

STATE OF TASMANIA v CONON TERRY STEVENSON
COMMENTS ON PASSING SENTENCE

29 AUGUST 2025
BRETT J

Mr Stevenson, you have pleaded guilty to four counts of assault. You have also pleaded guilty to a number of summary offences, in particular five counts of breaching an interim family violence order and two counts of breaching bail conditions.

You committed the crimes during an appalling course of family violence perpetrated against your partner and your daughter on 7 February 2024. You and your partner had been a significant relationship for about two years and your 13-year-old daughter had moved from Queensland to live with you about a month earlier. Your behaviour, at least towards your partner, had been deteriorating for some time. You had been angry and domineering toward her in the preceding months. She gave birth to your child on 6 October 2023. The circumstances of the birth described to me include conduct on your part which led you to being excluded from the hospital during and after the birth. The child was taken into the care of child safety services upon birth and you blamed your partner for this.

At the time of committing these crimes, you were subject to a family violence order and bail conditions which prevented you from having contact with the complainant and from entering the house in which she was living. You were also subject to curfew conditions which required you to stay at your residence between 9 pm and 7 am every day. Despite all of this, on the day in question, you and the complainant had spent the day together at her house. You both had a lot of alcohol to drink. As the day proceeded, you became angry and abusive towards the complainant. Initially, this anger manifested in verbal abuse which included calling the complainant a whore. You then perpetrated the violence. The first assault occurred when you pushed the complainant onto her back on a bed and then put your hands around her throat and squeezed. You applied this pressure for approximately 15 seconds. The complainant was gasping and trying to beg you to stop. The pressure you applied interfered with her breathing but she did not lose consciousness. After this, you were yelling incoherently. You then moved into a different room, where you then grabbed the complainant to the throat with one hand and threw her into a wall. Your daughter was in the house at the time during all this and was yelling at you to stop.

After this, you went to your bedroom and either passed out or fell asleep. Your partner and daughter came to check on you. When the complainant tried to rouse you, you woke and responded angrily and violently. You kicked out at her, hitting her, and then grabbed her to the throat with one hand. You pushed her to the ground and then let her go. Shortly after, you went into the lounge room where you ended up on the ground yourself. When your partner tried to help you up, you pushed her to the floor. Your daughter was present and tried to help the complainant.

At some point during these events, you assaulted your daughter. She had tried to intervene to protect your partner while you were assaulting her. You grabbed your daughter by the arm and then pushed her by the throat into a couch. Shortly after, you grabbed her to the throat again and pushed her to the ground.

Eventually, your daughter called the police. They attended and searched the house, looking for you. However, it seems that you must have left and they did not locate you.

You returned to the house about an hour after the police left. Sometime later, there was a further incident of violence when you threw your partner onto a bed and began to punch her. You punched her to the right rear shoulder and triceps area. The police were called again and you were arrested. You have been in custody since that time.

The complainant was taken to hospital by police. She suffered tenderness and bruising to various parts of the body. She was treated with pain relief.

I have read an impact statement prepared by your daughter. Understandably, she feels betrayed by you and is still suffering traumatic recollections from the incident. She believes that you have permanently impacted your relationship with her and that what you did was, in her words, “unforgivable”. You bear a considerable degree of moral culpability for your actions that day.

You are 40 years of age. As far as your general background is concerned, your childhood was spent in a home in which you are exposed to considerable family violence perpetrated by your father against your mother. You have had an industrious employment history but have also suffered injuries in accidents which have impacted on your ability to work in recent years. In respect of your criminal history, you have some prior convictions which include offences against police including assaulting police, but there is no prior offending in the nature of family violence. However, since committing these crimes, you have received a three month sentence of imprisonment for numerous breaches of the family violence order. Some of these relate to the period leading up to these events, and many more involved telephone contact between the complainant and you after you were remanded in custody. All of the breaches both before and after the relevant events which were dealt with by that sentence occurred with the consent of the complainant.

Family violence of this nature is unacceptable and must not be tolerated. The violence perpetrated against your partner is aggravated by the presence and involvement of your daughter, and of course the assault directly upon her carries a high degree of objective seriousness. The fact that you committed the crimes while on bail and subject to a family violence order is also aggravating. Your intoxication provides no mitigation whatsoever. In fact, it seems to me that alcohol has been a factor relevant to your prior offending and was clearly implicated in your commission of these crimes. This is relevant to the question of specific deterrence. As far as mitigating factors are concerned, you are entitled to some credit for the utilitarian value of the plea which at least has avoided the need for your partner and your daughter to give evidence against you in a trial. I note that the pleas were entered one day after the indictment alleging these charges was filed. I take into account also that you have now been in custody on remand for a considerable period of time which during that time have been subject to numerous prison lockdowns and have been unable to access courses and programs which would otherwise be available to a sentenced offender. These matters would clearly have made your time in custody more onerous than would otherwise have been the case.

The only appropriate sentence is one of imprisonment. This is necessary to fulfil the sentencing objectives of general deterrence and denunciation. I will however assess the sentence taking into account the plea. I also will permit eligibility for parole. I think this is appropriate both to recognise your plea of guilty and also to give the parole board the opportunity to supervise your return to the community in a manner which permits appropriate work to be done to address the factors relevant to your behaviour on this occasion.

I am required to declare you to be a serial family violence perpetrator if I am of the opinion that the declaration is warranted. I am of that opinion particularly having regard to the nature and circumstances of the relevant offending, and the risk that you may commit further family violence offences in the future. In assessing the question of risk, I take into account not only the subject offending, but also the contextual background concerning your treatment of the complainant, your apparent willingness to turn violently on your daughter when she stood up to you and tried to help your partner and the numerous and persistent breaches of the family violence order committed by you before and after this offending. I also take into account the fact that you perpetrated these crimes while affected by alcohol, which in my view, enhances the risk because it demonstrates what you are capable of when you are affected by alcohol. Accordingly, I intend to make such a declaration.

The orders I make are as follows:

- a You are convicted of the crimes and the offences to which you have pleaded guilty;
- b For all of the crimes and offences to which you have pleaded guilty, I impose a global sentence of imprisonment for a term of two years and four months. That sentence will be served from 6 May 2024. You are not eligible for parole until you have served one half of that sentence.
- c Pursuant to s 29A of the *Family Violence Act*, I declare you to be a serial family violence perpetrator. The declaration is to remain in force for a period of three years. I direct that the declaration be recorded on your criminal record;
- d Pursuant to s 13A of the said Act, I direct that each crime and offence dealt with by this sentence be recorded on your criminal record as family violence offences.