

STATE OF TASMANIA v RYAN ALBERT PURDY
COMMENTS ON PASSING SENTENCE

10 JULY 2026
ESTCOURT J

The defendant, Ryan Albert Purdy, aged 36 at the time of the offending has pleaded guilty to one count of unlawfully injuring property, one count of assault and one count of wounding. He is the cousin of one of the complainants, Bianca Rose Clark. The other complainant is her partner, Michael Warren Charlton.

The incident arose from a misunderstanding where the defendant believed that Mr Charlton had made a derogatory comment about him. This led to animosity between the defendant and the complainants.

On 2 October 2024, the defendant drove to the complainants' residence in a black Mitsubishi Triton, after making threats. He drove onto the footpath outside their house, reversed, and then drove through their wooden fence into their backyard, where the complainants were standing. The defendant shouted threats at the complainants and drove his vehicle towards them, forcing them to take evasive action. A physical altercation ensued, between Mr Charlton and the defendant in which Mr Charlton pulled the defendant from his truck and during which the defendant used a box cutter to inflict a five-centimetre laceration on Mr Charlton's forearm.

The defendant was restrained by Mr Charlton and his brother until the police arrived. A forensic examination found both the defendant's and Mr Charlton's DNA on a red-handled knife and an orange box cutter, recovered from the scene.

Counsel for the defendant submitted that the defendant acted in excessive self-defence, potentially with an element of recklessness. The State concedes that the wounding was a case of excessive self-defence, with an element of recklessness. However, it was submitted that the defendant's actions, including driving a large vehicle directly at the complainants, were inherently dangerous and disproportionate to the complainant's, Mr Charlton's, attempt to remove the defendant from his truck.

The defendant had a period of stability between 2017 and 2024, during which he ran a successful fencing and landscaping business. However, a back injury led to an addiction to pain medication and later to illicit drug use, which caused personal and professional difficulties. The defendant has since ceased drug use and is in a stable relationship. He expressed a desire to rebuild his life and re-establish his business upon his release. He has now started drug and alcohol treatment and has commenced depot injections.

The defendant has had an extensive criminal history, running to 35 pages of prior convictions in Tasmania and other Australian states, involving dangerous driving and offences of violence. The State urges caution regarding claims of rehabilitation, given further allegations of violent offending against the defendant.

Counsel for the defendant drew attention to the defendant's guilty plea, which followed negotiations with the State, and I take that into account. The defendant has spent 308 days in custody on remand attributable this matter.

I have had read to me a victim impact statements from Ms Clark who now lives in fear and had to move house as a result of the offending. She has become a recluse and her children have also been affected.

This was a disgraceful affair and the violence used by the defendant was a totally disproportionate response to both the insult involved, and the force advanced by Mr Charlton. Fortunately the wound inflicted upon Mr Charlton was not of greater seriousness than it was, and the damage to property was, relatively speaking, limited. The assault, I note was by threat. Nonetheless, specific deterrence remains a highly relevant sentencing factor in this case.

The defendant is convicted on all counts and is sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, backdated to 2 September 2025, with the balance suspended from today on condition that the defendant commit no offence punishable by imprisonment for a period of 12 months from his release from prison.