

EDITORS' NOTE: RAID IMAGES AVAILABLE FROM SAMANTHA HALES, MIPI ON (02) 8569 1177.

MEDIA RELEASE

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Victorian Police pull the plug on third player in national piracy syndicate

MELBOURNE - Victorian Police have today raided the Phillip Island home of a man alleged to be involved in a national piracy syndicate, confiscating close to 10,000 pirated film and music discs, 31 burners and 11 printers. The police operation, assisted by industry anti-piracy groups, Music Industry Piracy Investigations (*MIPI*) and the Australian Federal Against Copyright Theft (*AFACT*), was part of a continuing investigation which saw the arrest and conviction in 2007 of a 36-year-old man in Queensland and an August raid on a 56-year-old man in Victoria.

Police are interviewing a 62-year-old man who was allegedly burning up to \$6,000 a week's worth of counterfeit discs and running a sophisticated manufacturing operation and distribution network which included selling the illegal copies at a variety of workplaces such as local construction sites.

During the raid, police and industry investigators discovered bootleg recordings from popular artists including U2, The Cure, David Bowie, Michael Jackson and Meatloaf and illegal copies of movies currently screening at Australian cinemas and not yet legitimately available on DVD, including bundled copies of *Wall-E*, *Wanted* and *The Dark Knight*.

"We're seeing a new trend among those who manufacture and sell counterfeit goods – in that they are turning to new venues to sell their illegal product," said Dean Mitchell, Investigations Manager of MIPI. "No matter the venue, whether it's eBay, the local market or a construction site, anti-piracy groups will continue to work with police and other industry groups to put a stop to people who unlawfully gain from the hard work and creativity of others."

Neil Gane, AFACT Director of Operations, said: "The Victorian Police are to be highly commended for their diligence in closing down another pirated DVD operation. The wide distribution of these illegal movie and music DVDs threatens legitimate businesses in the local community – people with families, mortgages and employees who deserve a fair go."

On 19 February 2007, a 36-year-old man alleged to be one of the suspect's partners was convicted at Ipswich Magistrates Court in Queensland on three copyright charges, having been discovered selling large quantities of pirated optical discs on eBay. The man was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

On 1 August this year, Victorian Police raided a Melbourne-based pirated movie burning lab of another alleged associate of the man at the centre of today's raid, and seized an estimated 9,000 pirated DVDs and computer equipment used for manufacturing illegal optical discs. The raid followed a complaint from a member of the public that a 56-year-old man was allegedly selling pirated movies to construction site workers in Melbourne's north-west suburbs.



Criminal penalties for copyright infringement are up to \$60,500 and five years imprisonment per offence for individuals, and up to \$302,500 for corporations. Police can also issue on-the-spot fines of \$1,320.

Members of the public can help police identify and shut down music and movie piracy operations by reporting piracy at www.mipi.com.au or www.moviepiracy.org.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.mipi.com.au and www.afact.com.au.

For interviews with Dean Mitchell, MIPI contact:

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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. MIPI operates a free-call anti-piracy hotline at 1800 06 16 16.

For interviews with Neil Gane, AFACT contact:

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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.

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