

“I think the fact there has only been 180 complaints over the last three years isn’t necessarily indicative of the community concerns over some of these outdoor spaces and how they’re being a bit too confronting on occasion,” he said.

Ms Jolly said while there are no specific rules applied to outdoor advertising, the ASB board when considering complaints takes into account the fact that billboards are hard to avoid.

“Over the past three years to be honest the board has become more strict with outdoor ads,” she said.

Four billboard ads made it into the top 10 most complained about in 2010 and 2009, with two in 2008.

The most complained about billboard ad last year was a promotion for the “Sexpo” convention held in Brisbane.

It received about 75 complaints but they were not upheld by the ASB.

Hot on its heels was an ad shown at Sydney Airport by a dating agency which encouraged visitors to Sydney to “have an affair” because “life is short”.

It received about 60 complaints and also attracted the attention of the NSW government which voiced its displeasure to the ASB.

The complaints were upheld and the ad was taken down in July last year.

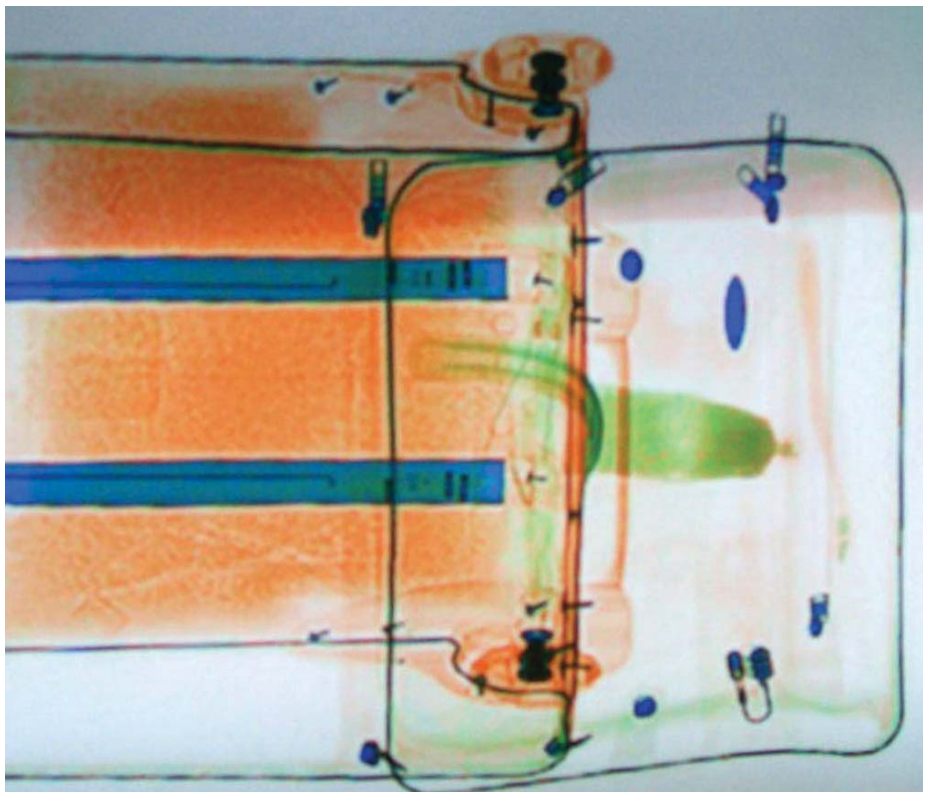
Other ads attracting criticism include those for sex performance products, Calvin Klein clothes, and an ad which urged customers to join the Fernwood Fitness Club “Now for Fox Sake”.

The inquiry is likely to report in the middle of this year after a series of public hearings. •

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SCREEN SAVER: Security screening at airports not enough to stop criminals. Photo: aapone

Liquid could have brought down plane

Threat revealed at air safety hearing.

A parliamentary review of aviation and maritime security has heard that a chemical being carried by a passenger arrested at Perth Airport in 2007 could have resulted in the crash of a passenger jet if the liquid had been opened on board the aircraft.

Maggie Plumb, senior research coordinator with Western Australia Police, told federal parliament’s Law Enforcement Committee: “That liquid would have been toxic at one part per million of oxygen, so we are talking here about a whole plane crashing. If the seal had broken or he had decided to empty it into the toilet, everyone would have died.”

Ms Plumb said Australia was “way behind other countries” in domestic aviation security, particularly when it comes to checking of passenger identification for domestic flights.

She suggested Commonwealth legislation should be introduced that requires domestic airline passengers to authenticate their identity before they can fly.

“Domestic passenger identity legislation would assist in disrupting anonymous travel and disrupting organised crime and other criminal activity,” Ms Plumb said.

She indicated domestic passenger identification was standard international practice, and introducing it into Australia would simply bring us up to the standard that is accepted overseas.

But Qantas argued that identity fraud and tracking of individuals were neither a priority nor appropriate functions for airlines to implement, and that the financial burden of a change in procedures would be unjustifiable.

“Verification of identity documents by commercial entities should not be

NEWS

contemplated as they do not have the requisite expertise in the detection of fraudulent documentation,” Qantas Head of Security and Facilitation Steve Jackson said.

“The cost of system changes is estimated to be many millions of dollars, not including ongoing data storage and transmission costs and would be detrimental to passenger facility, contingency and system redundancy requirements.

“These anticipated costs cannot be justified based on identity verification or against the perceived benefit especially when considering that the domestic aviation industry is only seven percent of the size of the Australian domestic rail industry.”

A former aviation security specialist with the Federal Airports Corporation, Michael Carmody is calling for greater use of passenger profiling by airlines to help identify criminals and terrorists before they even reach airports or security screening gates. He said

passenger profiling software used by Israel’s El Al airline works in a similar fashion to how credit card databases can alert banks to unusual card use in an overseas country and stop the card until the card user verifies their location or purpose.

“At the point when you buy a ticket to fly on the Israeli airline the software kicks in,” Mr Carmody said. “Straight away, the software looks at you, who you are, where you are flying from, where you are flying to, the class of ticket, whether you are carrying baggage, how you have paid for the ticket, point of origin, nationality et cetera. If you happen to be a Qantas Platinum Frequent Flyer, moving throughout the Middle East continually, flying business class, invariably boarding here and disembarking there, have a profile that has been consistent over the years, have a ticket that is paid for by a company cheque et cetera, then obviously, in terms of risk based profiling, you would be shunted into a low-risk gate.

“If you happen to be a young fellow of 19 years of age flying first class with no baggage, paying cash and turning up in a pair of baggy jeans and a T-shirt, I suggest the software would trip you into another area.”

A passenger deemed risky will be questioned further when they check-in at El Al.

“The point of the exercise in profiling is, in a risk management sense, to highlight and identify your most serious risk before they hit the screening point, let alone the aircraft. We tend to engineer it in reverse; we tend to hope that at the eleventh hour we catch someone walking through a screening point or, better still, stumble across something as they mount the aircraft and sit in a seat. That, to me, is crazy.” •

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A GOOD DROP: Wine labelling changes expected to save millions. Photo: Newspix

Savings for wine exporters

Proposed labelling changes could save Australian wine exporters up to \$25 million a year and help expand their key export markets.

The Agreement on Requirements for Wine Labelling between Australia and the other members of the World Wine Trade Group (WWTG) standardises wine labelling requirements across the member countries.

Australian wine producers will be able to place all key product information including net volume, product name, country of origin and alcohol content in a ‘single field of vision’ located anywhere on the main body of the bottle.

Currently wines sold in Australia must include net volume on the front label. The changes mean exporters will be able to produce wine with one label that meets both Australian domestic and international labelling requirements for WWTG and European Union countries.

The WWTG includes major markets such as the USA, Canada and Mexico, and along with the European Union constitutes 80 per cent of Australia’s export market.

Hamish McCormick from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade told federal parliament’s Treaties Committee the voluntary changes

would significantly reduce production, distribution and marketing expenditure for Australian wine producers.

“The industry expect cost savings of \$25 million each year as well as benefits for marketing and supply,” Mr McCormick said.

While the potential savings are significant, some Queensland and South Australian consumer groups are concerned consumers might be confused by the changes.

However Mr McCormick said the changes could actually make it easier for consumers to locate product information on wine labels.

“Four key pieces of information will be available at the same time, in the same field of vision.

“You could argue there are benefits for consumers by providing all this information in the one field of vision.”

The Winemakers Federation of Australia has agreed to a request from peak consumer body Choice to combat any confusion through an education campaign explaining the changes to consumers. •

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