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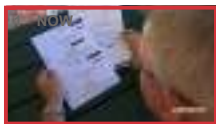
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6PM NEWS 2:12am February 14, 2017

Queenslanders urged to check debt letters for errors

By 9NEWS

Terrified families, pensioners and singles are being slapped with unexpected debt letters from Centrelink and other government agencies.



Families being hit with unexpected Centrelink debt letters



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Queenslanders have been urged to carefully check unexpected debt letters from Centrelink and other government agencies.

A 9NEWS investigation has uncovered a string of alarming errors as frustrated families are accused of owing thousands of dollars.

"When people are receiving these letters they're automatically assuming that they owe a debt, that's not actually the case," James Farrell, from Community Legal Centres Queensland, said.

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Thousands of automated debt letters are being generated by a new Federal Government computer system that cross-checks all payments with tax office records.

Federal member for Lilley Wayne Swan said errors in some documents were a result of the Federal Government using a "quick calculation of debt".

"In many cases, it's inaccurate," Mr Swan said.

University tutor Andjre Panjkov successfully challenged his \$3000 debt.

"It was a total fiction they were saying this invented average fortnightly income was my actual income and my actual income at that time was zero," Mr Panjkov told 9NEWS.

"I think the way the system is set up is they're hoping that people will give up."

People who suspect they have been hit with false debt are urged to demand a free internal review by a Centrelink officer.

"If you can afford it go out and find a lawyer if you can't reach out to a community legal centre of legal aid," Mr Farrell said.

Centrelink advises people to check personal information is up to date via the [MyGov](#) website.

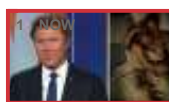
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TRENDING VIDEO

Richard Wilkins slams 'Fifty Shades Darker' as 'glorification of domestic violence'

The sequel to the controversial erotic drama film Fifty Shades of Grey has been slammed by Nine Network entertainment editor Richard Wilkins on the day of its Australian release.



9RAW: Richard Wilkins talks 'Fifty Shades Darker'



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