

Retailers fighting back

... but name-and-shame approach to shoplifting leaves them legally exposed

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RETAILERS are increasingly exposing themselves to potential legal action as they embark on a Facebook fightback against shoplifters.

A growing trend among store owners to post CCTV footage on social media in a bid to name and shame shoplifters could easily backfire, lawyers have warned.

But some shop owners say the practice is too successful in

detering opportunistic crimes to stop.

The Surf Shop, Victor Harbor, owner Matt Parry has used social media regularly over the past two years to show shoplifters being caught in the act. It has led to about 10 being caught and dealt with by police.

The latest shoplifting post by The Surf Shop, put on Facebook on Sunday, was viewed by more than 20,000 people in the space of days and led to the culprits turning themselves in

on Tuesday and paying for the goods they stole.

Mr Parry said he only posted a small number of the shoplifters caught on camera in his three retail outlets in the coastal town.

"With three stores, every second or third day something happens," Mr Parry said.

"I think eventually something legally will happen to a retailer but we're sick of getting shoplifted.

"At the end of the day, people stole from me. There's signs

in my shops that make it clear that if you steal from this shop you can expect to be named and shamed."

The CCTV footage of the teenage girls who on Tuesday admitted to their shoplifting has been removed and a message sent on Facebook reads: "We have just been contacted by the two girls who recently stole from one of our stores. Unfortunately it took a Facebook video to go viral for them to come forward and pay for the goods that were stolen. The

photos and videos have since been removed. We have a zero tolerance on shoplifting at any of our stores, offenders will be caught and they will be publicly humiliated."

Duncan Basheer Hannon partner Patrick Boylen warns against the practice.

"Shop owners who do this are suggesting 'This person is a criminal, do you know them?'" he said. "If they are wrong about that, that is defamatory."

"The shop keepers are not trained in media law but they

are publishing. You have the usual defence of truth and honestly-held opinion — so long as it is not done in a hurtful way — but they are potentially in a fair bit of trouble if they get it wrong. It is very risky."

Unley boutique owner Robyn Boyd used the tactic last year and her posts went viral. She said she would not shy from the practice despite the advice. "I'll keep doing it. We had such a good reaction to it," she said.



MINDS ON THE JOB: Clairvoyants Amelie van Tass and Thommy Ten, who have a special connection, will be performing at the Adelaide Festival Centre.

Picture: KERYN STEVENS

Clairvoyants in love knew they'd have a future together

PATRICK McDONALD
ANNA VLACH

FOR European mentalists Thommy Ten and Amelie van Tass, the key to a successful relationship is about *not* reading each other's minds.

The Austrians, who star as

"The Clairvoyants" in the latest incarnation of stage spectacular *The Illusionists*, met on TV five years ago when she was a dancer and he a magician.

"I found out," Mr Ten said yesterday, "... there is a very special connection between the two of us".

Their apparent ability to read audience members' minds is a "joint power" and only works as a double act.

"Somehow it just happened, but we still have to practise," Ms van Tass said.

"We have to concentrate and have a good vibe ... if we re-

ally get along with each other we have a connection."

Offstage, the couple has a policy of not using psychic abilities in their relationship.

"Sometimes it happens," Ms van Tass said.

The third version of the show, which is at the Festival

Theatre from tonight until January 25, is called *The Illusionists 1903* and is set last century when elaborate and dangerous magic acts dominated the world's stages.

Today's audiences are more sophisticated but the couple said their aim was still to

"make them believe" and change people's minds after they've seen the show.

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Smiling Alex stands tall

IT was one moment that meant so much.

As Alex McKinnon stood and looked into the eyes of his fiancée Teigan Power, both right, this week, he gave his loving partner a giant smile. And with that, Australian sport's most courageous fight-back was given an almighty lift.

McKinnon, 22, suffered a terrible spinal injury in a tackle while playing for Newcastle in an NRL game against Melbourne last March.

This week he made a significant breakthrough on the Gold Coast, when he stood with the help of the woman who has given him so much strength.



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Mums' sleep linked to stillbirths

SLEEPING on your back in the late stages of pregnancy may be an extra risk factor for having a stillborn baby, new Australian research suggests.

The Sydney Stillbirth Study found women who had a stillbirth were more likely to be in unpaid work and to have had only a high school education.

It also found sleeping in a supine position may be an additional risk for already vulnerable babies, but it did not show that it caused a baby's death.

The research results, published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, support the theory that stillbirths result from a combin-

ation of factors. The authors said women sleeping on their backs in late pregnancy could increase pressure on the veins and artery to the heart, which could affect blood flow to the uterus and placenta. The study included 103 women who had a stillbirth in Sydney and 192 in the control group.