

# Media Release



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## Crime syndicate dismantled

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) has dismantled an alleged crime syndicate that attempted to defraud the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS) of \$150 million.

The AFP will allege that four men arrested today - who are due to appear in Sydney's Central Local Court at 3pm this afternoon on fraud charges - were key participants in committing the fraud. The arrests today follow the charging of six other people with conspiracy to money launder (that carries a maximum penalty of 25 years in jail) in August 2005.

The four appearing in court today - a 54-year-old former stevedore from Botany, a 33-year-old former clerk from Katoomba, a 44-year-old telephone technician from Maroubra and a 52-year-old hotel employee from Earlwood - were arrested by AFP agents in their homes and later charged with one count each of Section 134.2 of the Criminal Code Act 1995.

Further charges are expected to be laid against another leading member of the syndicate for his role in the fraud.

The arrests are the culmination of a 20 month AFP investigation involving financial institutions and law enforcement agencies from around the world.

The alleged fraud took place on Christmas Eve in 2003, when \$150 million was unlawfully transferred from the CSS to bank accounts in Greece, Hong Kong and Switzerland. All the money, except \$3 million still subject to a restraining order in Hong Kong, has been recovered.

The AFP has been investigating the matter with the assistance of other federal and state law enforcement agencies, regulatory agencies and the business and financial sectors. The AFP, through its overseas network, has also worked closely with law enforcement authorities in Hong Kong, China, Switzerland and Greece.

AFP National Manager Economic and Special Operations Peter Drennan said this alleged crime syndicate has now been dismantled.

"The AFP, together with law enforcement agencies across Australia and around the world, has dismantled this syndicate that has allegedly committed this significant fraud against the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme," Mr Drennan said.

"The AFP is committed to fighting these types of crimes and continues to work closely with Australian and international law enforcement agencies to combat serious crime," he said.

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