

MEDIA RELEASE

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TOUGHER LAWS NEEDED TO COMBAT COUNTERFEIT

The Australian Sporting Goods Association (ASGA) has called on Members of Parliament to toughen intellectual property laws and protect brand owners from counterfeit activity. The ASGA says that the sporting industry, along with other significant contributors to the retail economy suffer significant economic loss owing to the importation and sale of counterfeit products.

The ASGA has written to every Federal MP seeking amendments to legislation and has called for tougher laws.

ASGA Executive Director Brad Kitschke is critical of the reforms contained in *The Intellectual Property Laws Amendment (Raising the Bar) Bill 2011* currently before the Parliament, saying that they don't go far enough and more needs to be done to stop counterfeit products at the point of entry or manufacture.

"Australia's attitude toward counterfeit and our laws are out of step with those of other nations, in particular those in Europe. Our legislative and regulatory regime is open to manipulation and requires tightening. The best way to deal with counterfeit activity is at the place of manufacture or the point of entry into Australia. We need laws that not only detect counterfeit on import but give brand owners the ability to stop the products making their way into the market.

"If we stop it before it gets in, then we prevent counterfeit products from entering the market place. There must be greater emphasis on preventing counterfeit at the point of entry and it has to be easier for brand owners to take action to stop counterfeiters' Kitschke said.

The ASGA submission points out that counterfeit activity is not a victimless crime and that reports from credible international law enforcement bodies like Interpol credit counterfeit activity for funding internal crime rings, drugs, people smuggling and even terrorist groups.

"You might think that buying a fake shirt doesn't hurt anyone but what you perceive as a rich multinational brand. But when you buy the fake shirt think about the fact that it has probably come from a group overseas who uses counterfeit activity to fund more serious crimes. I don't think any Australian wants to fund people smugglers, drug peddlers or terrorists but they just might be if they buy counterfeit goods and the evidence is there to show it Kitschke concluded.

A copy of ASGA's issues paper can be obtained here
http://www.asga.com.au/images/stories/Counterfeit_issues_paper_ASGA.pdf

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