

STATE OF TASMANIA v TAYLA EBONY STEVENSON
COMMENTS ON PASSING SENTENCE

14 MAY 2021
PEARCE J

Tayla Stevenson, you plead guilty to receiving stolen property. On 13 June 2017 the police went to your home in Kings Meadows. Another person, Gavin Midson, was also present. He had been living with you for some months. In the front bedroom the police found a phone which had been stolen from a taxi driver in April 2015, a second phone stolen from a car parked near Hagley in December 2016, a backpack containing a laptop both stolen from a car in West Launceston. You were, or had been, in possession of furniture and household items stolen from a home in West Launceston in May 2017 and a stove oven and mattress stolen from a display home in Youngtown in May 2017, but by the time of the search you had arranged for some of those items to be sold. When you were interviewed by the police you claimed that you did not know the items were stolen, or even that you had some of them. By your plea you admit that you were in possession of all of those items and that, in each case, you had received the property knowing it to be stolen. The total value was just over \$11,000.

All of the stolen property was retrieved and returned to the owners.

You come from a stable family background. After completing year 10 you began work. I think it says something about your industry and resourcefulness that you managed to purchase your own home at such a young age. However you entered into a relationship with a young man who, as it turned out, was a drug user and kept company with other drug users and criminals. You became pregnant with his child. He and his associates, like Mr Midson, took advantage of the chance to bring stolen property to your home. You knew what was happening but you were apprehensive for a number of reasons to put a stop to it. However, you did not do so, and you participated to some extent in the sale of some of the stolen property albeit that you say it was to obtain funds to meet a drug debt your partner accumulated.

You are now aged almost 26. You were just 21 at the time of the search. Mr Midson was sentenced to a drug treatment order for receiving the same property, but his sentence also related to other stolen property as well as more serious offences of dishonesty. There are good reasons to sentence you differently.

At the time of this crime you had no relevant prior convictions. It has taken a very long time to deal with. You did not enter a plea of guilty until your trial was about to commence this year. Thus you are not entitled to the more lenient treatment that an earlier plea of guilty would have attracted. However, in the meantime you have had two children, the eldest of whom is now kindergarten age. The youngest is not yet one and is from a new and stable relationship. Your relationship with your then partner ceased long ago and he now plays little role in your life or in the life of his child. In 2019 you were fined for making a false declaration, but that offence was committed at about the same time, in September 2017, and also concerned Mr Midson. You have committed no offences of dishonesty since 2017.

I have concluded that, for a young person with no prior offences, a sentence of imprisonment for this crime is not warranted, suspended or not. Community service would be difficult for you and your present circumstances do not warrant probation. I thought about a conviction with a good behaviour bond, but I think that some greater level of punishment is required despite your limited role. You are convicted and fined \$2,000. I may only allow 28 days to pay, but if you require longer you may apply to enter into a repayment arrangement.