

# Former Australian Navy commander sentenced to jail for two years for historic sex abuse of boys

By [Melissa Mackay](#)

Posted about 3 hours ago – 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019



**Photo:** [David Graham, pictured here in 2013 with former Governor-General Quentin Bryce, has been jailed for child sex offences. \(Supplied: Australian Defence Force\)](#)

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A disgraced former Navy commander will spend the next two years in jail and 15 years listed on a child sex offender register after he was found guilty of seven child sex offences.

## **Key points:**

- David Graham, 50, was found guilty of three counts of indecent dealing with a child under 10 years, three acts of gross indecency and attempted sexual intercourse
- One victim said Graham's predatory abuse had caused him ongoing psychological problems
- Graham did not express any remorse or concern for his victims, and did not accept any responsibility for his actions, the judge found

David Graham, 50, [was found guilty](#) of inappropriately touching two young boys in Darwin between 2006 and 2008, as well as attempting to rape one of them while camping near Alice Springs.

Justice Graham Hiley sentenced him on Tuesday in the Supreme Court in Darwin to five years behind bars, to be suspended after two years.

## **Abuse had extreme effects on victims**

The sexual abuse had extreme impacts on the two victims, who are now young adults, with both suffering mental health issues and one even attempting suicide, the court heard.

"I became withdrawn, anxious, and scared about what people would think about me," one victim said in a statement.

"I felt like I couldn't do anything about it."

The man, who cannot be identified, also wrote directly to his abuser in his statement to the court.

"You and I, and now the world, know that you are guilty. I hope you see through your lies and realise that until you admit your guilt, you can't be helped," he wrote.

The younger victim, who saw Graham as a "father figure", told the court the reality of the abuse didn't sink in until he reached puberty.

"My belief is that Graham is solely to blame for not only the turmoil I faced as a child or the delinquent I became throughout puberty but also the mental instability I face," he said.

"I believe that he should pay for every drink that I've had past moderation, every suicidal thought that has ever entered my head, every sleepless night I had as a child, and for every day of my life that I have to bear the knowledge that I was a victim of sexual assault.

"The predatory and sexually abusive actions of David Graham have undoubtedly been the cause of the immense emotional and psychological damage that continues to wreak issues within my psyche today."

The court heard Graham's abuse of the boys was "opportunistic" and despite only being charged with seven offences, he had abused them "at least" 10 times.

## **Boys idolised and trusted senior naval officer**

Graham did not display emotion as he sat in the dock as Justice Hiley read out his sentencing remarks.

"Your conduct is particularly serious. Firstly, both of your victims were vulnerable," he said.

"[The younger victim] idolised you, he permitted you to do these things to him, even though he knew what you were doing was wrong.

"You knew the parents had complete trust in you ... it was also based on trust in you in your capacity as a senior naval officer. You breached that trust and abused your power over those boys."

## **Offender expressed no remorse, responsibility**

Graham's barrister, Tom Berkley, told the court he'd been "embarrassed" by the media attention his trial received, and that Graham was otherwise a man of good character.

Justice Hiley found the offending was in the "middle" range of seriousness for child sex offending.

"You do not express any remorse, you have not expressed any concern for your victims, and you do not accept any responsibility for your conduct," Justice Hiley said.

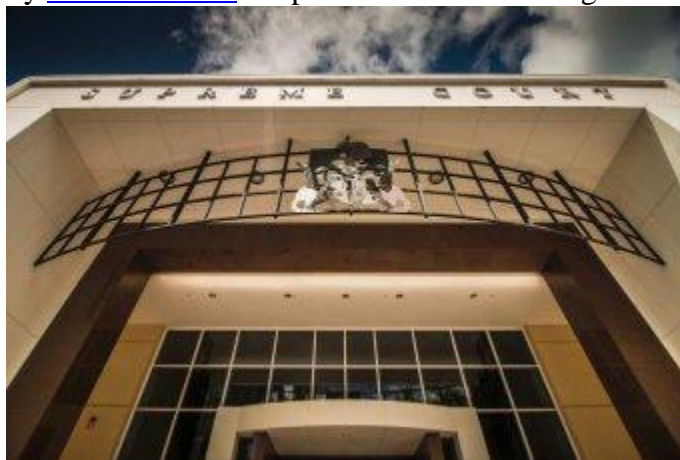
"Because of your denials, your victims had to be strongly challenged on their evidence."

Graham will be released from prison in August 2021.

**Topics:** [child-abuse](#), [child-care](#), [mental-health](#), [crime](#), [sexual-misconduct](#), [sexual-offences](#), [darwin-0800](#), [nt](#)

# Former high-ranking Australian Navy officer found guilty of historical child sex offences

By [Neda Vanovac](#) Updated about 4 hours ago - 14 August 2019



**Photo:** [David Graham was found guilty of seven of eight charges. \(ABC News: Tristan Hoofft\)](#)  
**Related Story:** [Former high-ranking Navy officer pleads not guilty to historic child sex offences](#)

A former high-ranking Australian Navy officer has been found guilty of historical child sex offences.

## Key points:

- David Graham, 50, was charged with three counts of indecent dealing with a child under 10 years, three acts of gross indecency, aggravated assault, and attempted sexual intercourse
- A jury found him guilty of all but the aggravated assault charge
- The offences against the two boys occurred in the Northern Territory between 2004 and 2006

David Graham, 50, was charged with three counts of indecent dealing with a child under 10 years, three acts of gross indecency — including one charge relating to a child under 16 — aggravated assault, and attempted sexual intercourse.

A jury took two-and-a-half hours to find him guilty on Wednesday in Darwin's Supreme Court of all seven sexual offences, but cleared him of the aggravated assault charge.

Graham had been extradited to Darwin from Canberra to face court.

The charges against him relate to alleged incidents in the Northern Territory between 2004 and 2006, when the two complainants were children.

Both boys are now adults.

The court previously heard that the two complainants, who cannot be identified, kept the allegations to themselves until several years after the incidents occurred.

One of the complainants said he recalled three incidents in which Graham touched his genitals when they were alone together.

Prosecutor Stephen Geary told the court during the trial that the complainant recalled waking up one night to find Graham, who he believed had been drinking, fondling his genitals.

"The accused was too drunk to drive home and he came into [the boy's] room late at night," Mr Geary told the court.

He said Graham left the room once the child woke up.

Mr Geary also gave a brief outline of the allegations made by the second complainant, who said Graham attempted to rape him while they were alone together on a road trip.

The second man also alleged that once when he stayed over at Graham's house, the man touched his genitals while they watched a movie together.

The complainant said he went to bed and locked his door, but woke to find Graham, who had opened the door, masturbating in his bed.

In another instance, the court heard a complainant's mother walked into a bedroom to see Graham and her son playing video games while Graham allegedly had two fingers down the back of the boy's shorts.

Afterwards, she took her son for a walk on the beach and spoke to him about inappropriate touching, but the boy told her nothing had happened, Mr Geary said.

Military police were alerted to the allegations in 2017, the court heard.

Graham will be sentenced later this month.