

Properties under court orders in drug probe

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A CONSTRUCTION site at Kerang's industrial estate and a chicken farm at Beauchamp, north-west of Kerang, have both been named in legal proceedings probing an alleged international drug cartel.

Land title documents show that both properties are subject to court orders preventing their sale or transfer.

The Kerang property, at 44-46 Tate Drive, where work on a new building ceased several months ago, is subject to a restraining order issued by the County Court of Victoria under Victoria's Confiscation Act.

An interim order was first made over the property, which is registered in the name of Seasons Kerang, on July 21.

That order was replaced by the court with a full restraining order on September 1.

The order stated: "No person shall dispose of or otherwise deal with the ... property or any interest in such property."

It stated the property would potentially be forfeited to the state if the person in question was declared to be a serious drug offender.

Also subject to the restraining order, "in the matter of Yining Tao", are properties in Balwyn and Upton Hill (near Seymour), bank accounts held with the Commonwealth, Westpac and St George banks, a Mercedes-Benz car, shares in the company Spring Ranch and several sums of money seized by police totalling \$68,850.

Yining Tao was last week charged in Melbourne Magistrates' Court with trafficking a large commercial quantity of methylamphetamine between March 2, 2018, and June 30 this year, and during the same period dealing with the proceeds of crime, including a house, vehicles and money.

In the case of the Beauchamp chicken and egg farm, interim restraining orders made on July 21 and August 11 were also replaced on September 1.

That order, "in the matter of Hanyin Zhang", extends to the Balwyn property and another at Truganina, as well as the Lake Lookout Road farm at Beauchamp, which is registered in the name of Seasons Ranch.

Also restrained under this order are bank accounts with St George, Westpac and National Australia banks, including one in the name of Seasons Ranch Organic.

Ms Zhang was last week charged with dealing in the proceeds of crime.

Neither Mr Tao nor Ms Zhang has been asked to plead.

Under the restraining order, the Seasons Ranch Organic bank account is permitted to be used "for the sole purpose of meeting (the company's) reasonable business expenses".

Also subject to the order are a Porsche car and two Toyota LandCruisers, the same sums of confiscated cash and shares in various companies, including Seasons Ranch, Seasons Ranch Organic and Seasons Kerang.