

Demanded smokes then he smashed down door

A PLEA for cigarettes turned into a violent attack on an elderly man's home, a court has heard, after a 29-year-old man smashed down the victim's door.

Jonathan Ball of Nurse Fox Close, Oberon, pleaded guilty in Bathurst Local Court, on May 10, to three counts of intimidation and one count of damaging property.

According to court documents, Ball went to a home on Jenolan Street in Oberon and demanded the victim sell him cigarettes but the person refused, so Ball threatened to slash his tyres.

The victim had been sitting in his lounge room 15 minutes later when he heard a loud bang and Ball yelling out. When he went to the hallway to see what was happening, he saw Ball standing at the front door with panels behind him.

Ball stepped back from the door and started calling out to the elderly victim, who was nearing 70 at the time, and asking him to go outside and fight.

"I don't have to prove anything to you," the victim said to a shirtless Ball.

Police went to Ball's home on Nurse Fox Close about 1.20pm where he was arrested and taken to Bathurst Police Station.

Once he had been taken from the Oberon home, a relative went to meet with police and allow them into the property to check for any more damage.

The woman noticed her computer was turned on with Ball still logged into his Facebook account, where he had earlier threatened another person and said "I kicked [victim's] door in two hours ago keep playing".

Ball was spoken to by police at the station around 2.50pm where he admitted to making the threats on social media and blamed other people for the entire situation, court documents said.

Legal Aid solicitor Keith Kuan, who represented Ball, explained to the court his client had no previous criminal history, which entitled him to a lesser sentence.

After taking Mr Kuan's submission into account, Magistrate D Pearce placed Ball on a community correction order for two years and made orders to protect the initial victim.

"If you breach this Apprehended Violence Order, you may be sent to jail," Mr Pearce warned.



Bron Powell (centre) and OzFish members run regular cleanups along the Macquarie River in Dubbo. Picture supplied

Litter story: It starts in our rivers

Allison Hore

WHAT do a beer bottle from the 1970s, a squeaky rubber chicken and a folding camping chair have in common?

They're all items professor Steve Smith from Southern Cross University and Bron Powell from OzFish dug out from the bank of the Macquarie River as they set up for a first-of-its kind litter study.

"This is a really interesting site because we're getting a huge mix of old and new litter, and this is a demonstration that litter can be in the environment for a very long time," he told the *Daily Liberal*.

"We've got a rubber chook which is obviously recent. But a lot of the old beer bottles have their date stamped

on the bottom, we've got one here from 1967 - that's when this was manufactured.

"We've got another piece of glass we found which is even older, bottle experts may be able to tell us, but it's a really old bottle which probably dates back to when Dubbo was established."

With the help of a team of eager citizen scientists, professor Smith and Ms Powell set up five sites along the Macquarie River in Dubbo this week for the first ever Key Littered Items Study for inland rivers.

"At the moment we're trying to establish a standardised method for assessing litter in rivers. We already have very good methods for beaches and estuaries on the coast but there's no

consistent standard method for looking at litter in rivers," professor Smith explained.

"The work that Bron's been doing here with OzFish has identified the need for that and so Dubbo's the spot where we're going to try to kick it off."

The Key Littered Items Study contributes data to the state government so that it can see if litter reduction targets are being met. It is also used to identify which single-use plastics should be banned next and informs the NSW EPA's state litter prevention strategy.

Currently, the data has been collected from coastal areas only. With the help of volunteer citizen scientists in Dubbo, this will soon change.

"It's probably not been

done so far because, in Australia, a majority of the population live on the coast ... but it's important to look at litter everywhere because we know there's a massive increase globally," professor Smith said.

"One thing that's become very evident from international research is that the majority of litter entering the ocean comes from rivers. Even within the local setting litter can have an amazing impact - plastic bags, for example, can smother animals."

Ms Powell said she and the Dubbo River Repair Bus team were keen to get professor Smith to Dubbo because local recreational fisherman and the community "really care" about the river.

"The more we can understand what's going on - what types of litter there are and whether it's increasing or decreasing - then we get a better picture of how to tackle that problem and try to stop it at its source," she said.

To prepare the sites for the research - which will be ongoing for many years - Ms Powell and professor Smith measured 30-metre lengths on the banks of the Macquarie River and cleared out all the existing rubbish to create a baseline.

Then, through OzFish, volunteer citizen scientists will return to the site every three months to collect and sort through any litter they find.

Professor Smith hopes the Dubbo sites will be the first of many in inland NSW.

Independent inquiry to learn from fish deaths

STATE water minister Rose Jackson has asked for an independent review of the unprecedented deaths of millions of fish at Menindee by the office of the NSW chief scientist and engineer (OCSE).

Ms Jackson said the deaths sent shockwaves around the world and it was essential to better understand the cause and explore strategies to prevent a recurrence.

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thoroughly investigating this matter," Ms Jackson said.

"In this review, the NSW chief scientist and engineer will consider the likely cause of the fish deaths event, its effects, the overall response and then make recommendations on what needs to be

done to stop this happening again.

"We anticipate that the review will be completed and released by August 31.

"The findings and recommendations will drive the NSW government's strategic response to what is undeni-

ably an environmental event of massive proportions."

Millions of fish, including golden perch and cod, were killed in the lower Darling-Baaka River near Menindee due to hypoxic blackwater, a naturally occurring phenomenon that causes extremely low dissolved oxygen levels.

The NSW government and local agencies continue to monitor the quality of Menindee's water supply to make sure that it remains safe to drink.

Environment minister

Penny Sharpe said OCSE had established a strong reputation for providing independent reports that deliver science-based recommendations that have gone on to shape government policy.

NSW chief scientist and engineer professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte said OCSE would be conducting a broad-ranging inquiry.

"There is no doubt the extraordinary number of fish deaths has had a far-reaching effect on Western NSW and beyond," professor Durrant-Whyte said.