

Savannah Brown, you plead guilty to aggravated robbery. The crime was committed late in the afternoon on 22 August 2023 against Tara Rettas. Ms Rettas was someone you knew within the same social group, but you were unhappy about posts she had made about you on social media. As you were travelling in a car along Wellington Street you saw her walking on the footpath. The car stopped. You and two associates left the vehicle and confronted her. She denied having made the posts you were angry about but, as she walked away, you ran up behind her, grabbed her around the neck and repeatedly punched her head and face with a closed fist. She fell against a metal railing but you grabbed her hair and clothing and continued to punch her, with significant force and more than twenty times. You ignored shouts from passers-by to leave her alone. While you were punching Ms Rettas your associate forcibly pulled her handbag from her, biting her finger as she did so. Your associate stole Ms Rettas's purse containing her personal belongings and cards, after which you punched her about three more times while she lay on the ground. You then left on foot, abandoning her on the footpath. A person who had been driving past observed what happened and took Ms Rettas to the hospital. Although it is not alleged that your assault was not racially motivated, afterwards you sent Ms Rettas a racist and abusive message telling her that your assault was "just a taste".

The whole incident was captured on CCTV from a nearby business. It shows a particularly violent attack with repeated blows inflicted on a person who was overwhelmed by force. She was confronted with the combination of at least two persons. She was then aged 41. She sustained extensive and painful bruising and swelling to her face. She had a blood nose, two badly blackened eyes and a lacerated finger. You were the person who initiated the attack and inflicted most of the violence. You punched Ms Rettas repeatedly and then left her in the street. You are also responsible for the robbery although dishonesty was not your primary motivation. Fortunately her physical injuries were not, as far as I have been made aware, long lasting but blows of this nature to the head carry a risk of much more serious injury. I have no victim impact statement from her but the experience must have been terrifying and traumatic. It likely also caused fear and alarm to the members of the public who witnessed it. The message you sent afterwards showed a distinct lack of remorse.

You are now aged 43. You have had a very difficult life and have been subjected to abuse, neglect and violence. You left home and school when you were 15. You have had the occasional job but not for a long time, although you are trying to re-enter the workforce with the help of a rehabilitation provider. Your life has been heavily affected by abuse of alcohol. You often do not have stable housing. At the time of this crime you were drinking extremely heavily. Your record includes offences of dishonesty, violence and anti-social offending which includes robbery with violence in 1999, *Criminal Code* assault in 2000, aggravated armed robbery in 2002 and aggravated robbery in 2007. A considerable time has passed since those offences, some of which were committed when you were a youth. However there are many other more recent ones including for common assault and assault police. In November 2021 you were given a wholly suspended 28 day sentence for summary, bail and property offences. In January 2022 you were given another 28 day wholly suspended sentence for similar offending but also abusing and assaulting police and destroying property. You quickly breached both suspended terms by re-offending and served the sentences. On 21 August 2024 you were sentenced to imprisonment for 10 weeks for alcohol related driving offences, common assault, trespass and destroying property committed in 2022 and 2023 before the assault I am to sentence you for.

Your plea of guilty is in your favour mostly because it avoids the need for your victim to give evidence. I accept that your difficult background led you to respond to the criticism you thought Ms Rettas made of you in a violent way. You have been trying to address your alcohol problem with the assistance of the Alcohol and Drug Service and a psychologist, and you are looking for independent accommodation and wish to train for employment. I have taken into account the letter you wrote and gave to me today. I accept that the recent death of your partner has had a significant impact on you and since this crime was committed you have taken real steps towards turning your life around. However none of that helps the victim of this crime. The sentence I impose must make clear to you and others that such serious public violence will be punished. Accordingly I must balance the factors personal to you with the need to send a message about crimes like this. Rather than order parole I will suspend part of the sentence with conditions which allow for a longer period of supervision and your assistance following your release.

You are convicted on complaint 34231/23. I make a compensation order in favour of Tara Georgina Rettas but adjourn the further terms of that order to a date to be fixed. You are sentenced to imprisonment for 15 months from 7 February 2025, the day you were remanded in custody. I suspend nine months of that term for 18 months from your release. I order that you not be eligible for parole on the six month operative part of the sentence. It is a condition of the order suspending part of the sentence that while it is in force you do not commit any offence punishable by imprisonment. If you breach that condition then a court must order that you serve that term unless it is unjust. I impose a further condition that, during the period the order is in force, you are to be subject to the supervision of a probation officer. The conditions which the law imposes on that order include that you must report to a probation officer at 111-113 Cameron Street, Launceston within three clear days of your release, you must, during the operational period of the order, report to a probation officer as required by the probation officer and comply with the reasonable and lawful directions of a probation officer or a supervisor, you must not, during the operational period of the order, leave, or remain outside, Tasmania without the permission of a probation officer and you must, during the operational period of the order, give notice to a probation officer of any change of address or employment before, or within 2 working days after, the change. I impose special conditions that you must, during the operational period of the order, submit to the supervision of a probation officer as required by the probation officer, attend educational and other programs, undergo assessment and treatment for alcohol or drug dependency, submit to testing for alcohol or drug use and submit to medical, psychological or psychiatric assessment or treatment as directed by a probation officer. I impose a further condition that if directed by a probation officer you must attend, participate in and complete the EQUIPS Aggression Program. If you breach any of those conditions you may be brought back to court and re-sentenced.