Bleak Future Forecast for Australian Internet Freedoms

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The Australian Sex Party has accused the Australian government of following the US in a sustained attack on civil liberties through new legislation to curtail the internet. "Right now, the US congress is considering legislation which would allow censorship of anything suspected of copyright infringement, and mandate information relating to such activity and the identities of users, to be handed to law enforcement authorities," Sex Party President, Fiona Patten said.

The Australian Government has already begun to remove due process from the prosecution of copyright infringement, and this new legislation being considered in the US could signal an expansion of the surveillance and dubious legal tactics already being employed in Australia. The Attorney-General's department has refused Freedom of Information requests for details of closed-door meetings with industry stakeholders, casting doubt over the motivations of the government.

"The enforcement of copyright laws must be balanced with the right to privacy, and the due process of our legal system is paramount; to erode it is to ignore the foundations of fairness in our country. The Attorney-General, Robert McClelland is threatening the rights of ordinary Australians for the sake of so-called movie rights groups, established to profiteer from such actions, not to benefit artists and those who create movies and other entertainment. This, coupled with the ever-present threat that Senator Conroy will again lead the charge to re-introduce internet censorship legislation, paints a bleak future for freedom in Australia.

"We must not follow the US legislative approach blindly. The US-Australia military alliance must not extend to militant legal action against Australians. Government must stop using pornography, child protection and copyright infringement as excuses to violate the rights of individuals to privacy and freedom. It is not the Government who should parent children, rather, parents need to take responsibility for their children's welfare, and adults must be afforded the rights they are entitled to." Ms Patten said.