

Child care debts ground parents [AU] ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

About 500 parents have been prevented from leaving the country by the Child Support Agency.

The government agency has the power to direct the Australian Federal Police to stop people at the departure gate at Australian airports, if they have not paid their child care maintenance bills.

Figures obtained by The Courier-Mail show that 482 parents were contacted by the agency in the last financial year, and ordered to pay their outstanding debts before travelling overseas. That was up from 100 cases the previous year.

The agency's international director David Mole said parents who persistently avoided their obligations were targeted under the airport crackdown.

"It's a fairly serious enforcement power we can use. We need to make sure there's a persistent failure to pay child support, and it's in the best interests of the child," he said.

Last year, the people stopped from travelling owed a total of \$9 million in outstanding payments, an average of almost \$19,000 each.

- reprinted from the Courier-Mail

Region: Australia and New Zealand ^[2]

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