

**STATE OF TASMANIA v CHRISTINE JOY RADFORD**  
**COMMENTS ON PASSING SENTENCE**

**25 FEBRUARY 2021**  
**MARSHALL AJ**

Christine Joy Radford has pleaded guilty to an offence of trafficking in a controlled substance, namely methylamphetamine, contrary to s 12(1) of the *Misuse of Drugs Act 2001*.

On 20 June 2016, Ms Radford travelled from Launceston to Melbourne by air and returned by air the same day. While in Melbourne she posted to an address in Chigwell, two packages containing methylamphetamine. The value of the drugs was approximately \$20,000 to \$60,000, depending on how they were sold. Ms Radford had travelled to Melbourne to source the drugs as a courier on behalf of another person who paid her to travel to Melbourne. She did so to raise money to support her own drug habit.

On 21 June 2016, Border Force at Melbourne Airport intercepted an international package from Singapore. It was addressed to Ms Radford at an address in Berriedale. It was seized by Australian Federal Police and transferred to police in Hobart. It was found to contain 77 Ice pipes.

On 23 June, police executed a search warrant at the Berriedale address and found an international post package addressed to Ms Radford. At the time Ms Radford was living with her then partner, who used her to attempt to obtain the Ice pipe. Police also sourced messages to and from Ms Radford on a Samsung device, indicating that she was involved in the sale of methylamphetamine.

Ms Radford is 40 years of age. She was 36 years old at the time of the offending. She has a significant number of prior offences involving drug use, but no prior offences involving a major drug-related matter of this kind. The offending, although described in the indictment as occurring between 2 January 2015 and 24 August 2016, essentially involved the two incidents of offending referred to above.

Ms Radford has had a very difficult life. That is not an excuse for her offending, but it helps to explain it and put it in context. She was born in Burnie, the youngest of three children to profoundly deaf parents. At the age of 7 her family moved to Wynyard. About that time her mother left the family home, taking her sister and leaving her brother and herself with her father, to whom she was close. The separation from her mother had a traumatic effect on her. She commenced offending at the age of 10, mainly engaging in trespassing, stealing and burglary, and later, driving offences. At the age of 12 to 13, Ms Radford was an inmate at a youth detention facility. There she was subject to sexual abuse by those who were charged with her welfare. Subsequently, in 2013, she received \$14,000 compensation from the State for that abuse. Ms Radford was in a de facto relationship by the time she was 16. At that age she became pregnant. She was in a 12 year relationship with the father of that child, and three more children from that union. She experienced severe domestic violence during that relationship at the hands of her partner.

At the age of 26, in 2007 she commenced to be prosecuted for, and found guilty of, drug use and possession offences. In September 2014 her house in Devonport – rented premises, but furnished by her with chattels obtained from the payment in 2013 made to her by the State – was burnt to the ground by a known criminal as the result of her giving certain information to the police. The fire occurred in the early hours of one morning. It was very fortunate that she

and her 15 year old daughter, present at the time, were not killed. She lost all her uninsured chattels at the rented property.

In April 2015 a 16 year old daughter of hers was involved in a serious traffic incident which resulted in the daughter incurring significant brain damage and 18 months' hospitalisation in Hobart. At the time Ms Radford commenced to live in Hobart and came into contact with men who used her to further their drug-related business ventures. It seems that after her father died in July 2015, her offending increased in frequency. She was sentenced to three months' imprisonment with effect from 21 June 2016 as a result of motor vehicle related offences when stopped by police when driving to Hobart after committing the offences related to the Melbourne trip. She also had her car impounded. It was owned by her father and all she had left.

In 2018 she discovered she was pregnant. Her daughter was born in September 2018, three months prematurely. She spent three months in the Royal Hobart Hospital with her daughter. She last touched any illicit drugs on the day she discovered she was pregnant. She has not been involved in any offending since then. She rents her own unit and has the full-time care of a 2 year old. She has a friendship, not yet a relationship, with a supportive male. Last week she had her first ever day of paid work as a fruit packer.

On 23 May 2019 she pleaded guilty to a minor offence of selling a controlled drug in April to May 2018, just before she discovered she was pregnant. She was sentenced to two months' imprisonment wholly suspended for 12 months. She complied with the terms of a suspended sentence, not to commit another offence punishable by imprisonment. Her maturity, now being in her early 40s and her devotion to her new daughter seems to have turned her life around. Her prospects of re-offending are, I believe, small.

There is no doubt that offence to which she has pleaded guilty is a very serious one. Although she was being used by others as a courier, it is important to note that she was, nevertheless a vital link in the chain of selling a substance which has, and continues to have, a devastating effect on the community.

While specific deterrence does not loom large in the sentencing of Ms Radford, who has turned her life around since discovering her pregnancy 2½ years ago, general deterrence does.

In the circumstances I propose to impose a penalty of two years' imprisonment backdated to 4 months and 13 days before today, to take into account the previous imprisonment of Ms Radford concerning a charge in relation to which she was not convicted. It will be backdated to 13 October 2020. I suspend the entirety of that term of imprisonment on the condition that Ms Radford not commit another offence punishable by imprisonment in the next two years from today.

Under s 38 of the *Misuse of Drugs Act 2001* I order that the Samsung tablet device seized from Ms Radford on 20 June 2016 revealing messages about the sale of drugs, be forfeited to the State. It is listed as item 6 on the Property Seizure Record Receipt 152711. I also order, under s 36B(2) of the *Misuse of Drugs Act 2001*, that Ms Radford pay the costs of the analysis of the drugs seized on 22 June 2016, being methylamphetamine, in the sum of \$600.