

Anti-smoking group spurred by court win

SYDNEY: A group specialising in painting anti-smoking slogans on cigarette billboards—BUGA UP—has pledged to step up its activities as a result of a court decision yesterday.

The pledge came after a Parramatta District Court judge upheld the appeal of one of its members, Arthur Chesterfield-Evans, against his conviction for spraying a stop-smoking message on a cigarette poster.

Judge Godfrey-Smith ruled that the charge of wilfully marking premises with paint was invalid because the poster did not constitute premises within the meaning of the Offences in Public Places Act.

At his trial, Chesterfield-Evans, of the inner Sydney suburb of Darling Point, admitted painting the slogan.

But, he pleaded not guilty on the grounds that his actions were necessary to prevent children from taking up smoking.

After yesterday's hearing, Dr Chesterfield-Evans said: "If I saw someone about to tip cholera germs into the water supply, I would try to stop him—even if it meant stealing the flask.

"In the case of painting on cigarette posters, it is the same thing."

He said BUGA UP—which stands for Bill-board Utilising Graffiti-ists Against Unhealthy Promotions—was more a "concept than an organisation".

He was committed to a smoke-free Australia by the year 2000.

"We don't want to keep painting slogans—but it is a case of having to while the Government refuses to ban cigarette advertising," he said.