



13th April 2006 09:18:17 AM

GREATER Dandenong video stores will soon be armed with webcams in a bid to resolve disputes with customers over late return fees.

Debt collection agency Legal and Commercial Recoveries this week said it had taken just 2595 Greater Dandenong residents to rack up \$642,000 in late-return fee debt over a 10 year period.

Current figures on the National Default Registry show there are 1311 residents still on the registry who collectively owe more than \$350,000.

The National Default Registry contains name and details of video store customers who fail to pay late-return fees.

Legal and Commercial Recoveries managing director Andrew Wall said the database was used by video stores to prevent customers who owe money at one store from signing up and creating more debt at another store.

But the late fine figure could be much worse, Mr Wall said, because many shops in Greater Dandenong are not signed up to the National Default Registry so their outstanding fines are not recorded.

Beginning this year, the company is beginning a rollout of webcams to stores who sign a deal to access the National Default Registry.

Mr Wall said webcams would revolutionise the industry by taking a snapshot, with consent, of each member when transactions are made, to help quash the commonly used argument of 'it wasn't me, it was someone else'.

Mr Wall said the webcams would function like a third umpire in cricket, where the company would send a snapshot of the customer along with a debt letter in order to prove they made the transaction that lead to late-return fees.

"What people don't realise is for the poor guy running the video shop, it's his livelihood," he said.

Mr Wall said people returned videos late because they felt it was 'only a video'.

"But we liken the story to be no different to renting a motor vehicle for three days and returning it after 14 days," he said.

"You would expect to pay 11 days additional rental on the vehicle if returned 11 days late, and there is absolutely no difference whatsoever between renting a video and motor vehicle."