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Anti Student admits she defaced billboard in smoking protest

A medical student who had "strong feelings" about the health hazards of smoking had defaced a billboard advertising cigarettes, a court was told yesterday.

In the Adelaide Magistrates Court, Fay Helena Johnstone, 22, of Sturt Road, Bedford Park, pleaded guilty to having on July 27 at Ashford wilfully and without lawful authority damaged a bill-

board, the property of Pacific Outdoor Advertising.

First Class Constable K. P. Rickard, prosecuting, told the court Johnstone had admitted defacing the billboard with a can of black spray paint attached to a broom handle.

Ms E. M. Baulch, for Johnstone, said Johnstone, who was in her fourth year of study at Flinders University, had met people who had smoking-related diseases during her training.

She had "strong feelings about the effects of smoking on people's

health" and the role of advertising companies in promoting smoking.

The act had been "political" rather than "pure vandalism."

Mr G. E. Carter, Senior Magistrate, said he recognised Johnstone's motive was not one of wanton destruction.

He ordered the complaint be dismissed without conviction under the Offenders' Probation Act.

He granted Johnstone six weeks to pay compensation of \$163.50 to Pacific Outdoor Advertising and court costs of \$40.