

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

**Criminal Case No. 25 / 2012**

**PUBLIC PROSECUTOR**

**V**

**ANDREW MELTERAS  
PETER NARAOV  
EDWIN ANDREW**

**Hearing:** 3 April 2012  
**Before:** Justice Robert Spear  
**Appearances:** Simcha Blessing for the Public Prosecutor  
Eric Molbaleh for the accused

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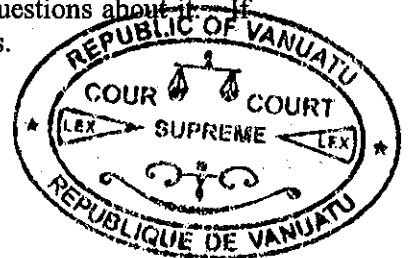
**CONVICTION and SENTENCE**

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1. The 3 accused were arraigned on an indictment charging them jointly with possession of cannabis. They have each pleaded guilty to that charge and they are convicted accordingly.
2. The summary of facts presented by the State is to the effect that the accused were seen packaging cannabis at a nakamal at 7 Star. The police attended that nakamal and found the accused packaging and rolling marijuana at that time in the store room. The total amount of cannabis involved was 156.87 grams which is certainly a significant amount. It would also appear that there was a modest commercial element to this offending given the circumstances surrounding the apprehension. Be that as it may, they are all first offenders and they could clearly benefit from a second chance.

***TO THE DEFENDANTS***

3. I propose to impose a sentence on you today that keeps you in the community. However, you need to understand that you were quite close today to being considered for a prison sentence. The only reason that I am not imposing a term of imprisonment, whether suspended or not, is because you are first offenders and the hope is that you will benefit from the opportunity that I am giving you today and stay away from cannabis. If you are apprehended again, you will go to prison with no questions about it. If that is a risk that you want to run then the choice is yours.



4. Cannabis is not a harmless drug and that is the international wisdom and experience. It is illegal in this country and if you involve yourself with it then you have to accept that you are a criminal. The only way to deter criminals in the end is usually to send them to prison. That is exactly what is ahead of you if you continue your involvement in cannabis. So you get this one chance today but it comes with something of a price.
5. You will each carry out 250 hours community work. You are also placed under supervision for a period 12 months with the special conditions:
  - 1) You are not to possess or consume cannabis;
  - 2) You will undertake the Niufala Rod Program as directed by your probation officer.
6. You are to report to the Court office at 3:00 pm today for service of the community work and supervision orders. If you don't know the way, ask Mr Molbaleh.
7. You have 14 days to appeal this sentence if you do not accept it.

BY THE COURT

