

STATE OF TASMANIA v GLEN BAMFORD
COMMENTS ON PASSING SENTENCE

BRETT J
11 JUNE 2025

Mr Bamford, you have pleaded guilty to, the summary offence of cultivating cannabis and the indictable offence of possessing a prohibited firearm without the appropriate licence. In addition, you have pleaded guilty to a number of summary offences in particular one count of possessing cannabis, two counts of possessing stolen firearms, three counts of possessing unregistered firearms, six counts of possessing firearm parts without the appropriate licence, one count of possessing a firearm without being the holder of the relevant licence, two counts of possessing ammunition without a licence and one count of requesting a person to send ammunition by mail.

The charges all arise out of a search of your property on 17 October 2022. Police located the firearms and firearm parts in your house, together with 372 cannabis plants located in various locations around the property. It is alleged that only 12 of those plants was of a reasonable size, although another 176 small plants were being cultivated by way of a hydroponic system. You told police that all of the cannabis was intended for your own use or the use of others who live in the house, or stay there from time to time. This is consistent with the plea that you have now entered and has been accepted by the prosecution. I accept that the original charge to which you pleaded not guilty was not able to be made out. I note that when police seized and searched your phone they did not locate any messages relating to the sale of cannabis and what you have pleaded guilty to seems to be the appropriate charge.

The firearms offences relate to three separate firearms, as well as a variety of firearms parts and ammunition. One of the firearms, the subject of the indictable charge is prohibited because it was found with a home-made silencer attached. The prosecution has confirmed that none of the firearms were in operational condition. There was no other real explanation for your possession of these items.

You are 58 years of age. You have both prior and subsequent convictions for drugs and firearms matters. The most serious of these is a conviction in 2013 for trafficking in cannabis. You were also dealt with at that time for cultivating and possessing cannabis. The circumstances seem to be very similar to those in this case. You received a wholly suspended sentence of six months imprisonment. There is no doubt that you are a persistent offender when it comes to cannabis. You explain your use of this drug on the basis that it helps relieve symptoms of ADHD, depression and anxiety, and you have been using it for that purpose for most of your life. I am told that since your arrest on these charges you have now been prescribed medicinal cannabis, although I note that the home detention assessment report notes that you are unable to produce a current prescription in that regard. I note also your counsel's submission today that you claim to have been abstinent from cannabis for a period of time.

Growing cannabis is illegal. Possessing and using it without having the appropriate prescription is illegal and you are a persistent offender. I am also concerned about the firearms offences. Notwithstanding their inoperable condition, the unlawful possession of firearms and associated items such as firearms parts and ammunition is a real concern. Unlawful firearms pose a grave threat to the community. In my view, the serious nature of these offences and your persistence in offending against the laws relating to both cannabis and firearms indicates that a sentence of personal deterrence is called for.

I would normally impose a sentence of actual imprisonment. However, given your plea of guilty to the relevant charges and your claim to be prepared to relinquish your unlawful use of cannabis, I think a suspended sentence conditional upon performing community service will be adequate to meet the sentencing aims of this case. Accordingly, I intend to make such an order.

The orders I make are as follows:

- a You are convicted of the crimes and the offences to which you have pleaded guilty;
- b You are sentenced to a term of six months imprisonment. The whole of the sentence will be suspended for a period of 24 months on the following conditions:
 - a that you are not to commit another offence punishable by imprisonment during that period.
 - b that you will perform community service for a period of 182 hours. The Court notes that the sections referred to in s 24 (5A) of the *Sentencing Act* apply to this condition. For the purpose of those provisions:
 - i you must report to a probation officer at the office of community corrections in Launceston within three clear days of today and
 - ii the operational period of the order is 24 months.
- c I make the forfeiture orders sought by the prosecution.