

CT Sept 9, 2011

# Father of four stashed cannabis in freezer, wardrobe and fish tank

By Natasha Rudra

A father-of-four who was caught with 162g of cannabis in his home is also accused of causing his wife's death in a 2009 car crash allegedly involving cannabis.

Troy Anthony Wilson, 39, pleaded guilty to one count of drug possession in the ACT Magistrates Court yesterday.

Police officers searched Wilson's home on January 7 and found a total of 162.1g of cannabis in various spots around the house, including the freezer, a bedroom wardrobe, and on top of a fish tank.

Defence lawyer James Maher said his client was a former butcher who began using cannabis for pain relief after a cutting knife pierced his bowel in a serious workplace accident several years ago.

The court heard that Wilson also took

cannabis to relieve post-traumatic stress disorder when his wife and partner of 18 years was killed in a car crash on Cotter Road in 2009.

Wilson faces a charge of negligent driving causing death over the accident and a decision has yet to be handed down.

Mr Maher said Wilson worked as a cleaner and was the sole parent for his four children.

He had stopped using cannabis "cold turkey" and felt bad that his children had been present during the police raid.

"He realises cannabis is not the solution to his problems," Mr Maher said.

But the court heard Wilson also had two previous drug-related convictions.

Magistrate Grant Lalor convicted Wilson and fined him \$1000.

He warned Wilson if he continued to use the drug he could expect a jail term in future.

## Missing points

The *Canberra Times* has, in its editorial of August 31 (page 18), signalled a significant and frankly surprising shift in its traditionally supportive attitude to the public provision of needle and syringe exchange facilities. The *CT* states "that it is anomalous that an activity which . . . is illegal in the wider community should be condoned in a correctional facility."

The provision of a needle and syringe exchange at the Alexander Maconochie Centre would in no way condone the use of illegal drugs at the prison just as the provision of needle and syringe exchange points across the whole of the ACT and indeed Australia over the last two decades have in no way condoned the use of illegal drugs in the broader com-

munity. It is a health prevention measure.

The *CT* expressed lack of support for such programs is disappointing. Does the *CT* believe that the needle supply programs operating throughout Canberra should be terminated?

Or are the *CT*'s reservations about needle and syringe programs and the associated health benefits to be derived from them restricted to prisons and prisoners?

Jon Stanhope, Bruce