

# Burbon spies in the south

DR Michael Turner has made quite a splash in his tour of Australia.

The international credit reporting expert was in Melbourne yesterday touting the benefits of Australia changing its credit information system.

In a move that would do no harm to trip sponsor and credit bureau Dun & Bradstreet, Dr Turner says the young, poor and women would all be big winners if Australia moved to positive credit reporting.

He has volumes of data to support his case but one of the more amusing anecdotes was a side effect of centralising credit information in the US.

Apparently the southern state agencies collected vital information that could not go on the federal database due to privacy concerns.

Using spies and other forms of information gathering, credit in the deep south depended partly on your drinking habits.

We assume that moonshine meant instant disqualification unless you were selling, but it is interesting to speculate on how many bourbons or mint juleps you could drink a night and still buy a house.

Australia is one of three countries to have only negative credit information collected, the other iconoclasts being New Zealand and France.

If the credit bureaus get permission to collect positive information on individuals, Dr Turner promises lower default rates and better credit access for groups that now find it hard to get loans.