

MEDIA RELEASE

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Music and video industry associations welcome ACTA discussions for increased international cooperation to address piracy

31 July 2008 (SYDNEY) – Industry organisations **MIPI** (Music Industry Piracy Investigations) and **AVSDA** (Australian Visual Software Distributors Association) representing the music and home entertainment film distributor industries encourage Australia to continue to work with other nations to combat piracy and protect the rights of creators by participating in discussions about a global anti-counterfeiting trade agreement, ACTA.

“Intellectual property infringement is a global epidemic and there is a critical need for governments to unite with common goals and approaches to address this problem,” said Sabiene Heindl, MIPI General Manager.

The Australian Government is currently considering its participation in ACTA, a draft anti-counterfeiting trade agreement that aims to work with other committed nations to protect intellectual property rights and combat the global threat of counterfeiting and piracy.

“There’s been a bit of scare mongering in the media about how this agreement will affect individual consumers and their privacy – let’s be clear: this agreement is not about Australian Customs smashing travellers iPods or computers. The purpose of this treaty is to ensure we have multi-national cooperation in protecting the creative rights of copyright owners, thereby ensuring that consumers can continue to get access to films and music the like,” said Simon Bush, AVSDA Chief Executive.

“Alignment of international laws stopping trans-national IP theft will ensure that future investments in Australian films like Baz Luhrmann’s soon to be released epic *Australia* will continue to get made,” Mr Bush said.

Media reports that ACTA will require Australian Customs officials to search travellers’ iPods and computers and seize material without proof of copyright infringement are simply erroneous. Currently ACTA is at a very early stage, with only one round of pre-negotiation discussions having taken place and no official text.

Both MIPI and AVSDA are working with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Attorney-General’s Department to provide valuable input on how piracy is detrimentally affecting the Australian economy. Piracy in Australia continues to demonstrate international dimensions. Earlier this year MIPI assisted the Australian Federal Police (**AFP**) in a search at an optical disc manufacturing plant and a number of retail outlets that were selling pirated music compilations. Further investigations revealed that an organised gang based in Australia with a complex network throughout Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific had been in operation for 4-5 years.

“This example highlights the international nature of pirate activity and reinforces the need for international cooperation via agreements like ACTA to make it easier to put a stop to these complex and global pirate networks,” Ms Heindl said.

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About MIPI

Music Industry Piracy Investigations Pty Ltd (www.mipi.com.au) is the anti-piracy organisation for the Australian music industry. MIPI represents close to 125 music labels through their association, ARIA and over 1,700 music publishers and songwriters through their association, AMCOS.

About AVSDA

The Australian Visual Software Distributors Association (AVSDA) was formed in 1983 to represent the interests of owners of copyright in, and distributors of, videos in Australia. In 2007, AVSDA members moved over 95.4 million titles worth over \$1.347 billion in wholesale sales. AVSDA represents the major Hollywood studios plus leading Australian independent distributors such as Roadshow and Madman. The Association speaks and acts on behalf of its members on issues that affect the industry as a whole such as censorship, film piracy, technology challenges, copyright and enforcement. For more information visit www.avsdacom.au.