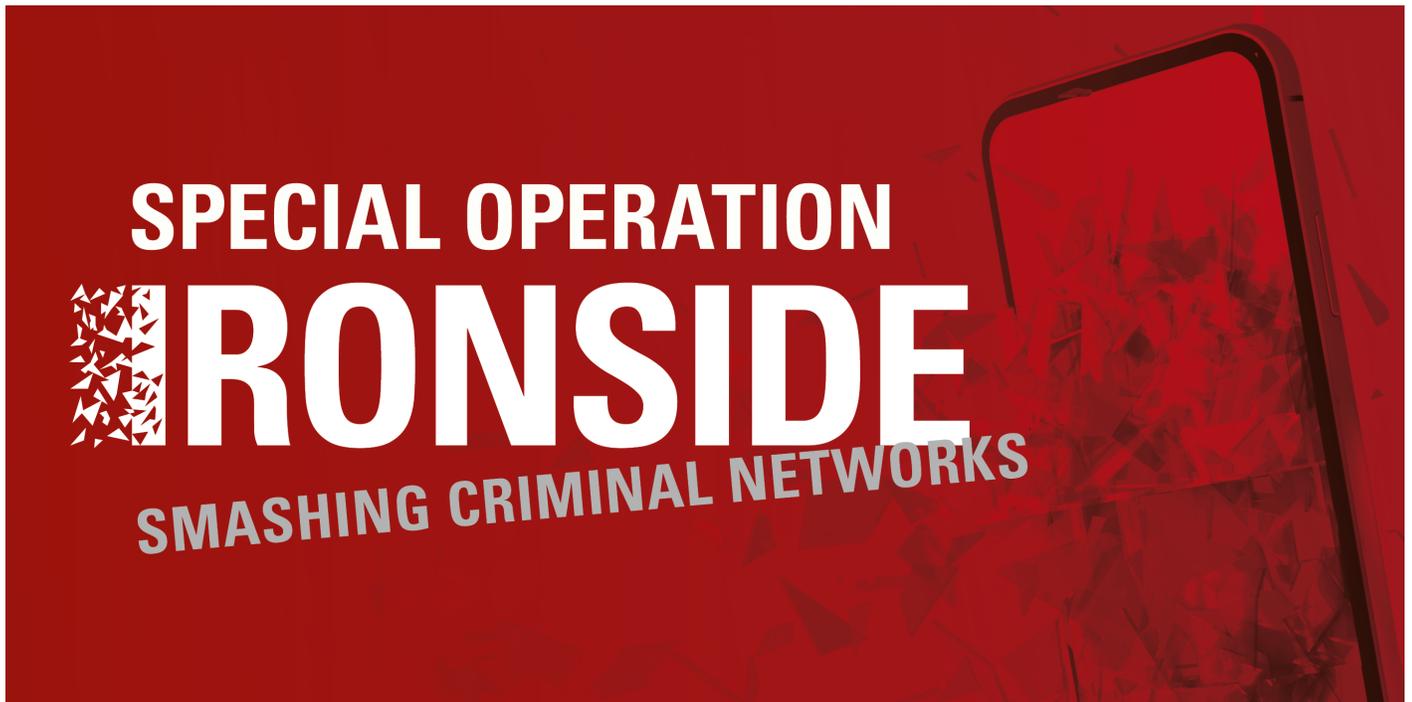




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First Ironside multi-million cash forfeiture



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Editor's note: [images of the seized cash available here](#)
<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/HH3NFjhJH7>

A jailed member of a criminal syndicate has lost \$6 million of ill-gotten gains to taxpayers after the Australian Federal Police won its first assets confiscation case under Operation Ironside.

The man - the first to be convicted in Western Australia under Operation Ironside - did not challenge the forfeiture orders made this month by the Supreme Court of WA.

The \$6 million in cash will be redistributed from the Confiscated Assets Account by the Minister for Home Affairs Karen Andrews to support crime prevention, law enforcement and related community initiatives.

The conviction and cash forfeiture sends a clear and determined message by the AFP: offenders will be identified and brought before the courts.

Separately, asset confiscation applications will be lodged with courts to restrain and forfeit proceeds of crime.

To date, Operation Ironside has charged 297 people for alleged crimes including drug trafficking, money laundering and weapons' offences.

The AFP-led Criminal Assets Confiscation Taskforce has so far obtained Proceeds of Crime Act restraining orders for more than \$31 million as a direct result of Operation Ironside.

The orders capture:

- Real Estate (residential) \$15,657,500
- Cash \$12,192,541
- Motor vehicles \$1,066,500
- Bank accounts \$1,025,291
- Financial instruments, including trusts \$579,638
- Real estate (commercial) \$478,000
- Cryptocurrency \$244,553
- Other valuables (including luxury watches) \$139,513

The Australian Financial Security Authority manages the custody of restrained assets and at the end of successful legal proceedings, liquidates them. The funds are deposited into the Commonwealth's Confiscated Assets Account for redistribution by the Minister for Home Affairs.

Operation Ironside-West-Maidos was an investigation into a Perth-based organised crime syndicate allegedly involved in the importation and distribution of methamphetamine and cannabis.

The discovery of the cash came as a result of intelligence gained from the ANoM platform, which was secretly run by the FBI. The AFP developed the technical ability to read encrypted messages in near real time.

A search warrant executed in Perth on 26 November 2020 found about \$6 million in cash and cash-counting equipment.

A man present at the Girrawheen home at the time of the search warrant was arrested and charged with a money laundering offence.

The 30-year-old pleaded guilty to dealing in the proceeds of crime and was sentenced in the WA District Court on 27 July 2021 to five years' imprisonment.

Before his sentencing, the man signed a consent order for the restraint and forfeiture of the seized cash, and on 8 September 2021 the Supreme Court of Western Australia issued orders restraining and forfeiting the cash.

AFP National Manager Criminal Assets Confiscation Stefan Jerga said the dual criminal conviction and asset confiscation strategy undertaken by the AFP and State partners, delivers maximum impact and ensures there is no silver lining for offenders when they are released from jail.

"Our strategy ensures that when offenders have served their sentence they do not come home to enjoy their criminal wealth and a property portfolio, cars, boats and jewellery all paid for by the proceeds of crime," Mr Jerga said.

"We know some criminals build jail time into the cost of doing business. But what they really dislike is coming out of prison without the benefit of their ill-gotten gains."

The AFP and its Commonwealth and State partners continue to identify and seize criminal assets as part of Operation Ironside investigations, and initiate proceeds of crime actions.

The CACT combines the resources and expertise of the AFP, Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, Australian Taxation Office, AUSTRAC and Australian Border Force.

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