

Abuse past rebounds

Leanne Edmestone, CourierMail
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A MARTIAL arts instructor and former air cadets leader has been jailed for four years after being convicted of sexually abusing four teenage boys in the 1970s.

Graham Charles Wickson, 52, a state advertising manager, was found guilty by a Brisbane District Court jury yesterday of six counts of indecently dealing with a boy under 16 years and one count of indecently dealing with a boy under 14 years.

He was found not guilty of a further charge of indecently dealing with a boy under 16 years, and the jury was hung on a ninth charge – which was later annulled by the Crown.

During the week-long trial, the court heard the offences happened in the 1970s while Wickson, then aged 20-23 years, was involved with co-ordinating air cadet groups or students for his Brighton kung fu school.

He was a member of the RAAF reserves until 1978.

The court heard the boys, aged 13 to 15 years, were systematically corrupted for Wickson's sexual gratification – which included offences of touching, oral sex, masturbation and indecent photography.

A police raid on Wickson's home found old photographs of young boys at campsites and kung fu tournaments – some of which were inscribed with terms such as "my special little friend".

Two victim impact statements read to the court detailed the significant impact the offences had on the men – each of whom described depression, suicidal thoughts, anger, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual confusion and relationship difficulties.

One described how he was "brainwashed" by the charismatic Wickson, and at 15 years was persuaded to live with him and another since-convicted pedophile when his own father died.

He was regularly molested for several years.

The victim also said Wickson had convinced people he was a "messiah" who could diagnose illnesses by reading auras and iridology – using this so-called power to keep his young victims submissive.

Judge Michael Forde said Wickson had shown absolutely no remorse and provided no co-operation to police.

"It's a pity someone like yourself who had so much to offer in terms of leadership and nurturing young boys' potential . . . have abused that trust and potential," Judge Forde said.

He said any benefit to possibly hundreds of other boys over the years had been ruined by his conduct towards the four victims. Wickson showed no emotion as Judge Forde sentenced him to four years' jail.

Yesterday lawyer Simon Harrison said a civil class action was expected to be launched against Wickson and the RAAF on behalf of several other men, not involved in yesterday's case, who also claimed to be abuse victims.

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