

Former childcare worker faces 1,623 child-abuse charges in Australia

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Sydney, August 3 (RHC)-- A former childcare worker in Australia has been charged with more than 1,600 child abuse offenses, including rape, against 91 young girls across the country and abroad over a 15-year

period.

Australian Federal Police (AFP) authorities say they became aware of the 45-year-old Gold Coast childcare worker's alleged offenses after recently identifying video discovered on the dark web in 2014, the UK-based Guardian daily reported Tuesday.

He was arrested in August 2022, with police then allegedly discovering a hard drive filled with child abuse material of young girls while executing warrants at his home and other addresses. AFP Assistant Commissioner Justine Gough described the alleged offending as "deeply distressing" and "unfathomable."

The man is now facing 1,623 child abuse charges, including 136 counts of rape and 110 counts of sexual intercourse with a child under 10, alleged to have taken place from 2007 to 2022.

The AFP alleges the offending took place in 10 childcare centers in Brisbane between 2007 and 2013, 2018 and 2022; an overseas location in 2013 and 2014; and one center in Sydney between 2014 and 2017. The man worked at other childcare centers but the AFP has confirmed that there is no allegation the man offended at those centers.

Gough said officers were confident all 87 Australian girls recorded in the alleged child abuse material had been identified, and their parents informed. Some of the alleged victims are now over 18. The AFP believes the man – who had the required childcare qualifications – recorded all his child-abuse offenses.

The AFP is working with international authorities to identify four children in alleged recordings created overseas. The New South Wales police assistant commissioner Michael Fitzgerald said the man would also face more than 100 charges in NSW.

"Once this man faces the AFP charges in Queensland, we will be seeking to extradite him to Sydney to face the full force of the law in NSW," he said.

Fitzgerald said the NSW police would not call a single victim witness to prosecute the case, saving the victims from being retraumatized. "This is one of the most horrific child abuse cases that I've seen in nearly 40 years of policing," he said.

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