



Senator Sue Boyce
Queensland

MEDIA RELEASE

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INTERNET FILTER PROPOSAL DESCENDING INTO FARCE

The Rudd Government's hare-brained proposal to censor the internet was descending into complete farce with the Prime Minister admitting he didn't have a clue what was going on, Liberal Senator Sue Boyce, said today.

"Yesterday, Mr Rudd at a media conference, admitted that he had 'no advice' about whether or not the legislation would be introduced before the election and fobbed the matter off to Communications Minister Stephen Conroy," Senator Boyce said.

"This is despite the fact that Minister Conroy's spokeswoman was quoted in the media yesterday morning (Thursday) as saying the legislation would be delayed at least until after the June sitting of Parliament," she said.

"If Minister Conroy can't even keep the Prime Minister informed then there is no hope anybody else will ever be able to get any sense out of him on this issue."

Senator Boyce said Senator Conroy had announced last December that the legislation would be introduced in March this year and the delay only confirmed repeated warnings by independent experts that the so-called "filter" was proving to be impossible to implement.

"It is ridiculous to try and assert as Minister Conroy does at every available opportunity that his proposed internet filter will protect us all against child pornography and other disgusting and depraved websites. He knows, as everybody else knows, it simply won't work," Senator Boyce said.

"The revelation by Electronic Frontiers Australia that Minister Conroy's Department has a closed online forum to discuss the issue and that his Department had admitted in an April 13 posting to the forum that there wasn't even draft legislation shows how hopeless the project is," she said.

"Actually, I feel sorry for Departmental officers who have the impossible job of trying to devise legislation and come up with some sort of filtering technology that will even try to meet their Minister's absurd promises."

Senator Boyce said the fact that Minister Conroy had refused to say if there would be any penalty for circumventing any internet filter if and when it was ever imposed was a tacit admission that it was doomed to failure.

"It would be political suicide for a government to impose penalties for an offence which millions of Australians would inadvertently commit every day," she said.

"If and when the Prime Minister bothers to find out just what is happening, he should tell Minister Conroy that this mandatory internet filter idea is as futile and as useless as GroceryWatch and FuelWatch were."

"Mr Rudd has become very experienced at announcing that promises and programs are to be dumped. Let's hope he will be well enough informed to announce the dumping of this program in time for World Press Freedom Day next Monday."

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Media contact: Russell Grenning on 0448 193 903 or (07) 3862 4244