

Sex offender 'sorry'

WHITNEY HARRIS

A CENTRAL Victorian man who was photographed posing naked with a teenage boy has been placed on the sex offender register for eight years.

Richard Strachan, 67, appeared with the boy in 25 photographs, all of which depicted pornographic poses.

He pleaded guilty in the Bendigo Magistrates Court on Tuesday to one count of making or producing child pornography and four counts of firearms and ammunition offences.

He was sentenced yesterday morning, receiving a \$6000 fine and an eight-month suspended jail sentence.

The prosecutor, Leading Senior Constable Dave Somerton, told the court Strachan was caught out after a package addressed to him was handed to police by Australia Post workers on July 27 last year.

He said the following day, a second package from the same sender arrived and was also given to police.

In that package was a CD containing 55 images of the boy.

Leading Senior Constable Somerton said 47 of those images were child pornography and 25 depicted Strachan in pornographic poses with the child.

He said the images were taken over a two-day period in April 2006.

Strachan was 61 at the time.

After the images were detected, police raided Strachan's home in



REMORSEFUL: Richard Strachan leaves the Bendigo Magistrates Court this week.

Gisborne and his wife's home in Tylden.

Several firearms and ammunition were found that were not stored correctly. An unregistered double-barrel shotgun was also found.

Strachan, who has no prior criminal history, told the court he deeply regretted his behaviour.

He read to the court a letter he had written to the boy and the

child's family, which detailed his remorse.

"No words can adequately describe how sorry I am," he said.

"The loss of trust, loyalty and friendship... is a burden I will always bear."

The court was told there was no sexual relationship between the boy and Strachan, and that Strachan believed the photographs, which

were taken by a third person, had been destroyed.

However, Leading Senior Constable Somerton said Strachan's actions equalled a "monumental breach of trust".

"The need to eradicate this sort of offending from the community creates a situation where general deterrence is paramount in the sentencing synthesis," he said.

Drilling for gold begins at Tandarra

NAVARRE Minerals began a 20-hole drilling and geophysical testing program to explore for gold north of Bendigo yesterday.

The Stawell-based exploration company raised \$3.2 million before the closure of an entitlement offer.

An air-core rig started drilling on the Tandarra prospect, near Dingee, after a Navarre Minerals exploration showed a prominent quartz reef structure and quartz veining, potentially containing gold.

The company recorded a 10-metre intercept of gold assaying 34.4 grams per tonne, starting at 37 metres below the surface.

Managing director Geoff McDermott said a geographical survey in July formed the basis of the 20-hole preliminary stage.

"The key feature of our exploration strategy is an ability to target quartz reefs buried beneath the Murray Basin sediments. These reefs are known to start from only 30 metres below the surface at Tandarra," he said.

Mr McDermott said the reefs were like long tunnels of quartz, running parallel to the controlling fault structure of the region, the Whitelaw Fault.

"Our proposition is that the same fault is integral to the control of the gold accumulations in the Bendigo Goldfield to the south, a field which has produced around 22 million ounces of gold since its discovery in the 1850s," he said.

A larger \$4.2 million, 50,000-metre drill program is scheduled to start in October.

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