

Former prison worker Sarah Constable granted bail over trafficking allegations

A prison employee charged with commercial drug trafficking after being allegedly busted with carload of ice has been granted bail, as her lawyer argued the prosecution couldn't prove the most serious charge.

Alexander Blain

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Barwon Prison

A corrections staffer has been granted bail in a “lineball call” after being walked off the job for allegedly smuggling drugs into Barwon prison.

Sarah Constable appeared in the Geelong Magistrates Court on Wednesday, where she was granted bail by magistrate Carolyn Howe.

Ms Constable was charged with trafficking a commercial quantity of drugs in June, after a search of her car allegedly revealed more than 100g of ice.

Ms Howe found exceptional circumstances were met, noting the prosecution conceded there were issues in dispute with the most serious charge and the potential delay in the case reaching trial was unknown.

The prosecution had argued that even if there were exceptional circumstances, Ms Constable posed an unacceptable risk of interfering with witnesses and tainting the ongoing investigation into her supplier – who has not been identified.

Ms Howe found Ms Constable's parents, who had given evidence as part of the application, given an undertaking to report any bail breaches and offered a \$100,000 surety, were "genuine" and "extremely credible".

The court heard the possibility of Ms Constable using an encrypted app could be mitigated by bail conditions.

Ms Constable's lawyer, George Balot, had argued his client a "marked person" in custody due to her profession and spent 23 hours a day locked in her cell, which compounded mental health issues.

He argued family hardship was another factor, with Ms Constable the primary carer of two young children.

Ms Constable had "enormous family supports" and could reside at a stable address "not known to suppliers in the drug trade".

Much of Mr Balot's submission went towards the ability of the prosecution to prove the commercial quantity charge, which he asserted was "unlikely to be proven" on the current evidence.

Ms Constable's alleged role during the hearing was described as "courier" and "mule", with the prosecution having to prove she had intended to traffick a commercial quantity.

The court heard the threshold for such a commercial amount was 250g "mixed" or 50g pure, with further analysis of the alleged drugs set to take months and a potential trial remaining up to two years away.

Office of Public Prosecutions solicitor Jaidyn Traverna noted the monetary value of drugs were "significantly inflated" in a prison context and argued a jail term was "inevitable".

He also highlighted Ms Constable's alleged supplier remained unknown and the investigation was ongoing.

“Given there does appear to be some relationship between the accused and this person ... it does appear to be an unacceptable risk of an investigation being interfered with,” Mr Traverna said.

Ms Constable will reappear in court in September.