

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

**Criminal**  
**Case No. 21/1532 SC/CRML**

**PUBLIC PROSECUTOR**

**v**

**BOB TAHO**

*Date:* 11 August 2021  
*Before:* Justice V.M. Trief  
*Counsel:* Public Prosecutor – Ms J. Tete  
Defendant – Mrs K. Karu

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**SENTENCE**

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A. Introduction

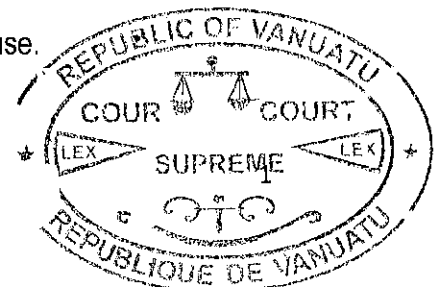
1. Mr Taho pleaded guilty to one charge of cultivation of cannabis. He is convicted on his plea and the admitted facts.

B. Facts

2. On 7 January 2021, the Police found at Mr Taho's residence at Chicko farm area at Teouma on Efate a 1.6 metres high cannabis plant hidden amongst island cabbage plants. Mr Taho immediately confirmed that the plant was his. He was arrested and taken to the Police station. Testing showed the cannabis weighed 60 grams. Mr Taho stated when interviewed that he knew he was not allowed to grow cannabis but he did so as he smokes it sometimes when he drinks kava.

C. End Sentence

3. The maximum penalty for this offence is VT100 million fine or 20 years imprisonment or both.
4. It is mitigating that Mr Taho cultivated the cannabis for personal use.



5. The offending is aggravated by Mr Taho's deliberate concealment of the plant as he knew it is illegal to grow cannabis.
6. The offending is within the lower end of the scale of the first category in *Wetul v Public Prosecutor* [2013] VUCA 26.
7. Mr Taho is 28 years old and has 3 children living with him and under his care. He is unemployed. He makes a living through gardening and farming. Mr Taho has no previous convictions. He cooperated with the Police and pleaded guilty at the first opportunity.
8. Given that Mr Taho has already served 15 days in custody (an effective sentence of one month imprisonment), he is sentenced to complete 50 hours of community work and ordered to complete 6 months of supervision, including attending any drug awareness and rehabilitation programs required of him by the Department of Correctional Services.
9. The cannabis is to be destroyed.
10. Mr Taho has 14 days to appeal this sentence.

**DATED at Port Vila this 11<sup>th</sup> day of August 2021  
BY THE COURT**

  
Justice Viran Molisa Trief

