

Operation Protego — AI-assisted detection of GST refund fraud (Australia)

AI in the Public Sector · Good practice · Australia

Quality score: 60/100

Evidence strength: Observational / pre–post

Summary

From 2022, Australia's ATO deployed ML to detect a large-scale GST refund fraud scheme: 57,000+ alleged offenders identified, A\$2.7 billion in additional suspect refunds prevented, A\$123 million recovered, and 126 convictions — with ANAO identifying significant governance gaps.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Evidence of impact / measured public value	3/3
Transparency, fairness & accountability	1/3
Transferability / demonstrated replication	1/3
Scalability beyond pilot	3/3
Governance, capability & sustainability	1/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

[C-NAPSE web research](#) — accessed 2026-06-20

[Australian Taxation Office \(ATO\)](#) — accessed 2026-06-20

[Commonwealth Fraud Prevention Centre — Operation Protego case study](#) — accessed 2026-06-20

[ANAO — Governance of Artificial Intelligence at the ATO \(Report 2024–25 No. 26\)](#) — accessed 2026-06-20

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