

**From:** [William Chirgwin](#)  
**To:** [sentencingcouncil](#)  
**Subject:** ED RMS: Submission - assaults on emergency/ essential services workers  
**Date:** Wednesday, 29 July 2020 8:13:29 AM

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To the sentencing council,

Re making a submission.

Last September, at Goulburn gaol, a prisoner in the minimum security area assaulted two Corrections staff members, one being pushed to the chest and on myself being punched to the face and head.

It involved the prisoner pushing one staff member to the chest who ended up on the ground and then coming up from behind and punching me to head and face over and over again. He was yelling out allah ackbar (arabic for god is great) while he continued to punched me. He was later charged by Police: common assault (law enforcement – not Police officer) x 1 and assault occasioning actual bodily harm (law enforcement officer – not Police) x 1.

During several local court mentions the accused prisoner wanted to have the facts amended, to delete the part about yelling allah ackbar during the assault. A discussion with Police, who asked if we agreed, resulted in the request being denied by us (the victims).

The prisoner finally pleaded guilty to the facts in their original form, getting a sentence Police inquiries suggested was a good result in the degree of severity. The sentence was 30 months all up, 20 months in custody dating from when his previous sentence expired in January this year. In my view, it seemed a fair sentence.

The support by way of communications with the Police constable in charge of the case, pending the matter being finalised and afterwards, was very good throughout, allowing easy access and open discussions.

As to the magistrate's sentencing remarks, given the prisoner obviously does suffer from a mental illness and has been radicalised by islam, I asked the gaol Governor for the sentencing remarks be obtained, something that is not automatic from the local court, to be placed on his gaol file. The governor agreed to get the remarks to better manage the prisoner in custody and later upon his release to parole.

The prisoner certainly poses a risk to prison staff, Police and ultimately the public upon his release to the community in the future. I do feel Corrections officers should also be stated in the legislation, as are Police, given the nature of the employment in dealing with the mentally ill and sometimes the radicalised in assault matters. Gaols can be violent and more needs to be done to protect staff from prisoners in custody who are violent.

Kind regards,

William Chirgwin.  
(a Corrections officer at Goulburn gaol)

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