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Piracy reforms to protect Australian jobs

Australians working in the creative industries have more secure employment after pirate website blocking legislation was passed by Federal Parliament today.

The new law will reduce traffic to illegal sources of content that compete with legitimate platforms which invest in local productions and employ Australians.

“Australians employed in the television industry make important contributions to our economy and culture, and it’s vital their endeavours be supported by laws that help ensure fair reward for their effort,” ASTRA CEO, Andrew Maiden, said today.

“The nearly 7000 Australians working in subscription television are delighted the Coalition and Labor have worked co-operatively to protect their legitimate rights,” he said.

The new legislation to address supply of illegal content matches efforts by the industry to make legal content available to consumers faster and cheaper.

In the last financial year the subscription television industry expressed more than 15,000 hours of television to Australian audiences, including 242 hours of premium drama. The industry’s largest platform, Foxtel, also provided new more affordable entry-level packages to its customers.

While no single measure can entirely eradicate piracy, evidence suggests the new laws will greatly reduce traffic to illegal offshore sites.

“A recent study in the United Kingdom found that website blocking legislation caused a dramatic 77% decline in traffic to blocked pirate websites in the two months following its introduction,” Mr Maiden said.

“The legislation was also accompanied by growth in the use of legitimate online sources of television and film content. It also reduced the exposure of minors to advertisements for pornography and gambling websites, which so often funds the operation of illegal pirate sites,” Mr Maiden concluded.

In 2013/14 the subscription television industry invested more than \$600 million in local television production.

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About ASTRA – The Australian Subscription Television and Radio Association (ASTRA) is the peak body representing the subscription media industry in Australia. Members include content makers, distribution platforms, technology companies and supporting industries. ASTRA members produce content that reaches one in three Australians. In 2013/14 they invested more than \$600 million in local content production, added \$1.9 billion to the economy, and created jobs for 6600 Australians.