

Conroy: We're not walking away from filter

Written by PC World Australia | Renai LeMay
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Communications Minister Stephen Conroy last night remained stalwart in his support for Labor's controversial mandatory internet filtering scheme in a heated debate on the ABC's Q&A program with representatives of the public, the Coalition, the Australian Sex Party and more.

ABC viewer William Rollo from South Australia asked Conroy whether Labor's support for the filter was pointless, given that it may not have the numbers to get associated legislation through parliament.

"The Coalition aren't backing it ... and the Greens aren't too keen on it either. Under the new paradigm it's realistically unlikely to get anywhere. Do you therefore think it's fair for voters to see your insistence on this policy as a time and money waster?" he asked Conroy.

But the Communications Minister pointed out there was still a review of the Refused Classification category of content to be gone through before associated legislation made it to parliament. "You don't, simply because you've got a lot of criticism, say 'well I'm going to run away from that policy'," he said.

Independent Rob Oakeshott -- whose vote is crucial to Labor getting any legislation at all through parliament over the next several years -- said he was in favour of personal responsibility in terms of internet use, but he would wait to see the legislation.

Shadow Innovation Minister Sophie Mirabella told the audience that the Coalition wouldn't support the policy because it wouldn't work -- particularly being unable to block peer to peer traffic. However, Conroy rejoindered that the filter had never aimed to block peer to peer traffic.

"The filter is not an attempt to deal with peer to peer," he said, adding that other mechanisms would tackle the distribution of Refused Classification material through that channel -- such as additional policing resources and education.

Australian Sex Party president Fiona Patton warned filter critics not to take the Coalition's

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opposition to the scheme for granted.

"[Shadow Treasurer] Joe Hockey may have said he won't support the filter as it stands, but certainly Tony Abbott out at Rooty Hill, of course, said that he would do whatever he could to stop people looking at filth," she said, claiming also that Labor's line on the filter's aims and what it would block was shifting again.

Ultimately, Conroy said all Australians would get their chance to have their say about the Refused Classification category of content through the upcoming review.

"The legislation will ultimately reflect the outcome of that review ... for people to say it definitely won't be passed -- the legislation hasn't been drafted, and that review hasn't taken place yet," he said.

Source: [PC World Australia](#)