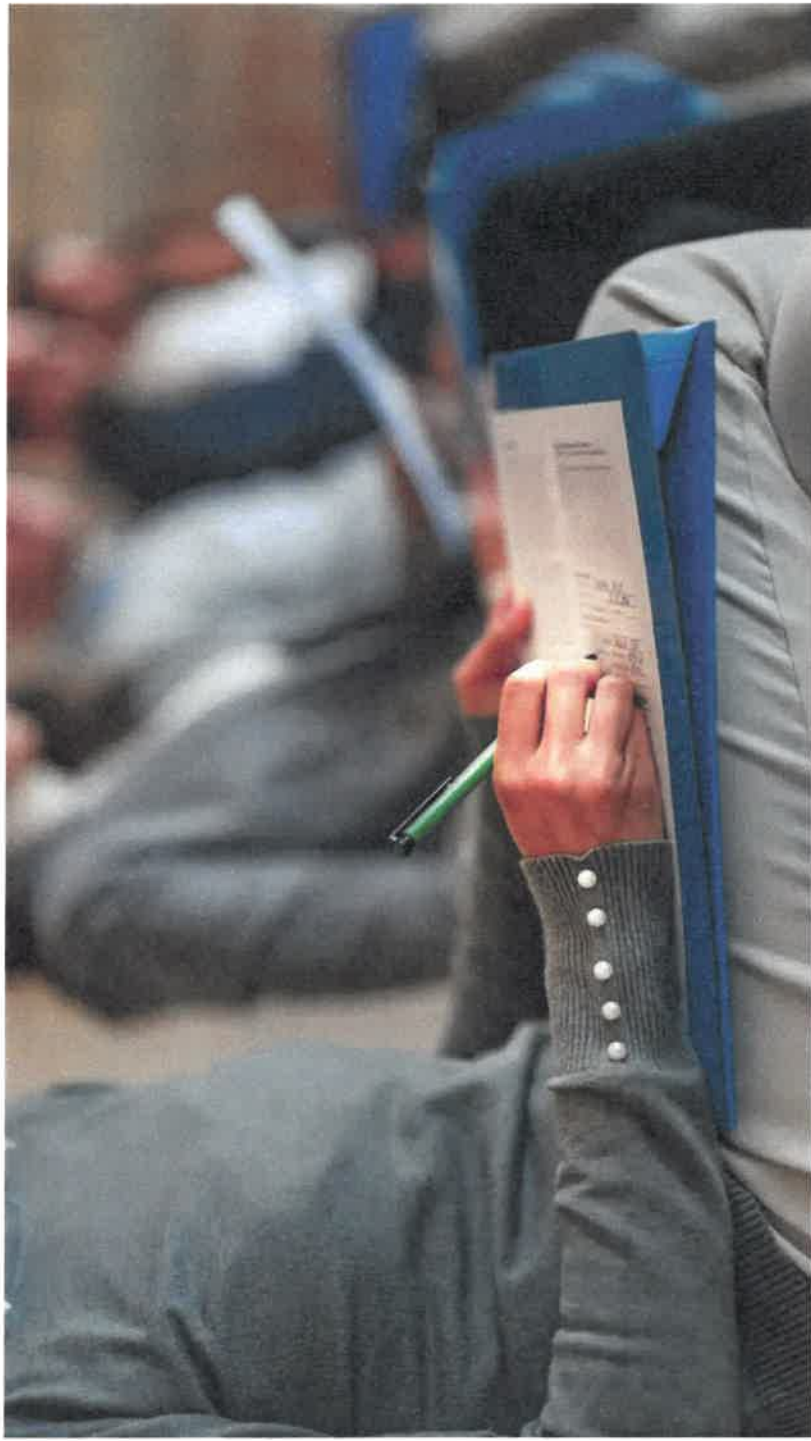


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An investigation has been launched into a video showing a job agent blaming an unemployed man for not being able to find work.

Credit: Getty

Australia

'It's your fault': Job agent caught on camera blaming jobseeker for unemployment

WISE Employment and the Department of Social Services have launched investigations into the alleged conduct shown in the video.

 5 min read

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By Eden Gillespie

Source: SBS

“The question I’m going to ask is do you actually want to work?”

The job agent then refers to information on his computer screen that states the jobseeker has a psychological psychiatric disorder.

He then tells the man it’s time he starts coming in and “taking it more seriously” and orders him to come into an appointment each week.

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When the argument escalates between the two and the jobseeker attempts to leave, the agent tells him an incident report will be filed with Centrelink.

“We just talked about being condescending, we just talked about using people’s situations against them,” the jobseeker replies.

“You’re protecting your job, and you’re literally trying to manipulate me, knowing that I’m dependent on you ... you know that and you get a h*** on.”

'Shocking' behaviour

Jeremy Poxon, a spokesperson from AUWU, described the video as “shocking” but also said he was not surprised by the interaction.

“This is the kind of treatment that happens to jobseekers through the system,” he told SBS News.

“It was incredible to see that a job agent who knew full well that the jobseeker was recording, still had the gumption and felt he had the right to treat someone this way.

Given the incident is still being investigated, we won't be able to comment on the video or any comments made at this time," the spokesperson said.

"We prioritise the wellbeing of both our customers and our staff, and we're taking the matter seriously ... the investigation will recommend actions to be taken to resolve the issue, including where appropriate an apology to the jobseeker."

A spokesperson at the Department of Social Services told SBS News they would also investigate "the alleged conduct in the videos."

"The Department is unable to comment further on this matter at this stage. We are also unable to release information related to an individual's circumstances," they said.

"The individual is encouraged to make contact with the National Customer Service Line on 1800 805 260 to raise any concerns they may have with their Employment Service Provider."

Mr Poxon urged the department to suspend mutual obligation requirements - tasks and activities agreed to by jobseekers whilst receiving welfare payments - during the pandemic and asked WISE Employment to ensure the jobseeker is not paired with the same agent again.

"I would be asking the general manager of WISE Employment to really have a cold hard look at this video footage and enact some disciplinary measures," he said.

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