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POLICE BUST BIGGEST ILLEGAL DVD MOVIE BURNING RACKET THIS YEAR

Burner lab capable of manufacturing nearly 3 million discs a year

Melbourne: On 10 May, Victoria Police from Altona North Regional Response Unit (RRU) raided a residence in Yarraville in Melbourne's south-west with a warrant to uncover a drug manufacturing laboratory. Instead they discovered a massive haul of over 30,000 illegal DVD movies with an estimated street value of \$300,000.

The haul also included a sophisticated illegal DVD manufacturing lab consisting of 117 DVDR burners, 8 computers and 5 printers. The burning operation was capable of producing nearly 3 million illegal discs a year.

Amongst the tens of thousands of illegal DVD movies, Police discovered illegal copies of *Iron Man 2*, which is currently showing in cinemas across Australia and is not yet legitimately available on DVD.

Police arrested a 28-year-old Footscray man, a 35-year-old Deer Park man and a 27-year-old Braybrook man shortly after the discovery and interviewed them at Footscray Police Station.

Following the operation, Neil Gane, the Executive Director of the Australian Federation Against Copyright Theft (AFACT), said: "I commend the important work carried out by Victoria Police during this operation. Closing down this large-scale DVD movie burning racket is a good day for local community cinemas and DVD stores who deserve a fair go and should not have to compete with theft. It also sends a clear message to would-be movie criminals that copyright theft is a serious crime which will be investigated, shut down and prosecuted through the courts."

Altona RRU Senior Constable David Kerr said Police were continuing to find DVD syndicates operating out of homes and factories across the western suburbs.

"We believe we shut down a major operation last night," he said. "Such syndicates are often linked to a range of other criminal activity affecting local communities.

"We will continue to work with the Australian Federation Against Copyright Theft in finding those responsible and dealing with them accordingly."

In the first quarter of 2010, AFACT was involved in 16 raids resulting in the seizure of 67,911 illegitimate discs and 148 DVDR burners.

Members of the community can provide information on movie piracy to Crime Stoppers by calling 1800 333 000 or AFACT by calling 1800 251 996.

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

In 2009, State and Federal Police conducted 69 raids involving movie piracy and seized 194,233 pirated DVDs. They also seized 749 burners capable of producing over 18 million pirated DVDs a year with a potential street value of over \$94 million.

On 24 November 2009 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 (*Underbelly*, *Charlie and Boots*).

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.

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