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Former Labor official Peter Hansen sent 'abhorrent' encrypted messages about sex with children, court told

By Paige Cockburn Courts

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Peter Hansen has pleaded guilty to a number of child exploitation offences. (Facebook: Peter Hansen)

A former priest and Labor official sent encrypted messages about wanting to maximise his trip to the Philippines where he paid young boys to engage in sexual acts, a court has heard

The District Court in Sydney today heard Peter Hansen sexually abused nine children on overseas trips to the Philippines and Vietnam and possessed more than 100,000 files of child pornography.

He has been charged with more than 30 child exploitation offences.

Hansen used an online messaging service in 2016 to tell another user about the price he could afford to pay the boys he abused and said he hoped the Thai king would not die while he was there and consequently impact his trip.

"My bloody luck he [King Bhumibol Adulyadej] dies the day before I get there and everything is shut," Hansen said under a username to another user.

The 63-year-old from Cabramatta in south-west Sydney said the most he would pay the boys, who were between the ages of 10 and 14, was 250 to 300 pesos (the equivalent of \$6.75 to \$8.10) but "outstanding performers" might get 500 pesos.

Key points:

- Peter Hansen was arrested at Sydney Airport in 2018
- The court heard Hansen sexually abused nine children on overseas trips
- Earlier this year Hansen told a sentencing hearing he felt ashamed

Hansen, who began to tear up when the messages were read in court, has pleaded guilty to offences including possessing and distributing child exploitation material and sexual intercourse with children.

In other messages, Hansen explained there were no high walls, locked gates or caretakers at the Metro Park Hotel in Cebu City where he was meeting victims.

He also asked about the best way to store the images he took of the boys posing nude or engaging in sexual acts.

"I hope to keep the camera busy," Hansen said.

"Still thinking about how I can ... max the poolside weekend in terms of what I can get on my memory card ... where should I upload them? "

Justice James Bennett described the messages as "abhorrent".

While in the Philippines, Hansen paid a local intermediary to find young boys outside schools to bring to his hotel room.

On one occasion multiple boys were invited over and given new clothes to wear.



Peter Hansen used an online messaging service. (Facebook: Peter Hansen)

Justice Bennett said Hansen began performing fellatio on one victim who said it made him feel "not good" so Hansen moved onto another boy.

The same man who brought the boys to Hansen also introduced him to his adopted son.

Hansen was arrested at Sydney International Airport in 2018 after returning from Vietnam and police found an external hard drive in his possession that contained child pornographic material.

Earlier this year Hansen told a sentencing hearing he felt ashamed.

"I exploited them," he said on a video link from prison.

"I didn't only exploit their age, I also exploited the fact they came from a poor Asian country and I exploited their vulnerability.

Hansen ministered in the Archdiocese of Melbourne until he resigned in 2011 and in response to his arrest, he was suspended as Labor branch secretary of Cabramatta in March 2019.

Hansen is fluent in Vietnamese and has worked as a compensation lawyer and an Asian studies lecturer.

He also previously provided legal counsel for the Transport Workers Union of Australia.

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