

MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

Anti-smoking lobbies go on the offensive

The anti-smoking lobbies have the tobacco companies on the back foot. Marketing, writer, Lea Wright, reports.

Although they'd hate to admit it, Australia's leading tobacco companies are worried. For years the anti-smoking lobby has regularly challenged their sports sponsorship activities, decrying them as de facto television advertising.

Now the law, however, is moving over to the lobbyists' side.

Just two weeks ago, the non-smoking lobbies — in particular the Sydney-based Non-Smokers Movement — won a landmark legal case where part of Winfield's sporting promotion in the 1984 Rugby League grand final was deemed to be a television advertisement, and as such illegal.

Next targets for the anti-smoking lobbies are the Benson and Hedges World Series Cricket and the Adelaide Grand Prix.

According to NSW Cancer Council spokesman, Mr Stephen Woodward: "What the court decision means is that sporting associations will be more

selective about the advertisers they get into bed with.

"You will find now that people are less tolerant of cigarette ads on television. And there will be more action on the issue.

"I will be very surprised if this year's Channel Nine coverage of the cricket and grand prix have such a prominent display of cigarette signs.

"We will be making submissions and calls to the government on the issue and joining with the other lobby groups."

In the Winfield case, a District Court jury found that Channel 10 had illegally broadcast a Winfield cigarette advertisement during the 1984 Winfield Rugby League grand final.

The jury said that the combination of entertainers in the Winfield Cup "big game build-up", who paraded with a large flag carrying the word Winfield, along with shots of the ground under the goal posts where the words Winfield Cup were emblazoned, was an advertisement.

The tobacco firms, however, are hoping the noise will settle down quickly.

A spokesman for Rothmans, manufacturer of Winfield, Mr Tony Woods, said: "The court decision won't change anything. The changes have already been made to that



What the anti-smoking lobbies object to — the televising of cigarette advertisements such as this Winfield Cup logo at last weekend's rugby league grand final.

particular event, the big game build-up — we don't do it anymore and anyway the case referred specifically to that pre-match activity.

"Signage has always been within the law, which the Broadcasting and Television Act recognises as incidental and accidentally to the broadcast of a sporting event."

The advertising of tobacco products was banned from television and radio in 1976. Meanwhile, in the past five years the amount the industry spends on sports sponsorship has leveled off at \$13 million per annum.

Major sporting events covered by the tobacco companies are:

Rothmans: NSW and Queensland Rugby League Winfield Cups, Rothmans Medals in rugby league, rugby union, soccer, trotting, horseracing and the speedway.

Philip Morris: PJ Nissan touring car team, football, horseracing, wind surfing and rodeo.

WD and HO Wills: Benson and Hedges World Series Cricket, JPS BMW touring car team, Hobart Cup and Benson and Hedges Cups in horse racing and other premium trotting and pacing events.

Mr Duncan Fairweather, the general manager for corporate affairs of Amatil Ltd, the parent company of WD and HO Wills, said: "The television coverage of the game is a separate matter taken up by the cricket board's marketing agents, PBL Marketing, and the television network."

However, the Federal Member for the NSW South Coast, Mr Robert Tickner, has picked up the issue of cigarette advertising and sports spon-

sorship and intends to mount a long-term campaign in Parliament.

Mr Tickner, who was a force in banning outdoor tobacco advertisements from the Sydney City Council, said: "Many people in Parliament share this concern, and I'm trying to mobilise people. Like getting Dick Smith to talk to the House (of Representatives). Ultimately it is up to the government to act."

In addition to Mr Tickner's action, a private members' bill has been introduced to the South Australian Parliament to stop advertising and sports sponsorship, while the Victorian Anti-Cancer Council has made a number of submissions to the Victorian Government for a tax on cigarettes that would pay for the sponsorship taken away from the cigarette companies.