

**Best criminal lawyer in Melbourne for Cultivation of cannabis, drug charges and theft of electricity charges. Community work granted.**

<http://www.hepburnadvocate.com.au/story/4322133/no-jail-for-growhouse-operator/>

# THE ADVOCATE

**28 November 2016**

## **Second Rokewood grow house accused faces Ballarat Magistrates' Court**

The second Vietnamese man arrested over a Rokewood grow house has avoided jail.

Phuong Chau, 45, of St Albans appeared before the Ballarat Magistrates' Court on Monday for sentencing, after his original plea hearing was adjourned in August.

Chau pleaded guilty to cultivating a narcotic plant, trafficking cannabis, theft of electricity and possessing ice.

In August the court heard a sophisticated hydroponic system with 88 cannabis plants of varying maturity levels were located in three rooms of the Ferrars Street house.

An electrical bypass system, which used 340 kilowatts of power per day despite only 15 kilowatts being paid for, was also found.

Chau was arrested in a car outside the property and was found with 0.5g of ice.

His plea hearing was originally adjourned so a neuropsychological assessment could be attained, but on Monday Chau's lawyer, Leonard Hartnett, said the report would not be relied on.

He told the court the incident had been 'a big slip up' for his client who otherwise has been able to live in and contribute to society.

He urged the magistrate to sentence Chau to a similar disposition as co-accused Luigi Selmanaj, 21, who was placed on a 24-month community corrections order with orders to complete 200 hours of community work, undergo treatment for drug use and complete offender behaviour programs.

In August Selmanaj's lawyer told the court his client accepted full responsibility for his criminality.

He said Selmanaj was ashamed of his actions, with a week in custody acting as a deterrent from doing anything similar in the future.

Selmanaj, who pleaded guilty to one count each of cultivating a narcotic plant, trafficking cannabis and theft of electricity, was also ordered to repay \$5000 compensation for the stolen electricity.

Chau's lawyer on Monday told the court Chau, who had no criminal priors, understood he faced prison if he does not abide by the CCO.

On Monday Chau was convicted and sentenced to a 12-month CCO with conditions to complete 200 hours of unpaid community work, and complete treatment for drug use and any mental health issues, and offender behaviour programs.

He was also fined \$1000 for possessing ice.

Ms Toose warned him the sentencing options were limited if he breached the order.

# The Border Mail

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