

Steven Ewart, you plead guilty to trafficking in a controlled substance. At 4.45 pm on Friday 23 May 2025 a black Audi sedan being driven by you was pulled over by the police on the Midland Highway just south of Campbell Town. Your partner was a front seat passenger. Under the driver seat the police found a paper bag containing a cryovac package. Inside the package was a snap lock bag containing 499 grams of methylamphetamine. You had driven to an arranged location at Brighton, just north of Hobart, and at around 3.30 pm, accepted delivery of the drug from another person. You were transporting the package back to Launceston.

When you were interviewed by the police you disclaimed any knowledge of the drug and told many obvious lies about how you had come to be in possession of it. By your plea you now accept that you were transporting the drug in the belief that someone else intended to sell it. The State accepts that it was not your intention to sell the drug yourself. Forensic testing of the package suggested the involvement of at least two other persons.

You are now aged 56. You have adult children. You had your own plastering business until you were seriously injured in a work accident in 2018. You now receive a disability support pension for which you are eligible because of a complex pain syndrome and arthritis. Your wife is your carer. You have some drug related prior convictions but they are for use and possession and do not involve a commercial element. One consequence of your injury was that you began to use methylamphetamine. During the period leading up to this crime you accumulated a drug debt of about \$10,000. You agreed to participate in the transport of this drug in return for forgiveness of the debt. You claim to have been apprehensive about the possible consequences if you did not agree. Your role was limited to picking up the package and delivering it by car to Launceston.

The seriousness of trafficking in illicit drugs has been emphasised on many occasions. Those who traffic in illicit drugs should expect harsh punishment. The use of and trade in methylamphetamine causes terrible harm. It is a matter of great concern to the courts and the community and generates other offending, especially crimes of dishonesty and violence. The quantity of the drug you were transporting is relevant to sentence. By your actions you would have contributed to the distribution of a very large amount of the drug. Sold in ounce quantities it could have returned upwards of \$100,000. Sold in point form, as is generally the case in sales to the ultimate user, it could have returned almost \$350,000.

I was asked to consider making a drug treatment order. Such an order is primarily aimed at rehabilitation. The State did not dispute your assertion that your crime originated from addiction. In general, trafficking to fund addiction is regarded as less serious than trafficking motivated purely by profit. Your involvement concerned a single trip which would not have been lengthy. You did not import the drug into Tasmania. However, for trafficking, deterrence, denunciation and punishment are the dominant sentencing factors, and factors personal to an offender are generally to be subordinated to those aims. It is well known and understood that those who traffic in this drug, no matter where along the supply chain, face heavy prison sentences, especially for such a quantity. I heard submissions about whether a drug treatment order may be made in respect of a sentence longer than two years. I do not need to resolve that question because a drug treatment order is not, in this case, an appropriate sentence whatever the length of the proposed term.

Steven Ewart, you are convicted on the indictment. I order that the phone and packaging listed as items 1 and 2 on property seizure record 209306 are forfeited to the State. Pursuant to the *Misuse of Drugs Act*, s 36B, I assess the reasonable expense of and attending the analysis and examination of the controlled substance as \$279 and award that sum against you as part of the costs of the prosecutor. You have 28 days to pay. You are sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 21 months from today. I order that you not be eligible for parole until having served half of that term.