Copyright Reform and the Information Economy

Australia will have some of the world's most advanced Internet legislation as a result of reforms to improve protection for copyright material announced recently by the Attorney-General, the Hon Daryl Williams AM QC MP, and the Minister for Communications, the Hon Richard Alston.

The reforms will include a new, broad-based technology-neutral right of communication to the public which will apply to works made available on the Internet and other on-line services, as well as works transmitted or broadcast to the public.

This new right of communication will replace and extend the existing technology-specific and limited transmission rights. Because the new right will be technology-neutral, it will be applicable to future developments in technology and transmission methods, such as web TV.

This right will be subject to exceptions for fair dealing, libraries and educational institutions– as is the case for other rights which copyright holders presently have, such as the right of reproduction.

The reforms will also ensure that libraries and educational institutions will have reasonable access to copyright material available on-line.

The Act will make it clear that carriers and Internet service providers (ISPs) will not be liable for copyright infringements on their customers' web sites because the infringement occurs on the facilities of the carrier or ISP, providing greater certainty for carriers and ISPs.

New enforcement measures are proposed in response to the problem of enforcement in cyberspace. New sanctions and remedies are proposed against the abuse of technological copyright protection measures – including program locks and encryption of broadcasts.

New sanctions are also propos(against tampering with rights manag ment information that is attached to cop right material – this information usual includes details about the copyrig owner and terms and conditions of u:

These reforms will further increa the effectiveness of Australia's alrea strong anti-piracy laws.

The proposed reforms impleme many of the proposals contained in t Discussion Paper, *Copyright Reform a the Digital Agenda* (July 1997).

The reforms will ensure that A tralia continues to take advantage of t opportunities arising from the new inf mation economy, which will have be efits for all.

These important copyright refor will be included in an exposure dr Copyright Amendment Bill that the g ernment hopes to be able to release public comment in the coming montl

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*B*usiness News

Insurance – HPF and Esanda

Hunter Premium Funding Ltd (HPF) advises insurance intermediaries that it has entered into an agreement with the Australia New Zealand Banking Group which has resulted in HPF's acquisition of the ongoing insurance premium funding business of Esanda Finance Corporation Ltd.

As part of the post-acquisition strategy, a help line has been established. The contact number for this service is 1800 818 209.

Australian Standards On-Line

Australian Standards will be available at all times thanks to its new "Standards Online Service" on the Internet.

Subscribers will have immediate electronic access to more than 6000 Australian Standards covering most aspects of commerce and industry.

The service will be available for an annual subscription and will be updated monthly. Information can be searched through title, number, key words and phrases.

The service can be sampled on the Standards Australia website at *www.standatds.com.au/software-services/products/asonline/default.htm*

Complaints Services

The *Australian Banking Ombu man Scheme* and the *Life Insura Complaints Service* are keen to ens that information on the services p vided by both in relation to compla services is readily available.

Brochures have been provided both schemes containing informatior complaints procedures to these org sations.

Stocks of the brochures are avail; as follows:

Banking Ombudsman - contact : Deborah Cull tel: 03 9613 7323

Life Insurance Complaints Service contact:

Christine Raff tel: 03 9629 7050