



# Correcting the record on Operation Protego

14 August 2023

In our Annual Report to June 2022 we reported a cost of \$1.2 billion at that time.

We became aware of an increase in referrals from banks in late 2021 which escalated in early 2022. We took immediate action.

There has been extensive ATO reporting of the impact of this fraud since Operation Protego was launched in April 2022 (Operation Protego publicly announced **May 2022**, first raids announced **June 2022**, further raids announced **July 2022**, crackdown on promoters **Feb 2023**, arrest activity **August 2023**).

As a result, we have prioritised and taken compliance action against more than 56,000 perpetrators.

In addition, working with Serious Financial Crime Taskforce and law enforcement agencies, more than 100 suspected perpetrators have been arrested, including members of outlaw motorcycle gangs, organised criminal organisations, and youth crime gangs – and more than 10 people have already been convicted for their involvement in this activity.

We continue to address GST fraud with the full force of the ATO. Since the reporting in our 2022 Annual Report, we have raised in the order of a further \$700 million in liabilities, which includes around \$300 million in penalties and interest.

As previously stated by Deputy Commissioner Will Day, we have stopped \$2.7 billion being paid to fraudsters. We continue to pursue those who have committed this fraud and collect debts which attract penalties and interest.

We also continue to monitor for any tax agents facilitating clients to participate in this fraud. We expect that any tax or BAS agent that becomes aware of a client that has participated in fraud to notify the ATO immediately.

This was an unprecedented threat proliferated via social media and is now contained.

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