



Australian Government  
Australian Commission for  
Law Enforcement Integrity



Australian Government  
Australian Taxation Office

## Media Release

Date Tuesday, 5 July 2022

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# Two individuals, including a former ATO employee, appeared in court today as part of joint ACLEI investigation

## A joint ACLEI investigation into corruption has led to the arrests and charging of two people who appeared in Parramatta Local Court today

Two individuals, including a former Australian Taxation Office (ATO) employee, faced Parramatta Local Court today (5 July 2022) in relation to alleged corruption offences as part of Operation Barker, a joint-agency investigation led by the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI).

It was alleged in court today that the former ATO employee accepted a bribe of \$150,000 from a taxpayer they were auditing to reduce personal and business tax debts of that taxpayer, in excess of \$6 million dollars.

The ACLEI-led investigation is supported by the ATO, the Australian Federal Police (AFP), NSW Police Force (NSWPF), the Department of Home Affairs, and assisted by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) and the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC).

ACLEI, with the assistance of ATO, AFP and NSWPF, executed search warrants at a number of residential and business premises in Sydney and surrounding suburbs on 9 June 2022.

The former ATO employee was later charged with receiving a corrupting benefit as a Commonwealth public official, and unauthorised access to computer data under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth).

A civilian associate, who also appeared at Parramatta Local Court today, was charged with providing a corrupting benefit to a Commonwealth public official, and bribery of a Commonwealth public official under the Criminal Code.

The maximum penalty for these offences is 10 years imprisonment.

Ms Jaala Hinchcliffe, the Integrity Commissioner and head of ACLEI said, "Operation Barker is a strong example of joint-agency collaboration and commitment to preventing and investigating corruption issues. The investigation has resulted in the first arrest of an ATO employee for corruption related offences since the ATO came within ACLEI's jurisdiction."

Mr Chris Jordan, Commissioner of Taxation, said the ATO had undertaken a thorough and robust internal investigation under Operation Barker to ensure taxpayer affairs have not and will not be compromised by any alleged criminal activity.

"The ATO has robust frameworks, policies and procedures in place to support a culture of professionalism and high ethical standards. These structures are in place because the community rightly expects the highest levels of integrity from the ATO," Mr Jordan said.

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Please direct all enquiries regarding this media release to [media@aclei.gov.au](mailto:media@aclei.gov.au)

From 1 January 2021, ACLEI's jurisdiction was expanded to include conduct of ATO staff members which relates to the performance of a law enforcement function.

Operation Barker was launched in September 2021. The investigation is active and ongoing.

**About the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI)**

ACLEI is committed to preventing and investigating corruption issues relating to Commonwealth law enforcement agencies. ACLEI supports the Integrity Commissioner to provide independent assurance to government about the integrity of prescribed law enforcement agencies and their staff members. The office of the [Integrity Commissioner](#) and ACLEI are established by the [Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner Act 2006](#). For more information, visit ACLEI's website: [aclei.gov.au](http://aclei.gov.au)