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Pirate Party Broad sides AFACT & Demands Lawmakers Respect Rights

The Australian Federation Against Copyright Theft (AFACT) has unsurprisingly come out in support of a graduated response mechanism, better known as 'Three Strikes', in their war on sharing.¹

"Pirate Party Australia completely rejects the implementation of any system that disconnects account holders from the Internet, increasingly the most important platform for communication and political discourse today, upon allegation of infringement, without full judicial oversight and due process. Mechanisms like this will see entire households disconnected, upon an allegation from an industry association." said Party Secretary Rodney Serkowski.

He continued "The implementation of a notice and termination style mechanism places an undue burden on Internet service providers who subsequently become de facto copyright cops. The provision of an Internet service should be considered akin to the postal service, in that packets of data are sent and received, and this communication should be considered private—no person or organisation should be opening and reading the content of these packets. Enforcement of copyright in its current form necessarily requires that these communications be monitored—letters to your lawyer, letters to your doctor, letters to your partner—this is completely unacceptable."

"AFACT has previously questioned the legitimacy of the Pirate movement participating in the democratic process, by inferring that the Party should not be able to obtain registration, likening file sharing to 'shoplifting'.² This shows a complete misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the fundamental issues in the debate, and an even bigger disregard for democratic institutions. Now they are turning to lawmakers in order to secure failing models and controls of distribution, purporting that copyright somehow supersedes fundamental civil liberties like privacy and the freedom of communication."

"We are seeing 'Big Media' donating very, very large amounts to the Australian Labor Party. In fact, \$205,000 was donated alone by Village Roadshow to the Federal ALP, with \$487,791 donated in total to other political parties in the lead up to last election.³ Will this "support" now translate into

¹ <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/media/canberra-urged-to-join-net-fightback/story-e6frg996-1225855218786>

² <http://www.smh.com.au/technology/technology-news/aussie-pirate-party-plans-election-onslaught-20090930-gbvd.html>

³ <http://periodicdisclosures.aec.gov.au/Donor.aspx?SubmissionID=10&ClientID=38843>

laws safeguarding failing business models by sacrificing time honoured freedoms and protections?" asked the Party Secretary.

The idea that file sharing is a threat to the digital economy is a fallacy. Torrentfreak released data today revealing evidence that media profits are on the rise. While the data shows that CD sales are dwindling, this is due to legitimate online sales, not piracy. Units sold went from a total of 760 million units shifted in 2003 to in excess of 1,700 million units in 2008. The film industry too is going through a renaissance with box-office sales hitting over 10 billion for the first time last year.⁴

"Hopefully the government of Australia will take their sovereignty into account before bowing to external pressures, as Minister Conroy often cites in order to support his argument for mandatory Internet censorship,"⁵ said spokesperson Brendan Molloy, Pirate Party Australia.

"While countries like Finland are moving to make Internet access a fundamental human right, AFACT are pushing to have it blocked. What's next, perpetual copyright length? For years and years people have shared tapes and CDs. Did that kill the media industry? No, it has only strengthened."

"Another question to ask: if this proposed Internet censorship infrastructure is implemented by the current government, will 'Big Media' demand that access to websites also be blocked? How far will lawmakers go? Allowing this transgression, the termination of a primary means of communication, for the protection of inappropriate business models, sets an unjustifiable precedent, that all Australians should oppose," concluded Rodney Serkowski, Party Secretary.

About Pirate Party Australia

The Pirate Party Australia is a forming political party, currently seeking membership for the purposes of registration with the Australian Electoral Commission and intends to contest the next Australian federal election if successful.

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 30 countries throughout the world.

The Swedish Piratpartiet have two elected sitting Members of the European Parliament, after the 2009 European Elections, in which they attained 7.1% of the vote.

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⁴ <http://torrentfreak.com/is-piracy-really-killing-the-music-industry-no-100418/>

⁵ <http://www.crikey.com.au/2010/04/15/crikey-says-conroy-fighting-internet-battle-on-wrong-front/>