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Conroy Misleads Public with Filter Report

The Pirate Party Australia rejected the proclamation by Senator Conroy (Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy) that the filter trial was a success. The Pirate Party reiterates its concerns regarding the impact Internet censorship will have on the community and the insufficient checks and balances for unwarranted governmental manipulation.

"Granting the government powers to censor information on the promise that it is for the best of intentions is like leaving a loaded gun in a room full of good people for their protection, but leaving the doors wide open for people to come and go." said David Crafti, President of Pirate Party Australia

He went on to clarify: "Assuming that Senator Conroy and the Labor government really have the well-being of all Australians at heart, how does he know that this will always be the case? Is he so sure that like-minded people will always form a majority in government? This is clearly the first step down a slippery slope that starts with a good, if misguided, intent of blocking child pornography and quickly spreads to blocking information based on morality (R18+ games, legal pornography, pro-euthanasia and anti-abortion sites) and eventually some government comes along and quietly stops anyone with opposing views from voicing them."

Pirate Party Australia believes that the way to stop child pornography from being distributed is to work with online policing organisations using regular procedures, to stop people from producing it. The sites that are on the current blacklist would never be found in a regular browsing session, so there is no risk that a child would just stumble across it. Parents should have the right to run their own families, choosing sensible actions like putting the family computer in a common area of the house and installing their own filters to enforce content appropriateness, as they see it.

Pirate Party Australia is against the government's scaremongering tactics to implement this policy. It has been shown repeatedly, by professors and high-school students alike, that the filter will not even work on almost all of the content that the government plans to block. The "100% accuracy" that Senator Conroy quoted is for a very low number of relatively small sites, which is only a tiny fraction of the total amount of content that the government considers illegal. The feasibility that this trial established was purely from a limited, technical standpoint.

This policy, when brought into effect, will put the Australian Government in breach of Article 19 of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This article states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

This Declaration has been praised by governmental officials the world over, including U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton. She said yesterday that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has "set a standard for human rights and dignity." As Australia has ratified this declaration, it should adhere to the principles, even if not implemented explicitly in law. This promise was not only made to the UN, but also to the citizens of Australia.

We believe that any censorship is too much censorship.

Join Pirate Party Australia to fight back against this abuse of freedom.

To join Pirate Party Australia, visit: <http://pirateparty.org.au/join>

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About the Pirate Party Australia

The Pirate Party Australia 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 35 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.