

Alexandra Karin Mucci you have pleaded guilty to a charge of blackmail. In or about late August 2021 you made contact with a man in his early 40's through social media. You sent him explicit messages and photographs, and agreed that you would meet him on 11 September 2021 and have sexual intercourse with him in exchange for a payment of \$500 per hour. By arrangement, he paid you a deposit of \$50 in advance. The meeting did not take place because the man felt uncomfortable about the arrangement. On 12 September 2021 you contacted him via Facebook. You threatened to contact his partner and his employer, and to disclose the sexual arrangements and to send them explicit photos unless he paid you \$350. He made no payment, and he blocked you. On 13 September 2021 you phoned the man's workplace and you left a voice message that included the words, "pay up or you're fucked".

On 14 September 2021 you phoned the police, pretended to be the man's partner's sister, made a false report of a domestic violence incident between him and his partner, and asserted that the partner was hiding in their living room. You have not been charged with making a false report and I am not punishing you for that. The police visited the man's home and found that it was a false report. He subsequently complained to the police about the blackmail.

On 17 September 2021 police officers searched your home pursuant to a search warrant, they obtained evidence from your mobile phone. You were interviewed at a later date at a police station. You cooperated by providing the passcode for your phone and by making full admissions during the interview at the police station.

Your conduct has had a substantial psychological effect on the complainant. He provided a victim impact statement. He had to explain his situation to his partner and to work colleagues. He became very fearful of what might happen if he did not pay the money that had been demanded. He lived with his curtains closed and lights turned off. He purchased a surveillance system for his home. He took time off work to have it installed and lost income as a result. He has ongoing psychological symptoms.

You are 27 years old. You have no significant prior convictions. You are a single mother with two children at primary school. One of your children suffers from autism. You have been unemployed for some time, and you are now dependent on Centrelink benefits, including a carer's payment in respect of your autistic child. You have had a gambling problem, but you have not consumed any alcohol for years and have never used illicit drugs. You have had a very unhappy and difficult life. You have been diagnosed as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. Your life was not going well when you committed this crime in 2021. Your children had been removed from your care. You were in financial difficulty because of your gambling problem. You were homeless. You resorted to blackmail to try to get some money. Since then you have got your life in order, obtained stable rental accommodation, and got your children back. It counts in your favour that you cooperated with the police and pleaded guilty in the Magistrate's Court some seven months after your first appearance.

You have been assessed as suitable for a home detention order, and for an order requiring community service, and for community-based supervision. If a home detention order had not been an available sentencing option, I think I would have imposed a suspended sentence of imprisonment and ordered some community service. I regard this case as serious because of

the level of dishonesty, your persistence in the scheme to extort money from the complainant, and the psychological impact on him. However, in the circumstances, I think that home detention will be a sufficient punishment without requiring community service as well. I will make a home detention order and I will also order supervision by a probation officer.

Alexandra Karin Mucci, I convict you and make a home detention order with an operational period of three months, commencing tomorrow. The home detention premises will be at [address]. The core conditions of the order are contained in s 42AD(1) of the *Sentencing Act* 1997. They will have effect for the full three months. They include s 42AD(1)(g), which requires you to submit to electronic monitoring. For the purposes of the condition contained in s 42AD(1)(c), I specify that you must, during the operational period, be at the home detention premises at all times on each day of the week unless you are not there for a relevant reason, as specified in s 42AD(4). The order will also include the following special conditions:

- (a) You must report to a community corrections officer at Community Corrections in Hobart for the purpose of induction no later than 10am tomorrow.
- (b) You must maintain in operating condition an active mobile telephone service, provide the details to a community corrections officer and be accessible for phone contact through that service at all times.
- (c) You must submit to the supervision of a community corrections officer as required by that officer.
- (d) You must not during the operational period of the order take any illicit or prohibited substances, including any controlled drug as defined by the *Misuse of Drugs Act* 2001, or any medication containing an opiate, benzodiazepine, bupropion hydrochloride or pseudoephedrine unless you provide written evidence from a medical professional that you have been prescribed the relevant medication.
- (e) You must not allow anyone else to remove, tamper with, damage, disable or interfere with the proper functioning of any electronic device or equipment used for the purposes of electronic monitoring.

I make a community correction order for an operational period of 18 months, with special conditions that, during the operational period of that order:

- You must submit to the supervision of a probation officer as required by that probation officer.
- You must comply with the directions of a probation officer relating to financial management and gambling related behaviour, including all directions to attend appointments and participate in programs relating to those matters.
- You must submit to psychological assessment or treatment as directed by a probation officer.
- You must comply with the directions of a probation officer as to the keeping of appointments and attending programs in relation to psychological support, past victimisation, and past violence.