

# Wikipedia Flies Flag for Fair Copyright in Australia

## MEDIA RELEASE

*Canberra, Monday, 22nd May*

One of the world's most popular websites, Wikipedia, will from today be flying the banner for a fair use copyright exception for Australia.

Wikipedia, which is viewed over 8 million times a day by Australians, will be displaying the banners to Australians accessing English language Wikipedia articles over the next few weeks. The volunteer editing community of Australian Wikipedians decided to show these banners to help raise awareness of the vital need for copyright reform in Australia.

"Wikipedia uses FAIR USE to share knowledge across the world. Soon Australia could too, with your help" reads one of the banners which will appear over the next three weeks.

The banners draw attention both to the importance of fair use to Wikipedia - around 10% of the English Wikipedia's over 5 million articles use some fair use content - and to the recent proposal from the Productivity Commission that Australia should also introduce a fair use exception.

"Australians benefit from fair use every day" says Jon Lawrence from digital rights group Electronic Frontiers Australia (EFA). "When you look up the ABC on Wikipedia and see its logo, that logo is there because a Wikipedia editor has uploaded it as a fair use of the image. Wikipedia users can only upload this content because they are able to rely on the US's fair use provisions. If Wikipedia was based in Australia you wouldn't see that logo."

In support of the banner campaign a microsite has been launched by EFA and copyright advocacy group the Australian Digital Alliance (ADA). The site at [faircopyright.org.au](http://faircopyright.org.au) highlights the problems with Australia's current law, and explains how fair use would fix them.

"Australia's copyright law is absurdly outdated" continues Lawrence. "Forwarding an email. Reposting a meme you found online. Uploading a picture of your toddler mangling the words of a song to Facebook. Our law hasn't caught up with any of these common usages, and as a result Australians inadvertently infringe copyright dozens of times a day."

Jessica Coates from copyright advocacy group the ADA agrees that the law needs updating. And the way to do that is with a flexible fair use exception. "Updating the law for each new use or technology, as we currently have to do, just isn't sustainable" she said. "It took until 2006 to legalise taping a TV show on your VCR - by which time most VCRs were already mothballed in the closet. We need copyright law that focuses not on specific technologies but on what is fair."

The Government is currently considering a recommendation from the Productivity Commission to introduce fair use. This is the sixth official recommendation for fair use in the last two decades.

“We’re encouraging people to write to their local member and ask that we update copyright law for the internet,” continues Ms Coates. “Schools, universities, libraries, museums, start-ups are all hamstrung by current copyright settings. If we want world class education and culture we need our copyright law to enter the 21st century.”

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The page accompanying the Wikipedia banner campaign is at:

<https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/FairCopyrightOz>

The Fair Copyright microsite can be accessed at <https://faircopyright.org.au>

The Fair Copyright campaign is on Twitter at: <https://twitter.com/faircopyrightoz>

The Productivity Commission report can be accessed at:

<http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/intellectual-property#report>