



## Nine people charged over alleged fraud in construction industry

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Nine people have been arrested following an investigation into alleged fraud and forgery in the construction industry.

In June 2018, the Organised Crime Squad's Money Laundering Unit commenced a joint investigation with the NSW Crime Commission under Strike Force Petrie following reports of the alleged issuance of fraudulent trade qualification certificates and money laundering.

Following inquiries, strike force investigators arrested a 49-year-old man outside a home in Canberra Street, Sylvania, about 5am on Tuesday 4 December 2018. Officers executed a search warrant at the property and seized several items relevant to the investigation, including \$58,000, business documents, numb-chucks, and electronic devices. The man was taken to Sutherland Police Station where he was charged with 11 counts of publish false/misleading material, 11 counts of make false document, five counts of possess prohibited weapon, five counts of possess false document, knowingly deal in proceeds of crime, and participate in criminal group. He was refused bail to appear at Sutherland Local Court on Wednesday 5 December 2018, where he was formally refused bail to appear at Central Local Court on 15 January 2019.

Simultaneously, a 55-year-old man and a 52-year-old woman were arrested in Melbourne, Victoria, and extradited to NSW, where they were both charged with 33 counts of make false document to influence exercise of public duty, five counts of publish false misleading material to obtain advantage, participate in criminal group, and knowingly participate in criminal group assist crime. Both the man and woman were refused bail and appeared at Central Local Court on Thursday 6 December 2018 where they were both formally refused bail to appear before the same court today (Wednesday 19 December 2018).

Police will allege in court that the two men and woman were providing forged documents for a fee for people to obtain qualifications without having to complete compulsory theory and practical assessments.

A home in Brunswick West, Victoria, and a business Cooper Plains, Queensland, was also searched, where strike force detectives seized several items, including forged certificates, computers, financial documents and electronic storage devices.

Following further inquiries, officers conducted search warrants at three properties in Panania, Bankstown and Rossmore on Friday 7 December 2018. Investigators seized several items, including forged certificates and mobile phones.

A 20-year-old Rossmore man was arrested and taken to Liverpool Police Station, where he was charged with two counts of possess false document to influence exercise public duty. He was granted conditional bail and is due to appear before Liverpool Local Court on Wednesday 16 January 2019.

A 34-year-old Bankstown man was arrested and taken to Bankstown Police Station, where he was charged with three counts of possess false document to influence exercise public duty. He was granted conditional bail and is due to appear before Bankstown Local Court on Wednesday 16 January 2019.

Following further investigation, detectives executed search warrants at homes in Roselands, Chester Hill, and Guildford on Wednesday 12 December 2018 and Thursday 13 December 2018. A 54-year-old Chester Hill man was arrested and taken to Bankstown Police Station, where he was charged with three counts of possess false document. He was granted conditional bail and is due to appear at Bankstown Local Court on Wednesday 16 January 2019.

A 44-year-old Panania man was arrested at Day Street Police Station and charged with possess false document to influence exercise public duty. He was granted conditional bail and is due to appear before Downing Centre Local Court on Wednesday 9 January 2019.

A 31-year-old Roselands man was arrested and taken to Campsie Police Station where he was charged with three counts of possess false document. He was granted conditional bail and is due to appear before Burwood Local Court on Thursday 31 January 2019.

A 28-year-old Guildford man was arrested and taken to Fairfield Police Station, where he was charged with two counts of possess false documents. He was granted conditional bail and is due to appear at Fairfield Local Court on Wednesday 9 January 2019.

Organised Crime Squad Commander, Detective Superintendent Anthony Cooke, praised the work of investigators.

“Strike Force Petrie detectives have been meticulous and thorough in their investigation, which has resulted in putting nine people before the courts,” Detective Supt Cooke said.

“The Organised Crimes Squad’s Money Laundering Unit will continue to disrupt the criminal activities of people who pose a risk to the community.”

Investigations under Strike Force Petrie continue.

Anyone with information that may assist Strike Force Petrie investigators is urged to contact Crime Stoppers: 1800 333 000 or <https://nsw.crimestoppers.com.au>. Information is treated in strict confidence. The public is reminded not to report crime via NSW Police social media pages.