

Media Release

The Hon Anthony Carbines MP

Minister for Police
Minister for Crime Prevention
Minister for Racing



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RECORD SEIZURES HAUL HITS CRIMINALS WHERE IT HURTS

Victoria Police has seized cash and property from criminals worth more than \$37.3 million in 12 months, a record haul that highlights the effectiveness of seizures in combating organized, profit-motivated crime.

Victoria's Asset Confiscation Scheme has operated since 1998 with the Victoria Police Criminal Proceeds Squad collaborating across government to remove assets and unexplained wealth from criminals, particularly those linked to organised crime syndicates.

By working with Victoria Police, the Office of Public Prosecutions and Asset Confiscation Operations at the Department of Justice and Community Safety, the Asset Confiscation Scheme helps to dismantle organised crime networks, reduce criminal profitability and provide an avenue for victim compensation.

In 2021-22 the scheme seized real estate, luxury cars, designer goods, cash and bank accounts. This included \$27.7 million in cash; real estate worth \$6.4 million; funds in bank accounts worth \$830,000 and confiscated vehicles worth \$770,000.

The confiscations show the impact of the ACS in disrupting criminal activity, ensuring that crime does not pay.

As part of an investigation by the Victoria Police Echo Taskforce, detectives intercepted a truck transporting boxes of coffee pods to South Melbourne where \$5.2 million in cash was discovered behind a false wall in the rear of the truck.

The target was charged with knowingly dealing with the proceeds of crime and various drug offences, and the seized cash was forfeited as unexplained wealth in October last year.

The Andrews Labor Government introduced the *Major Crime and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Act 2022* in September last year, enhancing the Asset Confiscation Scheme's powers to address organised crime's growing use of cryptocurrencies.

Amendments to the Act passed by the Parliament also strengthen investigation and enforcement powers and make it easier for victims of crime to be paid compensation from confiscated property.

Tip-offs are a vital component when it comes to identifying criminal activity – much of the success of the Asset Confiscation Scheme and the record level of confiscations is credited to calls to Crime Stoppers (1800 333 000) from members of the public.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Police Anthony Carbines

"Tip-offs and calls to Crime Stoppers play a significant role in dismantling crime syndicates, which helps police to reduce the impact of crime in our community and better supports victims of crime."

"These record seizures have hit criminal gangs where it hurts – the hip pocket – which reduces the incentive for people to engage in illegal and dangerous activities."

Media contact: Shaun Phillips 0407 553 763 | shaun.phillips@minstaff.vic.gov.au