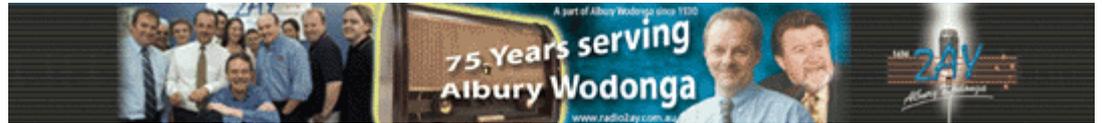


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LOCAL

Hoax calls cost \$7000

Brethren Church tie to bomb threat

MORE than \$7000 was spent on additional security last year when a Lavington man made bomb threats involving Albury Court and on one occasion claimed there would be a suicide bomber inside the building.

Bomb threats were made about the court and a house in Albury by Bruce Warren Suggate. Suggate, 39, of Mitta Grove, yesterday in Albury Court pleaded guilty to charges of using a carriage service to menace, harass or offend and two counts of using a carriage service to threaten serious harm.

Magistrate Tony Murray will take into account eight other charges relating to similar offences put on a schedule when he sentences Suggate on April 3 after ordering a pre-sentence report on him.

Mr Murray was told in tendered police facts that Suggate was a close friend of a man on trial in the District Court for sex offences involving young girls.

The circumstances of the alleged offences were known to Suggate through his association with the Brethren Church.

He went to a public phone in Lavington about 8.15am on October 24, rang the police station, mentioned the District Court case and said: "There will be a suicide bomber in court also."

Suggate used the same phone about 1.10pm to tell police a bomb would go off at 9pm at a residence where the alleged sexual assault victims lived.

Another threat about a bomb going off at Albury Court was made from a phone in Union Rd on October 25 and the following day a phone in Wodonga was used for a similar threat.

Suggate used a phone box at Thurgoona on October 28 to make bomb threats about two houses in Albury.

He contacted the fire brigade on November 3 about 7.30am claiming there was smoke coming from the roof of a residence and a fire unit was sent to check.

A phone box at Centrepoint arcade was used on November 5 for a threat by Suggate.

He used a phone box near a Lavington caravan park on November 7 for another bomb threat, but was under police surveillance at the time and seen making the call before being followed to his work in Fallon St.

Further threats were made on November 11 and 15.

The threats led to the court being evacuated and users being scanned by metal detectors.

It was an additional cost to the Sheriff's Department of \$7321.16 with compensation of \$800 being sought by the police department and \$250 by the fire service.

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