

Sacked policeman jailed for sex assaults



Jailed ... Luke Tink.

Photo: *Anita Jones*

Jennifer Cooke

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A sacked police officer, convicted over a string of indecent acts involving girls as young as 14, was jailed today for more than two years.

Luke Andrew Tink's family broke down in tears after he was led away, with his mother shouting, "It's not right! He's told the truth and he's going to jail."

Judge Deborah Payne took more than an hour to outline how Tink, 24, had coerced five teenagers aged between 14 and 19 to kiss him while he sometimes exposed himself or while he touched them.

The judge described the seven charges, to which he pleaded guilty earlier this year, as a "course of conduct" between February 2001 and November 2003.

Two of the charges related to incidents in 2003, just seven months after Tink had graduated from the Goulburn police academy and while he was still a probationary constable.

The last offence, involving a 15-year-old girl, was committed within three months of Tink becoming a sworn constable in the NSW Police Force.

Four of the complainants were aged under 16 at the time of the offences.

Noting a most "unusual" delay in the progression of the case, Judge Payne said Tink had been dismissed

from the police in April 2004.

The judge said "it must have been a frightening experience" for each of the girls with some knowing that he was a police officer.

The assaults and acts of indecency occurred variously late at night, on a dirt track, at a deserted beach car park, on a bush track and in a car at Corlette, Salamander Bay and Nelson Bay, all north of Newcastle.

Several of the girls were told not to tell anyone about his advances.

In April 2003, after one girl made a complaint which he denied, he was reprimanded by a senior police officer, the judge said.

"It is worth noting that he offended again" in November 2003 at a time when he was no longer a probationary constable and with a girl aged 15, who had been more than five years younger than him, the judge said.

Tink was sentenced to a total of two years and four months jail, which will be served in protection.

He will be eligible for parole after 16 months in January 2009.

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