

Patrick Johnston, you have pleaded guilty to being unlawfully armed in public. I also agreed to deal with your plea of guilty to six counts of destroying property and one count of secreting yourself within the curtilage of a dwelling house.

For about an hour just after midday on 7 February 2026, you wandered in and around the Mowbray business centre with a knife and using it to stab the tyres of parked cars. Many people saw you and you caused widespread alarm. Multiple phone calls were made to the police. You confronted some of these people directly. You gestured to the female driver of a car stopped on Invermay Road by pointing at her and running your thumb across your throat. There was a child in one of the cars you approached to stab the tyres. You asked another female witness who saw you with the knife “What the fuck do you want”. She was very frightened. She went inside the business in which she worked and told the other staff to lock the doors. The public complaints to police continued as you travelled through Mowbray Marketplace, Pleasant Street and Vermont Road. The police eventually found and arrested you after a report that you were in Joffre Street with a large knife. Once found by the police you attempted to hide from them in the yard of one of the houses. The knife was found nearby but it has not been suggested that the owners of that house were aware of your presence.

You are now 33. It is in your favour that you pleaded guilty. Your personal circumstances were outlined by your counsel and in a pre-sentence report from a probation officer. You have little or no family support and were, at least at the time of these offences, without stable accommodation. Your personal circumstances are complicated by your mental health. You suffer from schizophrenia although it seems from the pre-sentence report that you do not accept the diagnosis and are reluctant to address it. You are presently subject to a treatment order made under the *Mental Health Act*. The result is that you are supervised in the community by community mental health officers and ultimately by the Civil and Administrative Tribunal. However, abuse of alcohol also plays a significant part. You have something of a history of similar offences. In 2019 you were made subject to a community correction order for offences including brandishing a knife at the driver of a car and abusing the police. In 2025 you assaulted a female by striking her and holding a knife to her throat. You were sentenced to imprisonment for just over two months. Following your release you re-offended by, in November 2025, committing a series of anti-social offences including disorderly conduct, common assault, and assaulting, threatening and abusing police. One of the common assaults included a threat with a knife. On 16 December 2025 you were sentenced to imprisonment for three months, two months of which were suspended. There were conditions of that order that you comply with the conditions of a community correction order, no doubt made to assist you in the community, but you did not engage with the supervision. You breached that suspended sentence by committing further offences, including three counts of unlawfully possessing a dangerous article in public, respectively on 23 January 2026 with a sharpened butter knife, on 28 January 2026 with another small knife and on 5 February 2026 with a switch blade knife. You were sentenced for those offences on 1 May 2026 and ordered to serve a total of 10 weeks and 6 days from 7 February, the day you were arrested. The offences for which I am to sentence you came at the tail end of that offending, so totality has some part to play. Having said that, I think that these offences are more serious and, in any event, you were treated leniently by the magistrates. This pattern of offences indicates clearly that specific deterrence and, even more importantly, protection of the public are now important considerations. You say that you became frustrated and angry about your situation generally and you did not intend to harm any of the many members of the public

who saw you on 7 February, but that does make the experience any less frightening or concerning for them.

As to the property offences, you have no means of compensating the owners of the six cars which were damaged. You were due to be released from your last sentence on 24 April 2026, so the sentence I am about to impose will commence then. A further term of actual custody is required before you are released. However, balancing all the various competing considerations, I will suspend part of the term with conditions which, once again, are aimed at providing you with the assistance you need in the community to address concerns about addiction, mental health, aggression and housing. I was asked by the author of the pre-sentence report to impose a condition that you attend court again after your release so your progress and compliance can be monitored. I will fashion the sentence to achieve that aim. If, this time, you do not comply, you cannot expect any further lenience and an application should quickly be made, either before or after the review, to require you to serve the balance of the sentence.

Patrick Johnston, you are convicted on each count on complaint 30856/26. I order that the knife seized by the police is forfeited to the State. You are sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 10 months from 24 April 2026. I suspend six months of that term for 18 months from your release on the following conditions:

- (a) you are not to commit another offence punishable by imprisonment during that period. If you breach that condition you will be required to serve the term unless that is unjust;
- (b) you are to comply with the conditions of the following community correction order.

I make a community correction order for 18 months from your release. There are conditions of that order that:

- (a) during the 18 month operational period of the order, commencing on your release, you will be subject to the supervision of a probation officer. The conditions of the order will be set out in the order you will be given. These include that you must report to a probation officer at the office of Community Corrections in Launceston within three clear working days of your release, you must submit to supervision and comply with the directions given by your probation officer, you must not leave Tasmania without permission and you must notify of any change of address.
- (b) in addition to the core conditions, the order will also include the following special conditions that you must, during the operational period of the order:
 - i. submit to the supervision of a Community Corrections officer as required by that officer;
 - ii. attend educational and other programs, undergo assessment and treatment for alcohol or drug dependency, submit to testing for alcohol or drug use and submit to medical, psychological or psychiatric assessment or treatment as directed by a probation officer;
 - iii. attend, participate in and complete the EQUIPS addiction program if directed to do so by a probation officer;
 - iv. attend, participate in and complete the EQUIPS Aggression Program if directed to do so by a probation officer;
 - v. comply with the terms of any order made under the *Mental Health Act* which applies to you; and
 - vi. you must appear before the Supreme Court of Tasmania, Cameron Street Launceston, at 2.15 pm on Friday 6 November 2026.