

Firebug sentenced to prison

By ADAM LANGENBERG

A MAN who waited to watch fire crews extinguish a grass fire he had lit will spend at least six months in prison.

Christopher Luke Finn, 25, had pleaded guilty to one count of unlawfully setting fire to vegetation and one count of unlawfully setting fire to property.

Finn set fire to a small grassed area near Somerset's Cam River Bridge in the state's North-West on October 4, 2015, after having a disagreement with someone in a nearby street.

In sentencing Finn at Hobart's Supreme Court on Friday, Justice Stephen Estcourt said Finn had walked to the other side of the river, where he watched fire crews extinguish the fire.

Justice Estcourt said Finn committed the count of unlawfully setting fire to property when he acted as a lookout after his companion set a recliner chair on fire in Upper Burnie on August 6, 2014.

He said Finn and his friend had a dispute with the owner of the chair, Craig Donahue, about cigarettes before the man set fire to it.

The fire spread to a fence that bordered the property, causing about \$1700 worth of damage.

Justice Estcourt said Finn had a woeful record of prior convictions, having twice been sentenced to jail for unlawfully setting fire to property. He said a psychological assessment showed Finn had a mild to moderate intellectual disability.

He handed Finn two cumulative sentences – nine months imprisonment with a 4½ month non-parole period for setting fire to property, and three months imprisonment with a 1½ month non-parole period for setting fire to vegetation. Both were backdated to October 4, 2015.