Tears fall as dealer cops jail sentence

CRAIG DUNLOP

A former used car dealer was unemployed and smoking 500 cones a week when he was caught running a highly organised drug dealing operation.

Nick D’Amico, 45, held back tears in the dock after being sentenced to 14 months in prison, suspended after three months, for possessing nearly a kilogram of cannabis, $14,560 in cash and several vials of testosterone.

D’Amico, from Drummoyne, was supported in court by members of his family, including his fiance.

Prosecutor Imogen Taylor made a late submission to Justice Jenny Blokland claiming the extent of D’Amico’s drug use was not made apparent during his guilty plea in late August.

But Ms Blokland rejected the submission, agreeing with defence lawyer Peter Maley’s argument that his drug counsellor’s report stated he was smoking “upwards of 50 cones a day”, and said the extra 150 cones would make little difference to his decision.

“She had used cannabis on and off since the age of 13,” Ms Blokland noted.

D’Amico pleaded guilty to a string of five drug charges, including possession of a trafficable quantity of cannabis.

In sentencing, Ms Blokland noted D’Amico had suffered serious withdrawal symptoms after going cold turkey from drugs following his April 2020 arrest, and that he is the sole breadwinner for his family.

Since then, he has been self-medicating with alcohol and sleeping pills in order to sleep, his drug counsellor told the court in a written submission.

D’Amico, originally from New South Wales, only had a minor “and largely irrelevant” criminal history.

Ms Blokland noted “his former employer has spoken very highly of him in terms of reliability.”

She said “(But) cannabis is a damaging drug, particularly to vulnerable parts of the community.”

Ms Blokland said a jail sentence, rather than home detention, was justified. She also commented that D’Amico appeared to have been running a “highly organised” operation.

In addition to his cannabis charges, Ms Blokland fixed D’Amico $400, plus a victims of crime levy, for possessing several vials of testosterone.

Weather staff praised

FEDERAL Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment Bob Baldwin yesterday visited Darwin to tour the local office of the Bureau of Meteorology.

Mr Baldwin, a keen fisherman, highlighted the importance of the bureau’s marine forecasting.

“They are important tools for everyone using the ocean, our own backyard waters, bays and harbours, as they help with planning activities safely on the water,” he said. “They also play a vital role in supporting search and rescue operations.”

Mr Baldwin visited the bureau office with local MP Natasha Griggs, who praised the work of the bureau.

“Our local bureau office does a fantastic job helping our marine-related industries, such as shipping, port operators, commercial fishing and recreational ocean-goers, make the safest decisions on the water,” she said.

“The bureau will also have a new supercomputer operational next year that will significantly increase its current supercomputing power.”

POLICE are interested in speaking to a man approached by a 14-year-old girl for help after she was allegedly approached and grabbed by an unknown man in a Northern Suburbs park.

The girl was walking through a park on Dalwood Cres, Malak when she was approached by the man aged in his 30s about 6pm Tuesday.

Sergeant Leonard Turner said the man allegedly grabbed the girl by the arm and spoke to her.

“The girl did exactly the right thing and has told the man to leave her alone before running from the scene and reporting it to police,” he said.

Sgt Turner said the man was described as being of Aboriginal appearance, about 170cm tall, thin build aged in his 30s with short dark hair and a short beard. He was wearing black knee length cargo shorts, a red and orange basketball singlet with the number 6 or 9 and orange sunglasses.

If you can help ring police on 13 444 or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

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Games duo to run Mile

TWO Olympians will line up for the Mitchell Street Mile.

Australian 5000m record holder Ryan Gregson and Olympian Collins Birmingham have been confirmed for the September 20 race.

The two runners recently competed in the IAAF world championships, Sports Minister Gary Higgins said yesterday.

“These athletes are currently two of Australia’s best male runners and the fact they will be travelling to Darwin is a fantastic coup for the event and evidence the Mitchell Street Mile is becoming a drawcard for top athletes around Australia in only its second year,” he said.

The signing of the duo comes after Olympian Craig Mottram won last year’s race.

“We have been speaking with some of Australia’s best athletes and we will be announced a credible and compelling names very soon, including some top female athletes for the women’s elite section,” Athletics NT general manager John Bowden said.

Mauboy voices fear for the kids

SINGER Jessica Mauboy is finding her political voice.

Stepping out as an ambassador for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation at the Sydney Opera House yesterday, the chart-topping pop star from Darwin said she was concerned budget cuts to health and education programs would come at a price.

“I don’t feel right,” she said.

“I am sure there are other concerns but, at the end of the day, this is about the future and about kids that need help and we have the arms and legs and the voice to be able to do that.”

“I am really emotional about it and I get upset thinking these schools that don’t have anything are being cut again, it is really worrying.”

But Mauboy, 26, who first rose to fame on Australian Idol, remains cautious and said she doesn’t claim to speak for all.

“On behalf of my community, I only speak for myself,” she said. “If there’s something I’m connected to, of course I will say something. It is only natural.”

Indigenous Literacy Foundation ambassador Jessica Mauboy at the Sydney Opera House yesterday.

Picture: GREGG PORTEOUS.

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