

# Karate teacher fails to advise of sex offence

A FORMER Bokarina karate instructor yesterday copped a \$2000 fine for failing to alert authorities that he had been jailed for a sex offence against a child.

The Commission for Children and Young People issued Rodney Owen Stewart, 46, with a blue card to work with children at the karate club on April 11 in 2002.

On May 12, 2003, Mr Stewart was jailed for four months for indecently dealing with a child under 12 years.

Magistrate Ken Taylor said Mr Stewart should have known he was required to notify the commissioner upon the change in his criminal history.

He said the legislation intended to inform "people who have a direct interest and a right to know" — something which did not happen because Mr Stewart failed to disclose the change.

Under the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act (2000), people who work with children under 18 years of age in certain categories of employment must apply for a criminal history check.

The Working with Children Check aims to ensure that only suitable people operate businesses, or work as employees or volunteers, where they have regular contact with children.

Those found suitable to work with children or young people are issued a suitability card, or blue card.

Mr Stewart's two-year blue card was not due to expire until April 10 this year.

— RAE WILSON