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EXCLUSIVE

David Collard's empire investigated by



Founder of Australian company, Scale Facilitation, David Collard in the One World Trade Center office.
Picture: Abby Holden

Exclusive: Australia's financial crime taskforce is looking at whether a high-profile start-up empire dishonestly obtained \$76m from the tax office by filing almost 100 allegedly fraudulent business activity statements.



Business

respond to questions, while the Australian Federal Police declined to
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It can also be revealed that Mr Fatone's home was raided by the AFP in June
as part of a series of co-ordinated searches that centred on Scale's Geelong
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offices.

Australia faces a worrying energy gap and as a nation we need to throw everything at the
solution, top bosses have told The Weekend Australian's 2024 CEO Survey.
In an email to staff after the raids, Mr Collard said: "I believe the investigation
will be dropped once we are given the opportunity to present the complete
picture and explain the good intent and how the Australian operations fit into
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David Collard exploring Geelong by chopper. Picture: Supplied

The multi-agency taskforce is investigating whether Mr Collard and his well as their. Gao along Chris Scott were involved in alleged crime through 9 activity statements filed between last year and January 10 this year.



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'Rock in peace'

Mr Scott did not respond to questions.

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Dutton
were filed in an attempt to allegedly fraudulently claim \$52m.



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Sources with knowledge of the taskforce's investigation said anyone found to have been involved could be charged with handling money the business proceeds of a
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David Collard with Richard Marles. Picture: Supplied

Scale shot to prominence last year when its New York headquarters were opened by Richard Marles and Peter Dutton. The Deputy Prime Minister described Mr Collard as a “force of nature” and the Opposition Leader called him “Superman”.

Corporate records show Mr Collard and Mr Fatone – his childhood friend and a former fish and chip shop owner – became directors of dozens of entities set up over the past two years for research and development, as Scale told clients it could secure government rulings allowing it to claim lucrative tax breaks.

Multiple law enforcement agencies across Australia and New York – where Mr Collard has been based – are also investigating how staff have been left unpaid for months.



David Collard's apartment overlooking Central Park: Picture: Supplied



Roxie Bennett with David Collard. Picture: Supplied

In the latest twist, Scale is facing a new lawsuit over its alleged failure to pay \$US200,000 (\$A314,198) for a sublease on the 88th floor of the One World Trade Center building.

Staff have continued to head for the exits in recent weeks, including Geelong radio personality Roxie Bennett, who was Scale's head of strategic relationships.

According to LinkedIn, she took a job last month at Lake Advisory, a consulting firm which has launched legal action against Mr Collard's related SaniteX firm over unpaid bills.

The Victorian Supreme Court will hear their application to wind up the company later this month.

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