

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU
(Criminal Jurisdiction)

Criminal
Case No. 25/1862 SC/CRML

PUBLIC PROSECUTOR

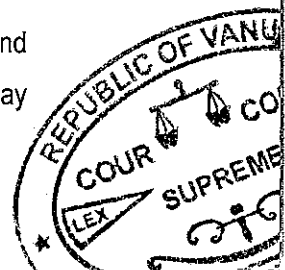
v

JOHN TARI
Defendant

Date of Plea: 19 August 2025
Date of Sentence: 15 September 2025
Before: Justice E P Goldsbrough
In Attendance: Kalwotong M for PPO
Vira H for Defendant

SENTENCE

1. John Tari, you have pleaded guilty to two offences. Those two offences are that of possession of cannabis, at first 17.49 grams on 22 March 2025 and then 15.11 grams on 11 April 2025. In each case, you were found in possession of the drugs whilst driving your commuter omnibus.
2. Parliament regards the offences related to illegal drugs as most serious. It has prescribed maximum penalties of twenty years imprisonment and VT 100 million in fines. This is an indication of how serious the legislature regards these offences.
3. There is little, if anything, that makes your offences more serious than others in this category, nor anything that makes them less serious. If anything, the fact that you were driving around in April after being caught in March suggests that you did not at first take this matter with any great seriousness. You might now realise just how foolish an attitude that was, given what has taken place since. You, at 30 years of age, are old enough to know better. The time you have spent in custody because of this offending may have helped you to see more clearly the danger of these offences and their consequences.
4. Your pre-sentence report is favourable, demonstrating that you have some good qualities and have prospects of rehabilitation. Your wife remains supportive. It is suggested that you may



benefit in the future from additional support for the Probation Service and its drug rehabilitation programmes.

5. In *Wetul v Public Prosecutor* [2013] VUCA 26 it was said, of an offence of cultivation of six cannabis plants netting 293.37 grams of cannabis, "This case is with the lower end of the scale of the first category. There is no need for an imprisonment sentence. Therefore, a starting point is not appropriate in this case." Here there is no suggestion of cultivation and an even smaller amount of cannabis in his possession. A custodial sentence is not called for, hence there is no need to consider a starting point.
6. For these two offences, you are sentenced to a period of supervision of twelve months, which is designed to assist in your rehabilitation. In addition, as punishment, you are required to perform 80 hours of unpaid community work within the next twelve months. After you satisfactorily complete that work and your period of supervision, that will be the end of this sentence. If you do not complete the work within 12 months or follow the lawful instructions of your supervisor, you may be brought back here to be dealt with differently.
7. You have a right to appeal this decision, but if you wish to exercise that right, you must do so within the next 14 days. An order is made for the confiscation and destruction of the cannabis confiscated from you by the police.

DATED at Port Vila this 15th day of September 2025

BY THE COURT

E P Goldsbrogh

Justice E. P. Goldsbrogh

