

Pensioner fined for 'medicinal' cannabis

By DAVID COHEN

A North Fremantle pensioner told police 20 cannabis plants he was growing hydroponically were for his own medicinal relief.

Vern Charles Papworth, 57, was fined \$2350 in Perth Magistrates Court on Tuesday for cultivating cannabis, and for possessing the drug and a bong made from an energy-drink bottle.

Magistrate Andrew Maughan heard police searched Mr Papworth's then-home in Jurien Bay in January last year and found a "sophisticated hydroponic set-up" that included 15 large plants in pots in a tent.

There were a further five cannabis plants in pots on the balcony.

Police also found about 10g of

loose cannabis, cannabis seeds, and the bong in the home.

Mr Papworth's barrister, Sarah Oliver, said the search warrant was sparked after Mr Papworth fell out with his partner.

"She dobbed him in," Ms Oliver said.

She said Mr Papworth had suffered from complex regional pain syndrome for 30 years.

"He wanted to avoid using prescription medication," Ms Oliver said.

"He can't work because of his condition, so the cost of purchasing the cannabis became excessive."

A report from Mr Papworth's GP said he was likely to benefit from cannabis.

Mr Maughan told Mr Papworth he had pleaded guilty at the earliest reasonable opportunity, so he was entitled to a discount on any sentence.

But there needed to be some deterrence in Mr Papworth's punishment.

He fined Mr Papworth \$1750 on the cultivation charge; \$350 for possessing the drug; and \$250 for possessing the bong.

Mr Papworth was also ordered to pay \$170.50 in court costs.

After he was charged Mr Papworth started an online fundraiser last November, calling for \$20,000 to help with his legal costs.

"All donations would go to fight the courts and to trial medical cannabis and bring about a law that people with chronic pain syndrome and other medical conditions be allowed to grow their own cannabis for pain control," Mr Papworth said.

The fundraiser did not receive any donations.



From one Christ Church old boy to another ... School services manager Conrad Scott delivering a meal package to fellow old boy Ian Grose in Claremont.

Old boys to the rescue

By DAVID COHEN

Hotel meals are on the menu for some of Christ Church Grammar School's oldest old boys.

Twenty-nine of the Claremont school's most elderly alumni will receive a month's worth of frozen meals as part of the Old Boys' Association's food delivery program.

The initiative, which started last week, is a collaboration between the OBA, the Subiaco Hotel, and the school, and aims to maintain connection with some of the more vulnerable old boys during the COVID-19 crisis.

"The Old Boys' Association wanted to take immediate

action to assist our most vulnerable senior members and reduce their exposure to COVID-19 during this period of social distancing," alumni coordinator Deborah Hill said.

"Old boys who received the meal delivery have expressed immense gratitude and appreciation."

Eligible members will be delivered five frozen meals every week during April, with the Subiaco Hotel subsidising the meal preparation.

Hotel owners Lawson Douglas and Dave Allan, members of Christ Church's graduating class of 2000, bought the iconic Rokeby Road venue last year. They said they were excited

about the opportunity to be involved.

"We believe wholeheartedly in the mission of the program," Mr Douglas said.

"The OBA has always been supportive of us and we welcomed the opportunity to give back to the Christ Church community".

Despite many of their scheduled events being cancelled because of new social distancing regulations, the OBA remains determined to find ways to support the wider Christ Church alumni community.

It plans to set up an online business network hub to make connections in the alumni community.



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