

STATE OF TASMANIA v JOEL KEITH LOMAS
COMMENTS ON PASSING SENTENCE

18 MAY 2026
JAGO J

Joel Keith Lomas, you have pleaded guilty to one count of aggravated assault. You pointed a firearm at two people, one was the mother of your partner, whom I shall refer to as "F" and the second was your partner's 15-year-old sister, whom I shall refer to as "N".

On 26 October 2024, your partner phoned her mother following an argument that she had had with you. She was upset and told her mother to come and get her. When her mother received the call, she was out shopping with N. F drove directly to the home where you and her daughter lived. She pulled the car up outside of the residence. N opened the passenger door and called out for her sister. F remained seated in the driver's seat. You opened the front door and looked towards the complainant's vehicle. You then shut the door. Seconds later, you re-opened the door and this time you were holding a firearm. F and N were still at their motor vehicle. You pointed the firearm at them and said, "If you don't fucking leave right now I am going to fucking shoot you". N immediately told her mother to drive because she had seen the firearm. The complainants drove around the corner where they parked and telephoned police.

Police arrived shortly after and spoke to you. They were unable to locate the firearm. You were not charged at that time. On 9 May 2025, you sent a message to N via Snapchat. In that message, you admitted that you sold the firearm after you "done what I done because I never wanted anyone to feel that way again".

N reported the receipt of that message to police. You were subsequently arrested. During a record of interview, you admitted to police that you had pointed a firearm at F and N but you claimed at that time that it was a replica gel blaster firearm. You now admit it was a real firearm and that you have since disposed of that firearm. You also told police that you sent N the message because you felt bad because you knew that they had believed it was a real firearm. That belief was obviously well founded as it was a real firearm.

It is not known whether the firearm you produced was loaded and capable of discharging ammunition, but in many ways it matters not. It is the act of pointing the firearm and threatening to shoot them which is sinister. When N saw the firearm, she believed it was real. She conveyed that to her mother. Threatening the complainants with the firearm in the manner that you did was a nasty thing to do. It caused them both considerable trauma and distress.

I have received victim impact statements from both N and F. N, in particular, was terrified by the experience. As noted, she was only 15 at the time. She believed it was a firearm and genuinely believed she was going to die. She comments in her impact statement as to how powerless she felt. She continues to experience ongoing anxiety and fear. She is hypervigilant and her sense of security has been badly affected.

Similarly, F has been traumatised by this incident. After she drove away, she felt a great sense of apprehension as to what might happen to her daughter, your partner, given she believed she was in the house with you and the firearm. Both N and F continue to hold fears that you will behave in this manner again and their daughter and sister will be at risk.

You are 28 years of age. As at the date of this crime, you had a minimal criminal history involving only some offences under the *Misuse of Drugs Act*. I am told at the time of this crime you were using methylamphetamine heavily. You had a difficult upbringing. You were raised

by your mother. You had no relationship with your biological father. Your mother remarried and you had a difficult relationship with your stepfather. You had significant learning disabilities and had issues with reading and writing. You were regularly expelled from school for disciplinary reasons. It turns out that you have ADHD, which was untreated and unmedicated during your childhood. This led to you self-medicating and using illicit substances. I am told you were introduced to methylamphetamine when you were approximately 19 years of age. Very quickly your use escalated to chronic levels.

You spent 11 days in custody following your arrest for this matter. I am told that was a turning point for you. Upon your release, you decided to address your drug use. You commenced counselling in November 2025. You continued with that counselling for several months and found it of great assistance. I am told that you have not used illicit substances for some 12 months now.

Your relationship with your partner remains ongoing, although there is a family violence order currently operating. You have two children to your relationship with your partner. You continue to see them in accordance with the limitations imposed by the family violence order. I am told that you are now compliant with the terms of that order, although I note that in August 2025, you committed several breaches of the interim family violence order. You were subsequently sentenced for those matters in the Devonport Magistrates Court in March 2026. At the same time, you were sentenced for a matter of common assault which was committed against a male. You were given a community correction order by way of sentence. It seems you are successfully completing that order.

You pleaded guilty to this matter at a relatively early stage, although I infer that when police attended in October 2024, you did not tell them of your actions as you were not at that time charged and the firearm was not found. Moreover, when you spoke to police after N had reported the sending of the message, you were not frank with them. You claimed the firearm was a replica gel blaster rather than admitting it was a genuine firearm. Since then, however, you have admitted that the firearm was a genuine one, and you have apologised to your mother-in-law and to N. I am told that you are genuinely ashamed of your conduct and feel terrible about the stress and anxiety that you have caused for F and N, a claim which is perhaps consistent with you now being honest about the true nature of the firearm.

This is undoubtedly a serious matter. Threatening to shoot someone with a firearm, is a serious form of assault. Not only did you produce the firearm, but you uttered the words. "I am going to fucking shoot you". Your behaviour caused N and F to believe that they were genuinely in danger. The fear you instilled, and the experience N and F endured is of itself a serious consequence of your crime. This type of traumatic experience often proves to be debilitating and leads to serious psychological consequences. In sentencing any matter of this nature, general deterrence and denunciation, punishment and protection of victims are paramount sentencing considerations.

I am of the view that the only appropriate sentencing order is a period of imprisonment. Such is necessary to mark the seriousness of your conduct. A very clear message must be sent to you and others who may be minded to behaving in this way, that such behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Your act had the capacity to, and it appears has, caused serious psychological harm.

Having regard however to your personal circumstances, your plea of guilty, the absence of prior criminal offending, and in particular the efforts you have made in recent times to address your drug use, I am satisfied the execution of the period of imprisonment can be properly suspended. You need to appreciate, however, Mr Lomas, that this was finely balanced determination and if you are foolish enough to breach the terms of the suspended sentence, then you should readily expect to serve that period in custody.

I make the following orders. You are convicted of the crime of aggravated assault. You are sentenced to imprisonment for a period of 14 months, the execution of which is suspended on condition that you commit no offences punishable by imprisonment for a period of two years.