

ANU student guilty of harassment

By MICHAEL BACHELARD

An ANU student found guilty of breaching a restraining order by harassing a female student consistently was remanded in custody pending a psychiatric assessment and sentencing.

The ACT Magistrates Court heard last week that Alexander Marcel Andrei Sebastian Bayliss, 22, of O'Connor had harassed and threatened Michelle Piercey continually over the telephone, even after he had been found guilty the previous of other breaches of an interim restraining order.

He had broken bail conditions, set by Magistrate Warren Nicholl on September 4, not to contact Piercey.

Bayliss denied all the charges.

Ms Piercey told the courts on Thursday that she met Bayliss at the beginning of the university year when he had asked her to join the Scrabble Society. A dispute over a seat in a lecture theatre had followed. She described several incidents when he had harassed and followed her. One involved his circling her on a bicycle and threatening to kill her. Other harassment involved his spitting on her computer terminal and confronting her in person.

She had obtained the interim restraining order in July. After this, she said he had telephoned her in her room at college, and come to her door at 3:30 one morning.

She said that in August she had begun to get 12 to 15 nuisance calls a day. She identified a "high pitched and effeminate" voice in some calls as being Bayliss's. On August 21 she said he had telephoned in her room said, "You're soon dead, sweetheart", and "Get ready, sweetheart, because I'm coming for you". This had led to his conviction earlier this month for breaching a restraining order.

Ms Piercey said that three days after this conviction she received several calls from Bayliss in the evening, including one in which he said, "I love you , sweetheart".

She had said "Alex", and he had said "Bitch, bitch, just leave me alone", and hung up. At 2:30am another had come in which he had said, "We can finally be together in a little while, sweetheart".

She had said "Alex" , and he had said, "Shut up, bitch, right now I'm coming for you right now", and hung up. She had contacted the police and he had been arrested.

Bayliss told the court that "puerile propaganda" had been written about time and the Scrabble club he had been trying to form, in a newsletter of the ANU debating society early in the year. Only after he had threatened to sue the debaters for this had the allegations of harassment begun. He told the court that Ms Piercey was associated with the debating society.

He denied making any calls, and denied being "obsessed "with Ms Piercey.

Bayliss's counsel, Michael Helman, suggested to Ms Piercey that she had fabricated the allegations because of her "hostility to Alex". She denied this.

The prosecutor, Ken Archer, said, said the case “smacks of a distorted mind going about a premeditated campaign of harassment.”

Chief Magistrate Ron Cahill remanded Bayliss in custody until September 24 for sentencing.