

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

Criminal  
Case No. 25/187 SC/CRML

PUBLIC PROSECUTOR

v

JUSTINE TABANG

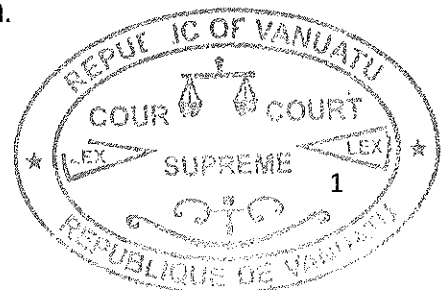
Date: 24 February 2025  
Before: Justice V.M. Trief  
Counsel: Public Prosecutor – Ms J. Tete  
Defendant – Mr J.S. Garae

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**SENTENCE**

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1. The Defendant Justine Tabang pleaded guilty and accepted the summary of facts in relation to one charge of possession of cannabis contrary to subs. 2(62) of the *Dangerous Drugs Act* [CAP. 12] and one charge of cultivation of cannabis contrary to s. 4 of the same Act. He is convicted on his own pleas and the admitted facts.
2. The Police received a complaint that Mr Tabang was planting cannabis at the side of the fence next to Rowanie School at Luganville. The Police conducted a search and found three plants that they suspected to be cannabis in a pot on the roof of the house. Testing confirmed it to be 480 grams of cannabis (Charge 2).
3. The Police also found at Mr Tabang's house a wooden box containing dried leaf materials which they also suspected to be cannabis. Testing confirmed the material in the wooden box to be 100 grams of cannabis (Charge 1).
4. The maximum penalty for the offences of cultivation and possession of cannabis is 20 years imprisonment and/or a fine of up to VT100 million.



5. There are no aggravating or mitigating factors to this offending.
6. The global sentence start point I adopt is 6 months imprisonment.
7. Mr Tabang is 17 years old, has no prior convictions, cooperated with the Police and pleaded guilty at the first available opportunity. He is a Class 4 leaver. He lives with his parents and other close relatives at Chapuis area in Luganville.
8. One third (2 months) is deducted from the sentence start point for the early guilty pleas.
9. The end sentences imposed concurrently are 4 months imprisonment for cultivation of cannabis (Charge 2) and 2 months imprisonment for possession of cannabis (Charge 1).
10. Mr Tabang has been in custody since 27 December 2024 to the present, an effective imprisonment sentence of 4 months. Accordingly, he has served the time required in respect of both charges therefore is to be immediately released from custody.
11. In addition, Mr Tabang is to complete 70 hours of community work within 12 months (Charges 1 and 2).
12. Mr Tabang has good prospects of rehabilitation. The Court trusts that he has learnt from this experience and will take care in the future to be an upstanding, law-abiding citizen.
13. Mr Tabang has 14 days to appeal the sentence.
14. The drugs are to be destroyed.

**DATED at Luganville this 24<sup>th</sup> day of February 2025  
BY THE COURT**

*VM Trief*  
Justice Viran Molisa Trief

