

RFS, you plead guilty to armed robbery. At about 7.30 pm on 29 September 2025 the complainant, a 22 year old international student from the University of Tasmania, was walking alone across the bridge near the university accommodation at Inveresk. You were 15 at the time. You rode past on your push bike. You stopped in front of him, got off your bike, produced a knife from your pocket and said “I will shank you cunt”. That was a threat to stab him. You demanded he hand over his iPhone. You asked him what kind of phone he had, and made him unlock it and wipe the contents. You asked him what cash he had and he told you he had none. You then stole the phone and left on your bike.

The incident was captured on CCTV and you were arrested on 9 October 2025. When interviewed you admitted what you had done. The stolen phone has not been recovered.

You are now aged 16. I was given some information about you by your lawyer, in a pre-sentence report prepared by your youth justice worker and also in a report prepared by James Blair, a psychologist. It is not necessary to go through all the details now but I take it all into account. Since you were born your family circumstances have been very difficult. You have been subjected to violence, emotional abuse, drug use and neglect. Over the last few years you have not had a stable place to live and your lifestyle has been chaotic. You have not been attending school regularly. You have been using cannabis and, worse still, methylamphetamine. You have been assessed as suffering from autism, ADHD and there is a possibility of some other difficulties which affect your ability to learn and function properly in the community. You began committing offences when you were 14 and there have been a lot since then, including burglary and stealing, carrying weapons, and destroying property. A magistrate made a probation order in October 2024 when you were 14. Another probation order was made in May 2025. Despite the attempts the youth justice workers made to help you, neither order seemed to make much difference because you kept committing offences. In December 2025 you were ordered to perform some community service.

These other offences are all concerning, but the armed robbery is by far the most serious. It is an extremely serious crime. You confronted a man you did not know in public and threatened him with a knife with serious, possibly fatal violence. Throughout the robbery he feared he would be stabbed. It must have been terrifying. It makes it worse that you were affected by methylamphetamine at the time. The reason that crimes of this nature are so serious is not because of the property involved, but because of the terrible psychological impact, often lifelong, that victims may experience. That is all confirmed by the victim impact statement I was given.

You are being sentenced in the Supreme Court. I have power to sentence you either as an adult or as a youth. Either way, your rehabilitation is an important consideration. Detaining you in custody should be a last resort and for as short a time as is necessary. Sometimes though, an offence is so serious, that imprisonment or detention is the only appropriate sentence. If you were an adult there is no doubt that you would be going to prison for a long time. I will impose sentence under the *Youth Justices Act*. Even so, there is no doubt that this offence is so serious that detention is the only appropriate sentence. The only question is whether I should suspend it and give you the opportunity to avoid having to actually serve it.

I have decided to give you that chance. You are now 16. It is in your favour that you pleaded guilty. There have been some positive changes and signs that things are looking up. Importantly,

you have been found your own unit to live in. You say you have stopped using methylamphetamine and that you want to stop committing offences and go back to school. There are many people who are willing to help you keep out of trouble and get your life in order. You will have support with living independently, education, employment, addressing your drug use and with assessment and treatment of your various conditions. However, it will be up to you to make the most of the chance the court is giving you. If you do, then everyone will be better off. If you don't, and you commit further offences, there is a very high chance that you will be required to serve an actual period of detention.

You spent 36 days in custody following your arrest and so I will take that into account. The crime is so serious that I regard it as necessary to record a conviction, despite the effect that may have on your rehabilitation and the chance of finding employment. To ensure that there is sufficient punishment I will add a requirement that you perform community service.

You are convicted on the indictment. I make a compensation order in favour of the complainant in an amount to be assessed. The following orders are made under the *Youth Justice Act*, Part 4, and I specify that the responsible Department in relation to that Act is to be responsible for all or any matters relating to the administration of the orders.

You are sentenced to detention for 12 months from 28 May 2026. I suspend the balance of that term for 12 months from today. There are conditions of the order that during the 12 month period of suspension:

- (a) you must not commit another offence which if committed by an adult could be punishable by imprisonment;
- (b) you must report to the assigned youth justice worker as required by the youth justice worker;
- (c) you must receive visits from the assigned youth justice worker as required by the youth justice worker;
- (d) you must notify the assigned youth justice worker of any change of residence, employment or school, or other educational or training establishment, before, or within 2 working days after, the change;
- (e) you must obey the reasonable and lawful instructions of the assigned youth justice worker;
- (f) you must attend educational, personal, health and other programs as directed by the assigned youth justice worker;
- (g) you must, as directed by the Secretary, submit to testing for controlled substances or alcohol;
- (h) you must undergo medical, psychiatric, psychological and drug counselling and treatment as directed by the assigned youth justice worker;
- (i) you must report to your youth justice worker, Aymie Tyson, at 115-119 Cameron Street, Launceston within two working days on or before 5 pm on Tuesday 7 July 2026;
- (j) you must, if directed to do so by a youth justice worker or police officer, submit to testing for controlled substances or alcohol; and
- (k) you must reside at an address approved by your youth justice worker; and
- (l) you must comply with the community service order I am about to make.

I also make a community service order. The full terms of the order will be set out for you in a document you will be given. The terms of it are that you are to report to your youth justice worker as already required and within 12 months, perform, in a satisfactory way, 49 hours of the community service activity that your assigned youth justice worker directs you to perform.