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ATO bribery accomplice sentenced to 2 years and 10 months' imprisonment

John Zeitoune has been sentenced to 2 years and 10 months imprisonment for aiding and abetting a bribe by Raymond Shlemon to former Australian Taxation Office (ATO) employee Wenfeng Wei.

Zeitoune had a close business and personal relationship with Shlemon and assisted in planning the bribe.

In May 2016, Wei commenced an ATO audit of Shlemon and his business Global World Group (GWG), which was subcontracted to Zeitoune's business, then called Asset Security. The audit prompted Zeitoune to plan the bribe with Shlemon due to their friendship and concerns about the audit's impact on his own business.

The bribe handover occurred on 19 August 2016 on the Granville railway station bridge. It involved \$100,000 in cash being handed over in a white plastic bag, while Zeitoune served as a lookout and made a recording of the bribe exchange. As a result of the bribe, Wei significantly reduced the taxation liabilities of Shlemon and GWG by millions of dollars and ensured no penalties were imposed.

In August 2024, Mr Zeitoune pleaded guilty to the offence of aiding and abetting a bribe of a Commonwealth public official contrary to sections 141.1(1) and 11.2(1) of the Criminal Code (Cth).

Zeitoune's sentence follows the imprisonment of [Wei for 5 years](#) in March 2024 and [Shlemon for 3 years and 14 days](#) in August 2024. Wei was sentenced for the offence of receiving a bribe, unauthorised access to restricted data and unrelated offences of abuse of public office and two other unauthorised access to restricted data offences. Shlemon was sentenced for providing a bribe to Wei and an offence of providing a corrupting benefit to Wei.

The sentence stems from Operation Barker, a joint investigation commenced by the former Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI), which transitioned to the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC), and the ATO, and was prosecuted by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Cth) (CDPP).

Operation Barker was supported by the ATO, Australian Federal Police, New South Wales Police, the Department of Home Affairs, the Australian Securities and Investment Commission and the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre.

This is the seventh conviction obtained in matters continued by the NACC since 1 July 2023.