

Lachlan Roberts, you plead guilty to three counts of assault. The crimes were committed in the early hours of the morning on 30 April 2023 in and just outside the Commercial Hotel in Launceston. You were there socialising with your sister and brother and one other friend. Bradley Harris and his friend Jarrod Pursell were there with Mr Pursell's partner and one other friend. For some reason a disagreement arose between the two groups. Mr Harris was with his companions in the dining room when your sister approached him, unhappy about something he had said earlier. The discussion became heated. You were not present at this stage. He told her to go away and she pushed him. There was some other pushing and shoving before you arrived on the scene. Mr Harris attempted to push past your sister as you approached. She punched him twice in the face before you then punched his face knocking him to the floor. You and your sister continued to punch Mr Harris to his head while he was on the ground. You are not criminally responsible for your sister's initial blows but you are responsible for the violence which immediately followed.

Mr Pursell and Mr Harris were shown outside by the security staff. A few minutes later, while Mr Purcell was waiting for the staff to retrieve his phone, you walked outside and punched him to the ground. His girlfriend attempted to intervene to protect him, and you turned your attention to her. Then Mr Harris stepped in to protect both his friends. You punched him so hard that he fell to the ground unconscious. As he lay unconscious on the footpath you stomped on his head twice.

At the same time one of your friends had taken Mr Purcell to the ground and, while he was there, you kicked him several times to the legs. You were separated by the security staff and you ran off. All of these incidents were captured on CCTV.

Mr Purcell required treatment for a swollen and bruised right eye and a partially broken tooth. Mr Harris was seriously injured. He was taken to hospital by ambulance. He presented with bruising to the right side of his head around his jaw, temple and ear. Blood was coming from his ear canal. Medical investigations disclosed that he had suffered an undisplaced fracture of the right temporal bone, the complex bone structure on the lower part of his skull under his ear. Fortunately there was no associated hearing loss, nerve damage, intracranial bleeding or brain or spinal fluid leak. However the impact on each of them has been significant. Assaults of this nature are highly traumatic for victims. Mr Purcell has required ongoing and complicated dental treatment and has had the type of psychological reaction which is to be expected. Mr Harris has been similarly impacted psychologically and has required ongoing treatment including two operations on his right ear.

You are now aged 22. You have no relevant prior convictions. You are in a stable relationship. You have worked since you left school in year 10 and you are now a first year apprentice carpenter. You have a carer role and some financial responsibility for younger siblings following your mother's death in September 2025. You have no mental health concerns or difficulties with abuse of alcohol or illicit drugs. These crimes were committed days before your 19th birthday. The sentencing principles which apply to young offenders apply to you. Your lack of maturity at the time made you more prone to ill-considered or rash decisions. You are likely to have lacked insight, judgment and self-control and may not have fully appreciated the nature, seriousness and consequences of your criminal conduct. There is a considerable community

interest in the rehabilitation of young offenders and a sentence of actual imprisonment should be imposed only if it is the only appropriate sentence. You have no prior convictions for violence. It is in your favour that you have pleaded guilty although it is not an early plea. It at least avoided the need for a trial, thus facilitating justice and avoiding the need for the victims to go through the additional trauma of having to give evidence.

Having made those comments, the dangers associated with assaults of this nature are well known. Part of the sentencing function of the court is to reflect the considerable community concern about public alcohol related violence committed late at night. Crimes like this are commonly committed by young men. It is necessary to condemn what you did, and punish you for it in the hope that it is made clear to you and others from the same cohort who might be inclined to act as you did what the consequences will be in the hope it may stop something which is so dangerous to the public from happening. Where deterrence, denunciation, protection of the community and appropriate punishment require more prominence, the weight to be attached to youth correspondingly reduces.

Balancing all of those considerations I think a home detention order is the appropriate sentence. The terms of the order will confine you to home between 6.00 pm and 6.00 am every day which, for a young man, is a significant punishment. It will however allow you to pursue your employment and family commitments. You are convicted on each count on the indictment. I impose one sentence. I make a home detention order. The operative period of the order is 15 months from today. I specify the premises at which you are to reside during the operational period of the order as [home detention premises] or such other addresses as may be approved by a probation officer. I order that you report to the office of Community Corrections at 111 Cameron Street Launceston at 9.00 am on Wednesday 25 February 2026, for induction into this order, and a further explanation as to its full terms.

There will be conditions that during the operational period of the order:

- (a) you must not commit an offence that is punishable by imprisonment;
- (b) you must reside at the home detention premises;
- (c) you must be at the home detention premises between 6.00 pm and 6.00 am on each day unless:
 - (i) you are travelling to or from, or are at, premises at which you are seeking urgent medical treatment or dental treatment; or
 - (ii) because it is necessary to not be on the premises in order to avoid, or minimise a serious risk of, the death of, or injury to, you or another person; or
 - (iii) with the approval, of a probation officer or prescribed officer, given –
 - so as to enable you to comply with a special condition; or
 - so as to enable you to seek or engage in employment; or
 - so as to enable you to attend an educational or training course or activity; or
 - so as to enable you to attend a rehabilitative or re-integrative activity or program; or
 - so as to enable you to attend a court; or
 - for any other purpose approved by the probation officer or prescribed officer.
- (d) you must permit a police officer, probation officer or prescribed officer to enter the home detention premises;
- (e) you must permit a police officer to –
 - (i) conduct a search of the home detention premises; and
 - (ii) conduct a frisk search, within the meaning of the *Search Warrants Act 1997*, of you, at the home detention premises or at any other place or premises; and

- (iii) take a sample of a substance found on the home detention premises or on the person of you;
- (f) you must comply with any reasonable and lawful directions of a probation officer or prescribed officer, including any directions as to the kind of employment, or the place of employment, of you;
- (g) you must submit to electronic monitoring, including by wearing or carrying an electronic device and:
 - (i) you must not, nor permit another person to, tamper with, damage or disable any device used for the purpose of the electronic monitoring; and
 - (ii) you must comply with all reasonable and lawful directions given to you in relation to the electronic monitoring including in relation to the installation, attachment or operation of a device or system used for the purpose of electronic monitoring by a police officer, a probation officer or prescribed officer or another person whose functions involve the installation or operation of a device or system used for the purposes of electronic monitoring;
- (h) you must, if directed by a probation officer or prescribed officer engage in a personal development activity, counselling, or treatment, engage in the activity, counselling or treatment in accordance with any directions given by the probation officer or prescribed officer;
- (i) you must submit to the supervision of a Community Corrections officer as required by that officer;
- (j) you must not take any illicit or prohibited substances. Illicit and prohibited substances include any controlled drug as defined by the *Misuse of Drugs Act* 2001, and any medication containing an opiate, benzodiazepine, bupropion, hydrochloride or pseudoephedrine, unless you provide written evidence from your medical professional that you have been prescribed the relevant medication;
- (l) you must, if directed to do so by a police officer, probation officer or prescribed officer, submit to a breath test, urine test, or other test, for the presence of an illicit drug;
- (m) you must maintain in operating condition an active mobile phone service, provide the contact details to Community Corrections and be accessible for contact through this device at all times.

This order comes into effect immediately, although you may not be fitted with the electronic monitoring device until tomorrow. You must understand that if you do not comply with the conditions, imprisonment is likely. If you breach the order by committing another offence, the order must be cancelled unless there are exceptional circumstances, and in that case imprisonment would be highly likely.