



Café owner's bold brew in \$1 million GST fraud

A man has been sentenced to 6 years and 6 months in prison after he obtained over \$1 million in fraudulent GST refunds.

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A South Australian man has been sentenced to 6 years and 6 months in prison, with a non-parole period of 3 years and 8 months, after he obtained over \$1 million in fraudulent GST refunds.

Mr Shaun Both fled to Western Australia in 2019 to avoid facing court in South Australia on refund fraud charges. The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) tracked Mr Both to a roadhouse in the state's remote north where he was employed, and he was subsequently arrested by the Australian Federal Police (AFP).

Mr Both pleaded guilty to 9 counts of obtaining a financial advantage by deception contrary to section 134.2 and one count of knowingly dealing with money that is proceeds of crime contrary to section 400.4 of the Criminal Code (Cth).

Assistant Commissioner Jade Hawkins welcomed the court's decision.

'This matter proves it doesn't matter where you try to hide, the ATO will find you and make sure you are held accountable for your actions.'

Ms Hawkins noted that those who deliberately steal from the community will face consequences for their actions.

'This individual knew he wasn't entitled to those funds, but he claimed them anyway.'

'Not only did this offender gain an unfair advantage over other businesses, he stole money that is used for essential community services such as schools, hospitals and transport,' Ms Hawkins said.

We know most people do the right thing, but those who deliberately cheat the system will be held to account.'

Between 3 March 2014 and 11 January 2016, Mr Both submitted 9 quarterly business activity statements (BAS) as the sole owner of Metro Express Café.

As a result, he claimed \$1,001,004 in GST refunds that he knew he was not entitled to.

In February 2016, Mr Both used a portion of his fraudulent GST refunds to purchase a property in Adelaide's inner-city suburbs for \$530,000. However, Mr Both was forced into bankruptcy 10 months later and had his assets liquidated, including the property, to repay the debts he owed to the ATO.

The matter was prosecuted by the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions following a referral from the ATO.

For those who may be tempted to take part in these criminal activities, the ATO will ensure you are held accountable for your actions including prosecution and the pursuit of outstanding debts.

You can confidentially report suspected tax crime or fraud to us by making a **tip-off online** or calling **1800 060 062**.

QC 102861

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