



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 4, 2009

Pirate Party Australia Condemns Trade Negotiation Secrecy

Secret negotiations threaten our civil liberties, and further the imbalance of copyright.

The Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement negotiations continue in Seoul,¹ Korea with a complete disregard for any form of real transparency. The deceptively named trade negotiations have now switched their focus to copyright infringement in the digital arena. Negotiations are being held behind closed doors and are being kept secret. There is no oversight from regular citizens, and anyone allowed to see any of the documents has to sign a non-disclosure agreement. Luckily, leaks are being reported, and if these reports are correct, they seem to indicate the worst case scenario.

The negotiations are currently in their 6th round in Seoul, and they revolve around 'enforcement in the digital environment.' This involves expanding ISP responsibility for the enforcement of the copyright monopoly and the end of safe harbour protections unless they comply with the stand over tactics of big media. Under the proposed treaty, there potentially will be an obligation for governments to implement systems similar to the 'three-strikes' or 'graduated response' scheme, which would see a household cut off permanently from the internet without due process, on three accusations from any copyright holder.

This makes it fundamentally a copyright treaty. "Copyright is supposed to exist in order to encourage innovation. It achieves this by giving a limited monopoly to the innovator, so that they will continue to create. It is not supposed to be used to protect copyright holders at the expense of society, and it certainly shouldn't lead to tyrannical protections such as these. This is why the Pirate Party movement

¹ http://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/acta/agenda_seoul.html

has gained so much popularity across Europe,” David Crafti, Pirate Party Australia President said.

He continued “It is an alarming development, we need people to speak up and make it known to the Australian government that this is atrocious. Secret negotiations, with no transparent public consultation for a treaty that threatens to further compromise our civil liberties and expand the already damaging and draconian copyright monopoly is unacceptable.”

“There is a distinct, and frightening lack of transparency” said Rodney Serkowski, another Pirate Party Australia spokesperson. “A complete disregard for our civil liberties, which are more important than this overbearing monopoly, which is completely out of balance at present anyway. Any move to disconnect any person from the internet because they are partaking in cultural exchange by sharing privately and non-commercially is offensive. We completely reject any plan to make carriage service providers de facto copyright cops. ISPs should be given no right or responsibility to snoop through private communication. We wouldn’t tolerate it with Australia Post, so we shouldn’t tolerate it with our Internet connections”

Only selected entities are being given access to the discussion,² with strict non-disclosure agreements enforced, and the public’s opinions and right to participate in the discussion are being sidelined, with big media being given unfettered access that precludes any level of a fair and balanced outcome being reached. ³

About the Pirate Party Australia

Pirate Party Australia is a forming political party that will be seeking registration with the Australian Electoral Commission and intends to contest the next Australian federal election.

Pirate Party Australia has an interest in reforming legislation and policy surrounding culture, innovation and the protection of civil liberties, with sister organisations fully registered, seeking registration or otherwise active in over 35 countries throughout the world. The Swedish Piratpartiet as of today, and with the passing of the Lisbon Treaty, have two elected sitting Members of the European Parliament, after the 2009 European Elections, in which they attained 7.1% of the vote. In recent federal elections in Germany, the Piratenpartei achieved astounding success in attaining 2%, or nearly 850,000 votes.

For further comment please contact:

David Crafti, President Pirate Party Australia
david.crafti@pirateparty.org.au
+61 415 548 108

² <http://keionline.org/node/660>

³ <http://www.efa.org.au/2009/11/04/acta-copyright-negotiations-underway-still-secret-still-worrying/> ;
<http://www.michaelgeist.ca/content/view/4510/125/>