

# The Advertiser

## **Home viewers owe video stores \$5.1m**

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ALMOST 18,000 South Australian video store users have been banned from hiring DVDs and videos after generating \$5.1 million in late fees.

Customers in Elizabeth, Davoren Park and Port Adelaide are the worst at returning movies on time.

They have racked up significant debt for such films as *The Matrix*, *Pulp Fiction* and *Harry Potter*.

The problem has become so severe, store owners are installing webcams and using photo identification to record customers and their movie choices.

More than 70 per cent of video stores nationwide subscribe to a mass database of "bad borrowers", maintained in Melbourne by debt collectors Legal and Commercial Recoveries and the National Default Registry.

Customers whose names appear on that database owe more than \$30 in late fees. Some owe as much as \$3000. They are refused membership or banned from renting until their personal debt is cleared.

Stores are provided with monthly lists of fee defaulters and can access the database at any time to find out how much, and to whom, a person owes.

Legal and Commercial managing director Andrew Wall, however, said being listed on the database did not ruin your entertainment options for life if you pay up.

"It's very easy to get your name removed - all you have to do is pay your local video store what it is owed," he said.

"It's that simple. We feel that, if you pay your account, you deserve to have all details regarding your account removed - effectively wiping the slate clean."