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## APS employee charged following joint-agency investigation into alleged serious corrupt conduct

*This is a joint media release between the National Anti-Corruption Commission, Australian Federal Police and the Australian Taxation Office.*

*Editor's note: Vision of the operational activity is available via [Hightail](#).*

An Australian Taxation Office (ATO) staff member has been charged with corruption-related and other offences as part of a joint National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC), Australian Federal Police (AFP) and ATO investigation.

The Gold Coast man, 32, is due to appear in Southport Magistrates Court on September 21 after being charged overnight with two counts of unlawful disclosure of information by a Commonwealth officer contrary to section 122.4 (1) of the *Criminal Code* (Cth). The maximum penalty for this offence is 2 years' imprisonment.

Investigators executed a search warrant at a Surfers Paradise home yesterday, where they seized multiple electronic devices, including mobile phones, which will undergo further specialist forensic examination.

It is alleged the employee disclosed information obtained in their capacity as a public official to organised crime associates.

During the search, police identified alleged child abuse material on some devices, and the man was also charged with two counts of possessing child abuse material, contrary to section 474.22A of the *Criminal Code* (Cth). He was also charged with 15 counts of using a carriage service for child abuse material. The maximum penalty for both offences is 15 years' imprisonment.

The APS4-level staff member has been suspended from duty without remuneration.

The charges stem from Operation Esk-Jerboa, a joint investigation between the NACC, AFP and the ATO.

Acting National Anti-Corruption Commissioner Kylie Kilgour said the investigation demonstrates the NACC will take strong action if Commonwealth public officials misuse official information.

'In this investigation, the corrupt conduct we are alleging has occurred is an abuse of office and misuse of information by a public official,' Acting Commissioner Kilgour said.

'These are 2 of the 4 types of corrupt conduct under the NACC Act.'

'It is also a criminal offence.'

'While the charges related to child abuse material are not corrupt conduct under the NACC Act, the material was uncovered because of this investigation.'

'I would like to thank the AFP and ATO for working with us to quickly resolve this investigation.'

AFP Deputy Commissioner Hilda Sirec said the investigation of potential illegal disclosures was crucial in maintaining the integrity of Australia's national security and community safety efforts.

'We have long been aware of members and associates of organised crime groups trying to corrupt people with access to sensitive law enforcement information, so it's concerning when we identify alleged instances of this classified information being made available to them,' Deputy Commissioner Sirec said.

'The AFP will continue to work proactively with our Commonwealth and state and territory partners to defend the integrity of our public institutions.'

'Importantly, we will work to ensure organised crime groups are not in a position to undermine the safety of our community by having channels to access information that helps them avoid law enforcement attention.'

'Further, the discovery of child abuse material during a corruption investigation demonstrates why investigators carefully examine all evidence, and we are unapologetic in our methods or approach.'

'Our investigators will methodically assess the material before them to ensure all alleged criminal conduct is thoroughly investigated, and all appropriate charges are brought before the court.'

ATO Deputy Commissioner Nicholas Shizas PSM said this demonstrates the ATO's zero-tolerance for corruption.

'The conduct alleged is despicable and has no place in the ATO. It is a disservice to the over 20,000 dedicated and honest ATO employees, who carry out their duties with professionalism and integrity.'

'Australians can be assured that the ATO remains unwavering in its commitment to identifying misconduct and ensuring there are serious consequences for those who betray the trust of the community.'

'The ATO has highly sophisticated and effective mechanisms in place to detect fraud and corruption and will continue to work with law enforcement and other government agencies to identify corruption or criminality and bring those individuals before the courts,' he said.

Since its commencement the NACC has secured 12 convictions. Five of its cases are before the courts.

Information about suspected corrupt conduct in the Commonwealth public sector can be reported to the NACC online or by calling 1300 489 844. Any suspected criminal behaviour can be reported to the AFP online or via Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.