



Final person sentenced over Operation Elbrus tax fraud

Man jailed for 4 years and 6 months for his role in a \$105 million tax fraud, under Operation Elbrus.

2 February 2024

This is a joint media release between the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Taxation Office as part of the Serious Financial Crime Taskforce.

A Sutherland man was jailed for 4 years and 6 months yesterday (Thursday, 1 February 2024) with a non-parole period of 2 years and 3 months by the Supreme Court of NSW for his role in a \$105 million tax fraud, becoming the final person to be sentenced under Operation Elbrus.

Operation Elbrus, also known as the Plutus Payroll fraud, was a joint AFP and Australian Taxation Office (ATO) investigation that became a key focus for the Serious Financial Taskforce in 2017. The man is the fifteenth person to have been sentenced.

The operation revealed that a group of people used payroll services companies to divert pay-as-you-go withholding tax and goods and services tax owed to the Australian Taxation Office.

Christopher Guilan, 36, was a long-term friend of one the main conspirators, operated a company which received funds from the conspiracy, and made and received payments that personally benefited his friend and himself.

He was found guilty of:

One count of dealing with proceeds of crime – money or property worth \$1,000,000 or more – contrary to section 400.3 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth); and

One count of dealing with proceeds of crime – money or property worth \$50,000 or more – contrary to section 400.5 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth).

This follows the sentencing of a Menai man, 36, and a Vaucluse man, 53, in August, who both received 15 years' imprisonment.

AFP Commander Kate Ferry said investigations into tax fraud were extremely complex, lengthy and required highly skilled detectives, forensic accountants and technical experts.

'The AFP is grateful and proud of our dedicated members who worked diligently to dismantle this deceptive and elaborate scheme – without your work, these convictions would not be possible,' Commander Ferry said.

'Tax cheats cannot evade law enforcement forever and will not be rewarded for their greedy actions.'

ATO-led Serious Financial Crime Taskforce (SFCT) Chief John Ford said this sentencing brings an end to the biggest tax fraud in Australia's history.

'It was a blatant attempt to rob the Australian community of money that could otherwise be invested in community services such as health and education,' said SFCT Chief John Ford.

'By working with partners across government agencies, the SFCT has an immense capability to share information and bring financial crime offenders to account which has been demonstrated with Operation Elbrus.'

'For those that think they can hide their illegal income, it's only a matter of time before you are caught.'

The matter was prosecuted by the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions.


For more information on the SFCT and to download the Serious Financial Crime Identikit, visit ato.gov.au/SFCT and visit ato.gov.au/Elbrus for the full story.

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