

Charles Read, you plead guilty to dangerous driving. I also agreed to deal with your plea of guilty to the summary charges of evading police in aggravated circumstances, possessing a controlled drug, possessing a shortened firearm, possessing ammunition without a licence, failing to take all precautions to ensure safekeeping of a firearm, possessing firearms without a licence, possessing unregistered firearms and driving while disqualified.

Just before 11.30 pm on Wednesday 15 February 2023 police officers saw you speeding along Boyer Road towards Bridgewater in a small white Toyota hatchback. You were alone in the car. They tried to pull you over by activating the lights and sirens on the police car but you did not stop as directed and drove away at speed. You thereby evaded the police. At the time you were disqualified from driving as a result of an order made by a magistrate on 1 September 2021.

The police car did not chase you but they followed along behind while other officers deployed road spikes where Boyer Road meets Sorell Road at Bridgewater. When you drove over the road spikes all four tyres on your car were punctured. However you did not stop. You accelerated away, turned left onto Old Bridgewater Road and then onto the Midland Highway towards Brighton. By the time you reached the roundabout at the intersection of the Midland and East Derwent Highways all the tyres on your car were deflated, meaning that it was now being driven substantially on the wheel rims. There was a constant stream of sparks on the road. You drove north on the highway, only at about 70 kph but fishtailing and swerving repeatedly across both northbound lanes. By this time you were being followed by a number of police cars. You turned left on Tea Tree Road and into a residential area of Brighton, still at about 70 kph. You then accelerated to 80 kph as you drove through the main commercial area of Brighton where the speed limit was 50 kph. You abandoned the car not far away and fled. Your wallet was found inside the car as well as a small quantity of methylamphetamine and some spent ammunition. By this time it was around midnight. You were found about half an hour later hiding in a ditch, affected by drugs or alcohol or both. You directed the police towards two firearms you had brought with you from the car and hidden nearby. One was a .303 British Savage Arms Lee Enfield bolt action rifle with a full ten shot magazine which had been actioned. The second, found a little later, was a Norinco .22 rifle which had been shortened. You had no firearm licence. Both firearms were unregistered and neither had been stored safely either where they were found or in the car. Two more small bags of methylamphetamine were found when you were searched at the police station. That made a total quantity of 6.2 grams. You claimed when interviewed that you were asleep on the floor in the back of the car when someone else was driving, and that because you were too slow in getting away, your accomplice struck you on the head with one of the firearms rendering you unconscious. Those were of course obvious lies.

You are now aged 25. Your plea of guilty is in your favour although it is not a particularly early one. Your personal circumstances were outlined to me by your counsel and in a report prepared by Dr Georgina O'Donnell. Although your mother was a good influence on you and has offered you every opportunity, your father was a notorious criminal. He left the marriage to your mother when you were young. You were mostly brought up by her but also spent time with him. He died in 2014 but not before introducing you to a high level criminal lifestyle. You have been abusing alcohol and various illicit drugs since you were young including methylamphetamine, heroin, cannabis and MDMA. Your drug use became worse after your long term girlfriend broke up with you before this crime was committed. According to Dr O'Donnell you likely suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder from cumulative effect of the trauma to which you were exposed

as a child for which you have been self-medicating with alcohol and drugs. It has not been suggested that the methylamphetamine found in your possession on 15 February 2023 was other than for your personal use. The evidence of your mental state is relevant to the chance of your reform and the extent of the future risk you may pose, but nothing is advanced to suggest that it is otherwise relevant to sentence.

The matters to which I have referred reflect in your recent record. On 1 September 2021 you were sentenced to imprisonment for six months, wholly suspended for three years, for a number of drug and alcohol related driving offences. You were disqualified from driving for three years. On 5 January 2022 a further month, wholly suspended, was added for another two drug related driving offences. You breached those suspended sentences by committing further offences. The further offending included offences of dishonesty, more driving offences, possessing ammunition, possessing a dangerous article, multiple breaches of bail, evading police and assaulting a police officer. Some of those offences were committed before the offences for which I am to sentence you and some were committed afterwards. On 29 December 2023 you were sentenced to a total term of 15 months from 3 June 2023 as well as two separate three month wholly suspended terms. Because you were not sentenced to until 29 December 2023 none of the convictions ordered on that day are prior convictions for sentencing purposes, and you have not breached the suspended terms. It is relevant that the crimes I am dealing with were committed while you were already on bail and subject to suspended sentences, and also that, even after your arrest, you kept committing offences. You served all of the 15 month term, so you have already been in custody for more than a year. You completed that term on 2 September 2024 and so the term of imprisonment I impose will commence then. To take account of the total time to be spent in custody I will moderate the sentences. According to your counsel you have not used drugs while you have been in prison and want to remove yourself from criminal associates on your release. I accept that your father's notoriety has been a problem for you but the time has come for you to take responsibility for your own behaviour and to get the therapy which Dr O'Donnell suggests might help you. Your behaviour while in prison has not been exemplary.

The courts and the community are very concerned about serious driving offences. You should not have been driving at all. Your driving was not as prolonged, or your speed as extreme, as in some cases. It was late at night so the traffic on the roads was light. I have not been told of any actual danger. You had no passenger. However, your dangerous driving extended over about 12 kilometres and, for some of the time was on major roads or in a residential area and in a commercial zone, and, given the condition of your car and the fact that you were affected by drugs and alcohol, you posed an obvious risk.

The seriousness of the firearm offences should not be overlooked. One was loaded with a magazine and ready to fire. There was no innocent explanation for you to have been in possession of any gun, still less guns of that character, which are often associated with other offences of dishonesty and violence.

Charles Read, you are convicted on the indictment and on complaint 1618/23, counts 1, 2 and 4 to 10 inclusive. On count 1 on the complaint, evade police, you are sentenced to imprisonment for three months from 2 September 2024. You are disqualified from driving for one year from your release. On the indictment, dangerous driving, you are sentenced to imprisonment for one year and three months to be served concurrently with the term just imposed, that is, also from 2 September 2024. In respect of that term of imprisonment I order that you not be eligible for parole until you have served half the term. You are disqualified from driving for two years cumulative to the period of disqualification just imposed. On count 9, driving while disqualified,

you are sentenced to imprisonment for one month also from 2 September 2024 and disqualified from driving for six months from your release. Count 5 on the complaint, possessing ammunition, is not punishable by imprisonment. As to that count, and count 2, possessing methylamphetamine, in light of the other orders I will make, I make no further order. On the remaining counts, counts 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10, the firearm charges, I impose one sentence, a term of imprisonment of nine months, three months of which is to be served concurrently with the term imposed on the indictment and the balance to be served cumulatively. I order that you not be eligible for parole until you have served six months that term.

The combined result of the orders I have made is that you will be required to serve a total term of one year and nine months from 2 September 2024 with eligibility for parole after having served half of that term, and you are disqualified from driving for three years from release.