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Kindergarten cleaner who allegedly had 5,000 child abuse images granted bail

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ABC Mildura-Swan Hill

Courts

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Christopher Rankin was a kindergarten cleaner when he allegedly installed a hidden camera in the bathroom.
(Facebook)

In short:

Christopher Rankin, 35, is charged with multiple counts of producing and possessing child abuse material.

Police allege they found more than 5,000 images of child abuse material on Mr Rankin's devices.

What's next?

Mr Rankin was granted bail on condition he does not use the internet or interfere with witnesses.

Readers are advised this story contains distressing content.

A Victorian kindergarten cleaner has been released from custody despite police uncovering more than 5,000 images of alleged child abuse material, some of which was allegedly filmed using a hidden bathroom camera.

Christopher Rankin, 35, worked as a cleaner at a kindergarten in Mildura and has been described as "tech savvy".

He was arrested in June by police, who allege they discovered 300 images of child abuse material on personal storage devices.

He was charged with multiple counts of possession and production of child abuse material, including altering images of children using Photoshop.

On Thursday, detective senior constable Jake Casey told the Mildura Magistrates' Court he had spent the past three days in Melbourne retrieving more child abuse material from a dozen of Mr Rankin's storage devices.

Detective Senior Constable Casey, who is from the Mildura Sexual Offences and Child Investigation Team, said he needed more time.

"I've been able to analyse all devices except for the computer tower, and I have confirmed that there is child abuse material on the computer tower.

"All of the devices that have been triaged I've located approximately 5,000 more images of child abuse material within those devices."

Detective Senior Constable Casey told the court he needed another five weeks to fully investigate the gravity of Mr Rankin's alleged offending.

"The tower is three to four times the size of the other devices and will take longer to triage," he said.

The detective told the court that the risk of Mr Rankin interfering in the case by deleting images was diminished but not extinguished, because he

was tech-savvy.



Police told the Mildura Magistrates' Court they had uncovered an extra 5,000 child abuse images. (ABC Mildura-Swan Hill/Tamara Clark)

Bail granted due to delays

The court previously heard that some of the child abuse material was allegedly filmed using a hidden bathroom camera.

Detective Senior Constable Casey told the court he wasn't sure whether Mr Rankin's Working with Children Check had been revoked, but confirmed that Mr Rankin's employer had "taken strides to make sure he doesn't have access" to the organisation's kindergartens.

The prosecution told the court it originally had concerns about Mr Rankin being granted bail as it feared he could access copies of images held in cloud-based servers on the internet and delete them; however, that concern had diminished because the prosecution was confident it now had access to all the images allegedly in his possession.

Magistrate Michael Coghlan granted bail to Mr Rankin because of an expected lengthy delay between now and when the case goes to a

committal mention or a criminal trial.

While on bail, Mr Rankin will have to comply with multiple conditions, including living with his parents and not accessing the internet except for banking and to complete his tax return while accompanied by one of his parents.

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