

Jason Riley, you plead guilty to two counts of assault, to perverting justice and interfering with a witness. I also agreed to deal with your plea of guilty to, on my count, 97 counts of breaching an interim family violence order and three counts of breaching bail.

The crimes and offences were committed during the latter part of 2024 against your former partner Rebecca Hall. You began a relationship with her in late 2023 when she was 18 and you were 22. You lived together between her mother's home in Rocherlea and her cousin's house in Ravenswood. On 4 June 2024 you were arrested following allegations that you had been violent to her. A magistrate made an interim family violence order to protect her with conditions that you did not threaten, harass or abuse her, contact her or go to where she was living at her mother's home. On 1 August 2024 you were made subject to a condition of bail that you not go within 300 metres of the same address and that you comply with the terms of the order.

You paid little or no attention to either the terms of the interim family violence order or the conditions of your bail. Every occasion of subsequent contact with her, both assaults and every threat and instance of abuse, was a breach of the interim family violence order or a breach of a condition of bail or both. In breach of the order you began staying with her at her mother's home. On 14 September 2024 you argued when you thought that she had let your dog escape and you abused her. You began to walk off but, when she shouted after you, you returned and pushed her forcefully into the door frame. She attempted to push you off but you grabbed her throat and pushed her against another door. You held her neck tightly for about 10 seconds. She felt she could not breathe. She struggled and you eventually let go. Not long afterwards she travelled to her cousin's home to pick up some of her belongings. You arrived as she did and followed her in, calling her a dog. She picked up a suitcase but you, fearing that it also contained something of yours, took it from her. As she walked away you jumped on to her back and grabbed her from behind in a headlock. She fell to the ground where you kept applying pressure with your arm. She felt she could not breathe and felt dizzy. She said that this lasted for 20 to 30 seconds and she thought she was going to die. Someone pulled you off. She went inside the house where you attempted to follow until someone stopped you. The result of these events was that the complainant had a sore and swollen neck and a hoarse voice.

She reported what had happened to the police later the same day. You posted a story on Snapchat abusing her, and calling her a treacherous dog. From early the following day you began sending text and TikTok messages to her. You were found by the police the day after that hiding under a bed and you were arrested and remanded in custody.

Your remand in custody did not stop you. Between 20 September 2024 and when you were next granted bail on 9 December 2024 you spoke to the complainant 194 times on the prison phone system using the accounts of others. There were 10 calls in September, 93 calls in October including 15 on one day, 88 calls in November and 26 in December. On 26 occasions you said things to her which were abusive or threatening or both.

On 17 October 2024, about a month after you were remanded in custody, the complainant delivered to the police a statutory declaration in which she claimed that the contents of her original statutory declaration, in which her complaints against you were made, were false. It emerged that she did so because, over a series of phone calls you made from prison, you pressured her with abuse and threats to change her story and withdraw her claims. You had

appeared in the Magistrates Court on 17 October and pleaded not guilty to a series of charges. After court on the same day you spoke to the complainant on the phone and said that she needed to make a statutory declaration withdrawing her allegations and saying she had lied. You instructed her to make the statutory declaration and give it to the police, and your lawyer. You told her that if she did so “everything should be right” and that neither she nor you would get into trouble. After the declaration was made and handed in you maintained the pressure. In a series of further conversations you told her either to not go to court at all, or if she were required to give evidence, she should lie, and that for her to lie was the only way you were going to get out of prison and “get it all dropped”. You told her that unless she was smart about what she said it would “cause [you] more issues”. The events I have described form the basis of the charges of perverting justice and interfering with a witness.

You are now aged 24. You were 22 and 23 when these offences were committed. You come from a very disadvantaged background. You were removed from the care of your mother at age seven following prolonged abuse and neglect. You were then cared for by your father but were exposed to his serious criminality until he died in 2019. You disengaged from education at age 14. At about that time you began to abuse illicit drugs which since then have been a serious problem for you and are strongly associated with your offending. You are still a relatively young man but the effect of that for sentencing purposes is much reduced by your poor criminal record, including for family violence. As a youth you were sentenced to suspended detention and then actual detention for arson, robbery, dishonesty, driving and drug offences. The most serious was an armed robbery committed on 1 January 2018 for which you were sentenced to detention for 12 months. As a young adult you served terms of imprisonment ordered in 2019, 2020 and 2021 for driving, firearm, drug and dishonesty offences. When terms were wholly or partially suspended you breached the conditions by re-offending. In January 2022 you were made subject to a drug treatment order after having committed a robbery on 8 August 2021. You did not complete the order and were re-sentenced to imprisonment for 12 months. In October 2022 you were given a partly suspended term for evading police. Most recently and relevantly, you were sentenced by a magistrate on 19 November 2024 for some family violence offences you committed during the first part of 2024. You were convicted but discharged. On 2 December 2024 you were sentenced to imprisonment for two months for evading police. You were sentenced for other offences on 9 July 2025. This time the offences included possession of ammunition and a replica firearm. You were sentenced to imprisonment for three months from 3 March 2025. The convictions on those two occasions are not prior convictions for sentencing purposes but are relevant to the prospect of your rehabilitation and to the issue of totality.

It was agreed at the sentencing hearing on 8 December 2025 that, at that date, a period of 216 days custody should now be taken into account. I have decided to proceed accordingly even though some of the offences were committed while you were serving that period of custody. On that basis the term I impose should commence on 6 May 2025.

You were charged with strangulation but that charge was not proceeded with. You are not guilty of that charge unless it is proved beyond reasonable doubt that you intended or appreciated your acts were capable of interfering with breathing or the flow of blood to or from the complainant’s head. Instead you are to be sentenced for assault. Nevertheless, the force you applied to the complainant’s neck on both occasions was a particularly dangerous form of attack, indicative of the exercise of dominance and control by family violence perpetrators over victims. It was the type of force which in fact risked serious injury or death through interference with breathing or blood flow. You should have realised that risk even though you are not to be sentenced on the basis that you intended or appreciated that consequence. On both occasions it must have been

very frightening for the complainant. On the first occasion she felt she could not breathe, told you to stop and struggled against you. On the second occasion she felt she could not breathe, started feeling dizzy and was scared she was going to die.

As is frequently pointed out, the prevalence and devastating impact of violence perpetrated against women within relationships is well recognised across Australia by criminal courts and the community. Family violence is an insidious, prevalent and serious social problem. It is fortunate that the complainant was not more seriously injured. There is no victim impact statement and apparently she remains supportive of you. It is not suggested that some of the contact which you had with her while subject to the order was not with her consent. Her conduct towards you may not have been exemplary. However the dynamics of relationships within which violence is perpetrated is complex on many levels and sometimes it is the responsibility of courts to protect people from themselves as well as from the actions of others. Your resort to violence against the complainant was a breach of the trust inherent within your relationship with her. Punishment and general deterrence are powerful sentencing factors, as is, in your case, personal deterrence. In other words, the sentence must make you understand the consequences of your offences so as to discourage you from acting in this way again.

Perverting justice is regarded as serious because it undermines the integrity of the justice system. Persons who are convicted of the crime are almost always sentenced to imprisonment, not only for punishment, but to send a message to those who might be tempted to act as you did that prison is the likely outcome. The charge of interfering with a witness arises from much the same conduct so you are not to be punished twice for the same behaviour. This is a serious case of both crimes for a number of reasons. You acted purely from self-interest and to attempt to avoid what you knew would be the likely consequences of your violence. It indicated a complete lack of remorse. It is commonly the case that family violence offenders attempt, by controlling behaviour or threats or by taking advantage of the feelings or loyalty of victims, to persuade the victims to lie or withdraw allegations. For that reason there is a very strong need to make clear to you and others that such attempts will attract harsh punishment. Your attempts were underhand, blatant and persistent and might have succeeded at least to make a prosecution more difficult. It is relevant that, as events occurred, the complainant was not required to give evidence because you pleaded guilty to some of the charges against you.

It is in your favour however that you have ultimately pleaded guilty. That indicates an acceptance of responsibility and importantly avoids the need for a trial at which the complainant would have been exposed to the additional trauma of having to give evidence. I have taken the plea into account not only in determining the total sentence but in allowing eligibility for parole at close to the earliest opportunity. On the other hand you have avoided the possibility of a conviction for a more serious crime. I am not satisfied that you have experienced any remorse in the sense a court looks for.

On your conviction for the offences you have pleaded guilty to you will have been convicted of at least three family violence offences, whether indictable, or summary, with at least three of those offences being committed on different days. I am asked to declare you to be a serial family violence offender. I am satisfied that such a declaration is warranted. I have set out your antecedents and described the nature and circumstances of your offending. Consistently with your disregard for the law over many years you repeatedly flouted the orders put in place to attempt protect the complainant. I think that there is a real risk that you may commit further family violence offences. I am also satisfied on the balance of probabilities, that you have committed family violence and that you may do so again. A family violence order, however, prohibiting

contact with the complainant for three years from 13 May 2025 has already been made, and so I am not asked to make a further order. I will impose separate sentences for each category of the related offending but there is some overlap in culpability and I will fashion the orders to achieve what I consider to be a just total result.

Jason Riley, you are convicted on each of the four counts on the indictment, on complaint 35145/2024, counts 1-5, 8-12 and 15-8, complaint 35149/2024, counts 1-3 and complaints 30835/2025, 30837/2025, 30838/2025, 30839/2025, 30841/2025, 30842/2025, 30843/2025, 30845/2025, 30846/2025, 30847/2025, 30848/2025, 30850/2025, 30853/2025, 30854/2025, 30855/2025, 30856/2025, 30858/2025, 30859/2025, 30862/2025, 30863/2025, 30864/2025, 30866/2025, 30867/2025, 30868/2025, 30869/2025, 30870/2025, 30871/2025, 31943/2025, 31945/2025, 31946/2025, 30884/2025, 31548/2025, 30873/2025, 30874/2025, 30883/2025, 30885/2025, 31549/2025, 30886/2025, 30888/2025, 30889/2025, 30890/2025, 30909/2025, 31054/2025, 31055/2025, 31494/2025, 31495/2025, 31496/2025, 31497/2025, 31498/2025, 31499/2025, 31580/2025, 31501/2025, 31503/2025, 31504/2025, 31506/2025, 31948/2025, 31949/2025, 31950/2025, 31952/2025, 31954/2025, 31955/2025, 31957/2025, 31958/2025, 31964/2025, 31965/2025, 31971/2025, 31977/2025, 31978/2025, 31980/2025, 31982/2025, 31515/2025, 31519/2025, 31521/2025, 31522/2025, 31524/2025, 31984/2025, 31986/2025, 31989/2025, 31990/2025, 31998/2025, 31999/2025, 32001/2025 and 32002/2025.

I am satisfied that all of these crimes and offences are family violence offences and I direct that each of them be recorded on your criminal record as a family violence offence. I declare you to be a serial family violence perpetrator. That declaration will remain in force for three years from today.

On counts 1 and 2 on the indictment, the assaults, I impose one sentence, a term of imprisonment of 12 months from 6 May 2025. I order that you not be eligible for parole until you have served six months of that term. On counts 3 and 4 on the indictment, perverting justice and interfering with a witness I impose one sentence, a term of imprisonment of 12 months cumulative to the term just imposed. I order that you not be eligible for parole until you have served six months of that term. On the remaining counts, all of the family violence order breaches and breaches of bail, you are sentenced to a term of imprisonment of six months. I order that four months of that term be served concurrently with the term imposed on counts 3 and 4 on the indictment but the balance is to be served cumulatively. On that sentence you are not eligible for parole. The result is a total term of two years and two months from 6 May 2025 with eligibility for parole after having served one year and two months of that total term.