



Deceptive duo destined for jail

A former tax agent and his client have been sentenced to a combined 10 years and 6 months in jail.

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A former tax agent and his client have been sentenced to a combined 10 years and 6 months in jail for fraudulently claiming tax refunds and intentionally avoiding paying income tax, contrary to section 134.2(1) of the Criminal Code (Cth).

Banned tax agent Ravindra Narayan from Melbourne was sentenced to 5 years and 6 months imprisonment, with a non-parole period of 2 years and 9 months. Business owner Duane Saltmer from Townsville was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment with a non-parole period of 2 years and 6 months. The pair dishonestly gained a financial advantage of over \$4 million through refund fraud and avoidance of income tax.

Assistant Commissioner Jade Hawkins welcomed the court's decision.

'People who deliberately cheat the tax system can expect to face serious penalties, including jail time,' Ms Hawkins said.

'We are committed to keeping the system fair and holding to account those who choose to challenge it.'

Between 2012 and 2015, Mr Saltmer and Mr Narayan submitted false business activity statements claiming GST refunds for companies controlled by Mr Saltmer that the companies were not entitled to. The pair also claimed false deductions for Mr Saltmer's companies and evaded income tax by intentionally omitting assessable income in Mr Saltmer's personal income tax return. Mr Narayan was also charged with evading income tax by intentionally omitting assessable income in his personal income tax return.

In 2015, the ATO audited the tax affairs of Mr Saltmer's companies and discovered that the pair were operating a false invoice scheme to defraud the Commonwealth.

An additional audit into the individual income tax affairs of Mr Saltmer uncovered that Mr Narayan, in his capacity as an accountant and tax agent, had lodged income tax returns containing false amounts on behalf of Mr Saltmer.

'Schemes such as this undermine the integrity of the tax profession and give businesses an illegal and unfair advantage over those in the community who are doing the right thing,' Ms Hawkins said.

'It also has broader impacts on our community by reducing funds for essential services such as health, education, transport and infrastructure.'

This matter was prosecuted by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Cth) (CDPP) following a referral from the ATO.

You can anonymously report suspected tax crime or shadow economy activity by making a **tip-off online** or calling **1800 060 062**.

If you are concerned about the conduct of a tax practitioner, you can report them to the Tax Practitioners Board at <https://www.tpb.gov.au/make-complaint> [🔗](#).

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