



To: The Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications  
P.O Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
AUSTRALIA

To Committee,

RE: Aviation Transport Security Amendment (Screening) Bill 2012

Hearing about the proposed bill and the provisions within it has made me greatly concerned for the future of international travel to and from this country. Australia's current security systems are viewed around the world as sensible and balanced. Moving away from this sensible approach, which this bill would have us do, will put a black mark on Australia's reputation and damage our transport and tourism industries. Many people from all over the world have indicated that they would no longer have any desire to visit Australia should these body scanners be installed – especially if there was no option of a frisk search instead of being forced through the machine. This issue accounts for part of the fall of tourism to the US and UK where the scanners are in use.

Mr Albanese suggests that the scanners are necessary because of the attempted bombing of NW253 on 25 December 2009. This suggestion does not stand up to reasonable analysis.

Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the so called "underwear bomber" did not go through the security screening process in place at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, he was permitted onto the flight by the US government without a passport. The device was not viable and not capable of downing the aircraft even if it was. While the device would not have been detected by a metal detector, it also would not have been detected by the proposed scanners. It would have been detected by Explosive Trace Detection, which Australia already has in place.

The event did not show any vulnerability in global aviation security screening practices, instead it proved, once again, that passengers are more than willing to step in to deal with any of the extremely rare threats within the aircraft's cabin.

The proposed scanners don't work as advertised. They have an excessive false positive rate everywhere they are currently in use. A number of countries have outright rejected the scanners after lengthy trial periods due to their failure rates (Germany tested them in Hamburg for over a year with several versions of software, all of which failed). Even the short trials last year at Sydney and Melbourne Airports resulted in the same failure rate. The scanners repeatedly alarm on sweat, fat and clothing folds. They also take a much longer time to clear a passenger, resulting in delays at the checkpoint (this is becoming increasingly prominent in the US at airports where TSA has installed body scanners). This has the potential to cause major problems at already over taxed airports (such as Sydney) while also *creating* a security risk. A long line of passengers at a checkpoint is a much more tempting and far softer potential target than an aircraft. There have been no successful terror attacks on passenger aircraft since September 11 2001. There has been a number of successful terror attacks on airports (LAX July 2002, Davao March 2003, Kathmandu September 2004, Hat Yai April 2005, Madrid December 2006, Glasgow June 2007, Moscow January 2011). Creating longer queues at security checkpoints, which the use of these scanners will do, increases the risk of an incident.

The introduction of body scanners in Australia will not increase the level of protection in Australia's airports as Mr Albanese suggests, it will in fact diminish it. They have been introduced in the US and UK so the government can be seen by the public as "doing something", not because they work or provide any tangible benefit to travellers. They were introduced in Canada and Amsterdam solely because of the US.

The first proposed amendment merely assumes consent for most forms of screening. This change will not have any real affect to "ensure that passenger throughput rates are not unnecessarily affected by the introduction of body scanners and other technologies." At most, it will save one or two seconds per person. A saving which will be negated with a net time loss by the body scanners.

The second proposed amendment allows Mr Albanese to push through his desire to force someone into a body scanner or not fly. Of the countries around the world with body scanners in place only one,

the UK, has a “no scan, no fly” policy in place. This policy is now in breach of EU law. The European Parliament recently passed a law banning the use of the backscatter xray style body scanner (in use throughout the US, in Manchester and London) and requires the option of “opting out” of the scan in favour of an alternate screening method such as a frisk search. The EU passed this law due to health, privacy and safety reasons. The US Supreme Court found that a “no scan, no fly” policy in the US would violate the US Constitution.

There is nothing that a body scanner can detect that can't be detected, more efficiently, by methods already in place (metal detectors, ETD, frisk search). Body scanners have a failure/false positive rate approaching 50%, the methods currently in place don't.

The use of body scanners is not reasonable, nor necessary. The “enhanced pat down” used by TSA in the US is also not necessary. The TSA by default assumes that anyone presenting at a checkpoint is a criminal and the searches they conduct are to prove the person being screened isn't. This is why a number of TSA screening methods can be invasive.

The proposed third amendment removing the option to request a frisk instead of another screening method is completely unwarranted and not necessary.

Passengers line up for the scanners in the US and during the trial here, because they don't fully understand what it is and does, and many people have a desire to “try new things”. There is no justification for the deployment of body scanners. Especially as they have failed every operational test they have been subjected to globally.

The government is currently assuming that body scanners are safe to use. While it is good that the backscatter version has been rejected, the millimetre wave version is just as potentially dangerous. From the minister's speech, it appears that he does not understand the difference between different frequencies of electromagnetic radiation.

Millimetre-wave scanners use the Terahertz frequency range which is more powerful than the Mega and Gigahertz frequencies used by most public communications technologies. Terahertz range electromagnetic radiation has been known to ‘unzip’ DNA which can cause cancer. In addition, the scanners focus all of the energy on the body, not away from it as communications devices do. There have been reports of ‘cancer clusters’ among TSA screeners working at US checkpoints using this technology. These scanners have never been tested for possible health effects. Government agencies all over the world have only reviewed the manufactures specifications when examining the technology. This is not acceptable.

I strongly recommend that the members of this committee reject the proposed amendments to prevent a failed technology from being rolled out at Australia's airports, or at the absolute least, to remove all amendments preventing an opt out for frisk search.

Thank you

Amy Tomoe