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National Victoria [Crime](#)

‘Slight and childlike’ man who raped 12-year-old girl jailed for a year

Georgia Westgarth and [Alex Crowe](#)

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A man who raped a child he met online has been sentenced to 12 months in jail, with the judge raising concerns that his “slight and childlike appearance” would make him a target for sexual predators in prison.

Tyler Sullivan was 20 years old when he crept into the bedroom of his 12-year-old victim two years ago, raping her as her mother slept in the next room.



Tyler Sullivan posed as a teenager to groom his young victim online. [A CURRENT AFFAIR](#)

Sullivan, now 22, had first groomed the primary school student online, posing as a 14-year-old boy to gain her trust before catching a train and an Uber across Melbourne to sneak into her home.

He will serve just 12 months behind bars, after he pleaded guilty to charges of sexual penetration of a child under 16, possession of child abuse material and using a carriage service for child abuse material.

The victim's mother, who can't be identified for legal reasons, said her daughter had just turned 12 and was in primary school when she was abused.

"I can never get back her innocence, her innocence was taken," she said.

"This is a kid that was playing netball, grade six, her last year of school looking forward to starting high school, doing kid things."

During trial proceedings in May, Judge Richard Maidment told the court that because Tyler looked younger than his age, he would be at serious risk of being targeted in jail.

"I would like to get the maximum help possible for a situation where one has serious offending on one hand, but a very vulnerable accused who looks significantly younger than his years who will be in an adult prison," Maidment said.

Maidment reprimanded Sullivan – while acknowledging that he suffered from mental health concerns including social anxiety, depression and personality disorder – when handing down the sentence in the County Court on Thursday.

The judge also noted he had considered Sullivan's safety in prison ahead of handing down the sentence.

"You undoubtedly knew that what you were doing was unlawful and morally wrong ... you knew your first victim was 12 years old from the first online contact ... you set out to deceive her," he said.

"[Sullivan's] slight and childlike appearance is likely to be attractive to sexual predators you may encounter in a prison environment."

Sullivan was sentenced to 12 months, which will mean just 11 months behind bars as he's already served one month in custody. From July next year, he will have to obey a three-year community corrections order, meaning he can serve the time at home.

The victim's mum said they had been hoping for the maximum penalty, which in Victoria was 15 years in prison.

"Here's my daughter on my shoulder, the victim, nothing was said in regards to her wellbeing. I was livid, it took every ounce of me to keep my cool in that courtroom," she said.

"People like that need to be kept off our streets."

The victim's mother said her daughter was only just beginning to understand and accept that she was not to blame.

She said the family had been through months of psychology sessions and appointments since the abuse.

"I wish that I'd gotten up to go to the toilet, I wish that I'd gotten up to get a drink of water and caught him," she said.

“All I want is justice. My daughter’s got to live with this for the rest of her life and I pray and hope she has some normality, I pray and hope she has normal relationships.”

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Alex Crowe has worked as a breaking news reporter for The Age since June 2023. Previously, she was environment reporter at The Canberra Times.
