

Shannon Shane Dennison, you have pleaded guilty to a charge of perverting the course of justice. On 19 April 2024, you were sentenced in the Hobart Magistrates Court to a home detention order (HDO) for a period of six months. That order was due to expire on 19 October 2024. It was a condition of that order that you not consume alcohol or take any illicit or prohibited substances. It was also a condition that you submit to urine tests for the presence of alcohol or illicit drugs when directed to do so by a probation officer, police officer or a prescribed officer. You were inducted onto the HDO on the date it was made and signed an illicit substance testing contract. In that contract, you acknowledged you understood that you may be directed by a Community Corrections officer to submit to such testing.

On 10 October 2024, you were directed to attend urinalysis by your Community Corrections case worker. You failed to attend the appointment. Your case worker phoned you and asked why you had not attended your appointment. You told her you were experiencing poor mental health and you had a medical certificate excusing your attendance at urinalysis. A copy of the medical certificate was requested from you. An email was sent from your email address to the case worker attaching what purported to be a medical certificate from a medical practice. It stated that you were examined on 10 October 2024 and that the examining doctor was of the opinion you were suffering a medical condition and were "unfit for work / school / court and all other activities from 10/10/2024 to 19/10/2024 inclusive due to the current state of [your] mental health". No issues were taken with the medical certificate at that time it was initially sent. A week later, a different case worker looked at the certificate and noted some discrepancies. The medical practice was contacted and they confirmed they had not authored the medical certificate that had been provided to your case worker and that you had not had an appointment at that practice on the date alleged.

On 18 October 2024, you appeared in the Hobart Magistrates Court on an application to breach your HDO. That application related to your failure to attend multiple urinalysis appointments you had been directed to attend. It is not clear to me whether those proceedings had already commenced prior to you providing the false medical certificate. The issue of the false medical certificate was raised during that court appearance. Counsel who appeared for you on that occasion did not submit that the certificate was genuine or that you had seen the doctor on 10 October 2024. On that date, which was the day before the HDO was due to expire, an order was made extending its operation by one month as a consequence of the breaches that had been notified to the court. No particular finding was made about the false medical certificate.

The matter was subsequently reported to police. You were interviewed on 20 October 2024. You told police that your partner had doctored a genuine medical certificate because she thought you were going to be imprisoned. You acknowledged that you did not attend a doctor's appointment on 10 October 2024. You indicated that you were aware of the conditions of your HDO and the requirement to submit to urine testing when requested. You had previously obtained valid medical certificates, including on 12 August 2024 and 3 September 2024. You told police you were aware that providing a false certificate is an offence.

The State asserts that by providing the false medical certificate to Community Corrections, you intended to avoid possible negative consequences that would flow from your non-compliance with the conditions of the HDO that was then in place. It was asserted it was your intention to deny the Magistrates Court knowledge of the true circumstances of your failure to attend the

10 October appointment in order to avoid any potential application that may have been made because of it. The State submits that this perverts the course of justice because it has a tendency to erode or impair the capacity of the Court to do justice particularly in the administration of sentencing orders.

You are 30 years old. You have had a difficult childhood marked by physical abuse and neglect. You were placed in foster care at a young age. From the age of six you lived with your grandmother. Your grandmother died in September 2024. You found that loss difficult to process. She was the closest thing you had to a consistent parental figure. You have had little formal education, completing your schooling at the end of grade seven. You struggle to obtain and hold employment and have been largely reliant on Centrelink benefits. I am told you are keen to pursue employment in the future. You have obtained your white card and are interested in doing labouring work. You are also keen to reinstate contact with your two children.

You do not dispute the facts in respect of this matter. By your plea of guilty you accept that you were criminally responsible for attempting to avoid the possible consequences of not attending your urinalysis appointment. The idea of doctoring a medical certificate and submitting it to your case worker was initiated by your former partner. You agreed to the plan, including by forwarding the medical certificate to your case worker from your personal email address. At the time you were in a state of emotional distress due to the death of your grandmother. Ultimately, you say that what the medical certificate said about your mental health was in fact true. Your maintenance of the falsity of the medical certificate was short lived because you did not dispute that it was false during the Magistrates Court proceedings on 18 October 2024. You have pleaded guilty although this plea was entered at a late stage. This matter was listed for a possible trial this month. I am told that you changed your plea after disclosure of additional evidence.

You are currently in custody serving a sentence imposed in December last year. You are eligible for release on 20 February 2026. You intend to live with your mother until you can get your own independent accommodation on your release.

You have a lengthy history of offending commencing when you were a youth. You have been sentenced to periods of actual and suspended imprisonment. You have been the subject of proceedings in the Magistrates Court relating to breaches of suspended sentences on four occasions by my account. The HDO was imposed in respect of numerous dishonesty offences, breaches of bail, failures to appear, offences against public officers and disorderly conduct.

You are currently serving a sentence imposed on 22 December 2025 for breaches of a family violence order. This sentence was imposed in relation to offences you committed on 21 December 2025, the day you were released from prison after serving a four month period of imprisonment for numerous breaches of family violence order, common assault, breach of bail conditions, matters of dishonesty, drug offences and possession of ammunition, offences committed in August last year. Your history of offending both prior to and after you submitted the false medical certificate suggests poor compliance with and attitude towards court imposed orders and sentences.

The crime of perverting justice is always regarded as serious because of its tendency to undermine the justice system and the administration of the law. In this case, your conduct was directed at avoiding adverse consequences flowing from your non-compliance with an order made by a court and the due administration of that order. Not only did you seek to avoid the

consequences of not attending the urinalysis appointment, the false medical certificate sought to excuse you from any such obligations until the order was due to expire on 19 October 2024. Home detention orders are imposed by courts as an alternative to prison. Such orders are made to avoid the adverse consequences of a custodial sentence and to afford those sentenced to such orders the opportunity to participate in pro-social activities and foster their rehabilitation in a supervised and structured way to better enable their reintegration into the community as law abiding citizens. In my view, this is a serious example of this type of offence. General deterrence is an important consideration. It is necessary to send a message to others who may be minded to breach the conditions of such orders in this way that their conduct will not be tolerated.

I note that you did not continue to maintain that the medical certificate was valid once confronted with information to the contrary. It would have been difficult for you to do so given the strength of the evidence of its falsity that had been obtained by Community Corrections. It remains that the false medical certificate had been forwarded from your email address and had been relied upon you, at least until the Community Corrections ascertained it was not genuine. In light of your poor compliance with court orders generally, including sentencing orders, I see no alternative but to impose a period of imprisonment. I will take into account that you have spent all but one day of the last six months in custody when determining the length of that sentence. You are sentenced to a period of one month imprisonment from today.