Inside Fraud At National Bank of Australia - He Approved $200 Million in Phantom Auto Loan Scheme

Former NAB insider allegedly approved millions in fraudulent business loans for syndicate that bought luxury vehicles that never existed

A National Australia Bank manager spent more than a decade at the bank before becoming what police call the "gatekeeper" for one of the country's largest fraud operations.

Timotius "Donny" Sungkar, 36, was arrested Thursday at his home in where police seized approximately $60,000 in luxury jewelry and watches. He now faces 19 criminal charges for his alleged role in a sophisticated scheme that investigators say has defrauded Australian banks of more than $200 million, possibly reaching a quarter billion dollars.

The Phantom Auto Loan Scheme

The fraud started simple. Criminals used stolen personal information to apply for car loans through automotive financing companies across Sydney.

But the luxury vehicles they were financing never existed. Police call them "ghost cars."

The scheme expanded far beyond fake car loans. Investigators discovered the syndicate had moved into large-scale personal loans, business loans and home mortgages that targeted several of the nation's major banks.

"Initially the syndicate that we were looking at for vehicle financing for cars that didn't exist," Detective Superintendent Gordon Arbinja told reporters Friday. "Since that time police have discovered that the syndicate has expanded to mortgage, personal and business loans that we think now amounts to well over $200 million."

Arbinja, who commands the Financial Crimes Squad, called it one of the top three corporate corruption cases he has seen in his career.

A Position of Trust

Sungkar joined NAB in 2008 and worked there for years before leaving for 18 months to work as a mortgage broker. He returned to the bank in 2018 as a business bank manager and was later promoted to senior bank manager.

During at least three years, police say, he used his position to assist the syndicate in applying for approximately $10 million in business loans.

"This person, as far as I'm concerned, is the gatekeeper of funds," Arbinja said. "Without this person, the fraud cannot be facilitated. So he's in a position of trust. He violated that trust."

More Arrests Coming In Auto Fraud

Police launched Strike Force Myddleton in January 2024 after targeting a criminal syndicate focused on Sydney automotive financing companies. Since then, 16 people have been arrested and charged in connection with the operation.

But investigators say the arrests are far from over. They are now targeting what Arbinja calls "professional facilitators" who allegedly helped the syndicate operate.

That includes shady mortgage brokers, real estate agents, solicitors and potentially other bankers who may have looked the other way or actively participated in the fraud.

"There will be several more arrests that are similar to the one that happened yesterday," Arbinja said.