN PIRATE WEBSITE IN COASTAL TOWN

Ballina, NSW

In a joint operation involving NSW Police and investigators from Australian Federation Against Copyright Theft (**AFACT**), Music Industry Piracy Investigations (**MIPI**) and Microsoft, over 5,000 optical discs were seized at two locations in Ballina, on the Northern NSW coast.

The operation effectively shut down a sophisticated regional Australian piracy website offering hundreds of film, music and software titles for sale nationwide.

The confiscated discs included copies of HAPPY FEET, ROCKY BALBOA and CASINO ROYALE, films that are yet to be released on DVD, popular music CDs including Robbie Williams, U2 and Madonna, and computer software including Windows 2007 and Microsoft Vista. The haul also included a number of pornographic DVDs, six computers, and a large collection of documents.

“The close working relationship between Police and investigators for AFACT and MIPI ensures that we are taking effective action against Internet pirates,” said Adrienne Pecotic, Executive Director of AFACT. “We will continue to take strong enforcement measures to guarantee that authorized content of our members is not abused.”

“Today’s police raid in Ballina reinforces that perpetrators of internet piracy live not just in major cities but in small and regional Australian towns. Internet piracy is of growing concern to the Australian music industry and has a significant negative effect on artists, songwriters and all of the people involved in the music industry” said Sabiene Heindl, General Manager MIPI. “With less money in the industry as a result of internet piracy there is less money to be reinvested into finding and nurturing new Australian talent,” she stated.

Originating in a tip-off by a member of the public, the raid followed a six month investigation into the suspected piracy operation which identified pirated material being marketing on a website. As part of the investigation, examiners made covert evidence purchases by ordering movie and music titles including CLICK, SPIDERMAN 2, and ALIEN Vs PREDATOR. The transactions resulted in pirated DVDs being received by post from a PO Box in Alstonville.

Two brothers, one from Ballina and the other from Alstonville, are expected to face a range of charges for offences relating to the Copyright and Trademark Acts.

Penalties for copyright infringement are up to \$60,500 and 5 years imprisonment per offence.

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.

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.

For more information please contact:

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About MIPI

Music Industry Piracy Investigations Pty Ltd is an organisation that provides investigative and intellectual property right enforcement related services to the Australian music industry. MIPI has a dedicated music piracy hotline: 1800 06 16 16.

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Piracy in Australia

A study by LEK Consulting found movie piracy cost the film industry in Australia an estimated \$233 million in 2005, with losses mainly attributed to illegal downloading and illegal copying. These losses equate to nearly half of the \$536 million contributed to the Australian industry and economy through local and off-shore film and television drama production in the same year.

The illegal distribution of unauthorised copies of movies rose from 4% in 2000 to around 11% of the legitimate market in 2005.

Police jurisdictions recognise organised crime involvement in film piracy. Organised crime links to movie piracy in Australia were first uncovered following a raid on Malaysia-linked movie pirates in 2002.