Singaporeans drawn to craze

THEIR numbers may be small, but Singaporeans are being drawn to the “planking” craze that recently claimed the life of a man in Australia.

The potentially dangerous game involves enthusiasts posing for photographs while lying on their stomachs in unexpected places such as staircases, and even on railway tracks.

They then upload the photos or videos of their exploits on websites such as Facebook.

Since as far back as 2009, “plankers” in Singapore have been recording themselves lying in MRT stations and on public roads and bus seats.

But the risks faced by enthusiasts have been thrust into the spotlight following the death of Mr Acton Beale, 20, who fell seven storeys from a Brisbane apartment after attempting to plank on a balcony railing.

Planking, or the Lying Down Game, was invented in Somerset, England, more than 10 years ago, according to BBC News.

There are no official figures on the number of plikers in Singapore. But The Lying Down Game (Singapore) group has 20 members on Facebook, and the Planking Singapore page has been “liked” by more than 500 users.

Singapore plankers say they know where to draw the line. Student Andrik Sim, 21, considered trying spots such as a balcony “because it looks so out of place”. But friends advised him not to.

“It is up to the individual to exercise responsibility,” he said.

Plankers may find themselves on the wrong side of the law. Mr Foo Cheow Ming of law firm Khat-tarWong said: “If the planking endangers the safety or life of others, the police may prosecute.”

Psychologist Daniel Koh of Insights Mind Centre warned that plankers’ tendency to try to outdo one another can lead them to “do things beyond one’s abilities”.

Singapore Management University social media expert Michael Netzley said problems may arise when people’s “sense of daring overrides common sense”.

He added: “A few comments and laughs on Facebook is a poor reward for putting your life at risk.”

YUEN SIN & NEO WEN TONG

(From left) Engineer Jael Kwan, student Ace Goh and retail assistant Lim Shu Rong planking on the roof railing outside Dhoby Ghaut MRT station. ST PHOTO: CHEW SENG KIM