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2 POLICE OPERATIONS IN 1 WEEK NETS OVER 23,000 ILLEGAL DVDS

Combined haul worth a street value of over \$230,000

Melbourne: On 27 April, Victoria Police from Croydon DTU, supported by investigators from the Australian Federation Against Copyright Theft (AFACT), raided a DVD movie store in Dandenong, in Melbourne's south-east suburbs, seizing over 1,000 illegal DVD movies.

Following on from information obtained during the operation, Police then made a search on a residence in Lyndhurst where they seized another 2,000 illegal DVD movies and 60 burners used to manufacture illegal movie DVDs.

Police discovered illegal copies of *Date Night*, *The Book of Eli* and *The Back-Up Plan*, which are currently playing in Australian cinemas and not yet available legitimately on DVD.

A woman in her 20s is assisting Police with their enquiries.

Following the operation, Neil Gane, the Executive Director of AFACT, said: "I commend the important work being undertaken by Victoria Police. When thousands of illegal DVDs flood the streets, it puts jobs and small local businesses on the line. Community cinemas and DVD stores and the people they employ deserve a fair go and should not have to compete with theft."

The discovery takes the haul of illegal movie DVDs seized by Victoria Police in one week to over 23,000, worth a street value of over \$230,000.

In an unrelated incident on 22 April, Victoria Police raided a residence in Doveton, in Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs, seizing over 20,000 illegal DVD movies and 22 DVD burners used to illegally copy movies and television shows. Police discovered illegal copies of *The Back-Up Plan*, a new comedy starring Australian Alex O'Loughlin and Jennifer Lopez, which has not yet been released in Australian cinemas. Illegal copies of the independent Australian film *Balibo* were also discovered.

Rob Connolly, the writer and director of *Balibo*, said "A film like *Balibo* took an incredible amount of commitment and hard work from cast, crew, distributors, cinemas and local DVD stores to bring the story to Australian audiences. All of these people rely on a legitimate return for their work from sales of the genuine DVD for their livelihoods, so it is incredibly disappointing when I hear that their work is being ripped off."

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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