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MOVIE PIRATE CONVICTED AND GETS \$5,000 FINE FOR CHRISTMAS

Christmas shoppers warned to watch out for fake DVDs

Sydney: On the 18 December, at Burwood Local Court, Mr Kenny Lee was found guilty of multiple copyright offences and fined \$5,000.

The conviction was the conclusion to a raid conducted on 31 October 2008 by New South Wales Police and supported by investigators from the Australian Federation Against Copyright Theft (AFACT) on a legitimate DVD rental store which sold pirated DVDs 'under-the-counter' to 'members' who were able to show an exclusive 'membership' card provided to them by the store's management. At the premises police seized over 17,500 pirated movie DVDs and uncovered a DVD burner operation consisting of 20 burners, along with computer equipment and printers. The DVD burner operation had the capability of producing over half a million pirated DVDs a year.

Movie titles discovered during the raid included illegal copies of "Max Payne", "Body of Lies" and "Babylon AD", which were then showing at Australian cinemas and not legitimately available on DVD.

Following the conviction, Neil Gane, Executive Director of AFACT, said: "Police have seized hundreds of thousands of pirated DVDs this year, but there are still criminals intent on selling these illegal wares. Everyone loves to watch a good movie over the holidays and nothing beats watching the real thing. Why settle for stolen 'knock offs'?"

There are a number of indicators that help you to identify a pirated DVD. Firstly, if a DVD is available while the movie is still playing in the cinema, then it's highly likely to be pirated. Secondly, if the price of a DVD is "too good to be true", then the chances are, it's pirated. Finally, if the artwork is sub-standard, where the discs are wrapped in cheap cellophane packaging, or if the disc is a DVDR, it is more than likely a pirated copy.

Roy Billing, "Underbelly" and "Charlie & Boots" actor commented: "If it's a film or television show you're buying for a loved one this Christmas, make sure it's the real thing. Not only will that mean that they'll get a good quality product, but your hard-earned money will go to people who deserve a fair go – and not to line the pockets of criminals."

On 24 November 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. Attending the destruction event, NSW Police Minister Michael Daley said: "It's tough enough for honest business people to make a living, hire staff and pay their mortgage, without having to compete with criminals."

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

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.

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.

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 \$94million.

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