



## Alleged QLD money laundering organisation dismantled, 4 charged

This is a joint media release between the AFP, QPS, ABF, ACIC, AUSTRAC and the ATO.

**Published** 9 June 2025

Four people allegedly involved in an elaborate Queensland-based money laundering scheme that smuggled cash around the country and washed millions of dollars of criminal proceeds have been charged following an 18-month, multi-agency investigation.

The AFP-led Criminal Assets Confiscation Taskforce (CACT) has also restrained assets across Queensland and NSW suspected of being the proceeds of crime, which have a combined value of about \$21 million and include 17 properties, bank accounts and vehicles.

More than 70 members from the Queensland Joint Organised Crime Taskforce (QJOCTF), comprised of the AFP, Queensland Police Service, Australian Border Force, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, AUSTRAC and Australian Taxation Office, executed 14 search warrants at homes and businesses across Brisbane and the Gold Coast on 5 and 6 June 2025.

AUSTRAC and the ATO also provided analytical expertise and support during the investigation, which was centred on Southeast Queensland but also monitored cash dead drops in multiple cities around Australia.

A Brisbane man, 32, from Heathwood, who was allegedly a major client of the money laundering operation and washed \$9.5 million in 15 months, was charged on Thursday (5 June) with money laundering and failing to provide the password to a mobile phone. He has been remanded in custody and is scheduled to face Brisbane Magistrates' Court today (9 June).

In December 2023, the QJOCTF began investigating suspicious financial transactions. The investigation linked the Heathwood man to a company that had received millions of dollars transferred by suspicious third-party transactions.

Investigators following the money trail allegedly identified the man was a customer of a sophisticated money laundering operation allegedly being run through the armoured transport unit of a security company that transferred \$190 million cash into cryptocurrency.

Investigations into the source of the \$190 million converted into cryptocurrency by the security company remain ongoing.

A Gold Coast man, 48, and woman, 35, who were the director and general manager respectively of the security business, were each charged on Friday (6 June) with a money laundering offence. The couple, from Maudsland, was granted watchhouse bail and is scheduled to face Southport Magistrates Court on 21 July 2025.

Another Brisbane man, 58, from West End, who allegedly funnelled laundered money through a business account to a separate business account controlled by the Heathwood man, was also charged on Friday with two money laundering offences. He was granted watchhouse bail and is scheduled to face Brisbane Magistrates Court on 1 August 2025.

The QJOCTF alleges the Gold Coast-based security company used a complex network of bank accounts, businesses, couriers and cryptocurrency accounts to launder millions of dollars of illicit funds over 18 months.

The security company, which transferred cash between businesses and banks, allegedly mixed cash from its legitimate business arm with illicit funds deposited by suspected criminals.

To further obfuscate the source of the funds from law enforcement, the security company allegedly channelled the money through a web of transactions including through a sales promotion company, a classic car dealership and cryptocurrency exchange services.

The organisation then paid out the funds to beneficiaries using cryptocurrency or those third-party companies.

The Heathwood man allegedly controlled the sales promotion company and received about \$9.5 million in cash and cryptocurrency originating from the security company over 15 months.

The QJOCTF will allege the Heathwood man attempted to distance himself from the money laundering scheme by setting his wife up as a 'straw director' of the promotions company, while he maintained effective control.

The QJOCTF alleges the West End man was the director of a classic car dealership that received about \$6.4 million from the security company and laundered it through his business over a 17-month period.

The director allegedly opened at least seven bank accounts with different banks to conceal the source of the money as he moved it around. The illicit money was then allegedly mixed with legitimate money from the car dealership before being transferred to the sales promotions business.

It is alleged the security company was also the front for the movement of millions of dollars of illicit cash from other states to Southeast Queensland for laundering.

The cash, which was allegedly generated by organised criminal ventures, was left at dead drop locations around the country and collected by a network of couriers who sent it as domestic cargo on flights to Queensland. It was then collected by the security company's couriers in Southeast Queensland.

During search warrants last week, investigators seized crypto wallets containing about \$170,000 in cryptocurrency, \$30,000 cash, encrypted devices, along with business records and documents related to the alleged money laundering scheme.

The Maudsland man, 48, the director of the security company, was charged with one count of dealing with the proceeds of general crime, worth \$10 million or more, contrary to section 400.2B(6) of the Criminal Code (Cth). The maximum penalty for this offence is 15 years' imprisonment.

His wife, 35, who was the general manager of the business, was charged with one count of dealing with the proceeds of general crime, worth \$10 million or more, contrary to section 400.2B(3) of the Criminal Code (Cth). The maximum penalty for this offence is imprisonment for life.

The Heathwood man, 32, allegedly linked to the sales promotion company, was charged with:

- one count of dealing with proceeds of crime, worth \$1 million or more, contrary to section 400.3(2B) of the Criminal Code (Cth). The maximum penalty for this offence is 12 years' imprisonment, and
- one count of failure to comply with a 3LA Order, contrary to section 3LA(5) of the Crimes Act (Cth). The maximum penalty for this offence is 10 years' imprisonment.

The West End man, 58, who was the director of the classic car company, was charged with:

- two counts of dealing with proceeds of crime, money or property worth \$1 million or more, contrary to section 400.3(2B) of the Criminal Code (Cth). The maximum penalty for this offence is 12 years' imprisonment
- one count of uttering a forged document, contrary to section 488(1) (b) of the Criminal Code (QLD). The maximum penalty for this offence is three years' imprisonment, and
- one count of dealing with identification information to commit or facilitate an indictable offence, contrary to section 408D of the Criminal Code (Qld). The maximum penalty for this offence is 5 years' imprisonment.

Investigations are ongoing, and further arrests have not been ruled out.

AFP Detective Superintendent Adrian Telfer said money laundering undermined Australia's national security, the economy and social security system.

'Many Australians are feeling the financial pinch but remain law-abiding and honest citizens,' Det Supt Telfer said.

'Criminals always choose greed over decency and will constantly find opportunities to increase their wealth at the expense of others.'

'We allege this organisation intentionally concealed and disguised the source, value and nature of their illicit money, and distanced themselves from the funds to try to avoid getting caught by authorities.'

'This plot was elaborate and calculated, and it demonstrates the lengths criminals will go to make money.'

'Money laundering investigations are incredibly challenging due to the complex web of deception used by criminals, and this crime cannot be tackled by one agency alone.'

'This result is a testament to the great work done by the investigators, forensic accountants in the QJOCTF, the CACT, and our Taskforce Avarus partners.'

Queensland Police Service Crime and Intelligence Command, Detective Acting Superintendent David Briese, from the Drug and Serious Crime Group, said money laundering was far from a victimless crime.

'Criminal networks use money laundering to legitimise their profits and exploit legitimate businesses, harming communities and economies. It fuels serious organised crime, enabling everything from drug trafficking and exploitation to fraud and violence,' Det a/Supt Briese said.

'This case demonstrates both the complexity of money laundering operations, and the extreme lengths criminals will go to conceal their illicit gains.'

'The result reflects the strength of our collaboration across law enforcement, intelligence, and regulatory bodies, and our shared commitment to protecting the public from the harms of serious and organised crime.'

ABF Acting Commander Troy Sokoloff praised the efforts of ABF officers working alongside partner agencies in the QJOCTF.

'Today's outcome sends a formidable message to those who seek to engage in criminal money laundering. This act is illegal and unacceptable, and all branches of law enforcement can and will work together to bring such crimes to justice,' a/Commander Sokoloff said.

'I would like to acknowledge the dedication of our highly trained investigator who was engaged as a co-case officer for the entirety of this investigation. He has worked tirelessly with his colleagues to achieve this outcome, drawing upon ABF digital intelligence sharing and observations which were critical to the success we see today.'

'This type of illegal activity is insidious – and the ABF will continue to work hand in hand with its partners to detect and deter such schemes.'

ATO Deputy Commissioner John Ford reinforced the ATO was assisting partner agencies in disrupting, investigating and penalising the perpetrators of organised crime.

'Serious and organised crime harms our community, economy, government and way of life, and robs the community of funding for essential services such as health and education,' Mr Ford said.

'This week's action is a strong reminder to those involved in money laundering – while you may think you can wash away the evidence, this is simply not the case. We will continue to work together with our partner agencies to disrupt these criminals and hold them to account.'

AUSTRAC National Coordinator, Law Enforcement, Markus Erikson said AUSTRAC intelligence was pivotal in putting a stop to these crimes.

'The intelligence AUSTRAC provided to law enforcement painted a vivid trail of criminal activity being undertaken by disparate individuals,' Mr Erikson said.

'I would like to recognise the businesses who report to AUSTRAC for their commitment to protecting the financial system from harm. Without their reporting, this disruption would not have been possible, and the offending may have continued undetected.'

'I would also like to acknowledge the incredible work of our partner agencies in this matter. Operations like this take significant resources, hard work, and personal sacrifice to accomplish.'

'This outcome is a testament to the dedication of everyone involved in Taskforce AVARUS as well as the Queensland Police Service and Australian Taxation Office.'

ACIC National Manager Boyd Doherty emphasised the critical role of the QJOCTF.

'The ACIC works closely with partners to disrupt the highest threat criminal networks. Serious and organised crime groups thrive off money made from criminal activities,' Mr Doherty said.

'We are committed to disrupting the operations of these groups, denying them the ability to profit and making Australia a hostile environment for them to operate in.'

The QJOCTF is a multi-agency team focused on targeting and dismantling transnational serious organised crime networks in Queensland.

Taskforce Avarus was established in 2022 to target the highest priority money laundering threats facing Australia. The Taskforce comprises

the AFP, AUSTRAC, ACIC and ABF who work in partnership to uncover methods criminals use to conceal their illegal funds.

The CACT – which brings together the resources and expertise of the AFP, ABF, Australian Taxation Office, ACIC and AUSTRAC – was permanently established in 2012 as a proactive and innovative approach to trace, restrain and ultimately confiscate criminal assets.

## Images

[Images available via Hightail](#) 

QC 105046

## Our commitment to you

We are committed to providing you with accurate, consistent and clear information to help you understand your rights and entitlements and meet your obligations.

If you follow our information and it turns out to be incorrect, or it is misleading and you make a mistake as a result, we will take that into account when determining what action, if any, we should take.

Some of the information on this website applies to a specific financial year. This is clearly marked. Make sure you have the information for the right year before making decisions based on that information.

If you feel that our information does not fully cover your circumstances, or you are unsure how it applies to you, contact us or seek professional advice.

## Copyright notice

© Australian Taxation Office for the Commonwealth of Australia

You are free to copy, adapt, modify, transmit and distribute this material as you wish (but not in any way that suggests the ATO or the Commonwealth endorses you or any of your services or products).