

# BILLBORED

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THE UN-OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF B.U.G.A. U.P.  
BILLBOARD UTILISING GRAFFITISTS AGAINST  
UNHEALTHY PROMOTIONS

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## AUSSIE INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHT OF CONFERENCE

The issue of cigarette advertising dominated the 5th World Conference on Smoking and Health held in Winnipeg last July, and by the end of the weeklong conference, B.U.G.A. U.P.'s initiatives in the field were internationally acknowledged to be the finest in the world".

Sydney doctor and part-time B.U.G. Arthur Chesterfield-Evans, presented a paper entitled "A Civil Disobedience Movement Against Cigarette Advertising" at the conference. His description of B.U.G.A. U.P.'s history and achievements, followed by a show of slides of enhanced Australian billboards brought a standing ovation and wild cheering from the normally ultra-conservative doctors attending the conference.

B.U.G.A. U.P. so captured the imagination of the delegates that a repeat session of the talk had to be organised in a larger hall to accommodate those who were turned away from the first one. The chairman of the Conference said that after five World Conferences, this was an unprecedented event.



In contrast with the run-of-the-mill papers on smoking cessation, cancer treatment and epidemiology, B.U.G.A. U.P. proved extremely press-worthy, with the result that the campaign dominated the Canadian press coverage of the conference.

The greatest accolade came from the Canadian advertising industry itself. Well before the conference, two poster companies who had been tipped off by their Australian cohorts, wrote to the organisers of the conference demanding that B.U.G.A. U.P. not be allowed to speak. They no doubt feared that Canadians would adopt the idea, and from reports already filtering back to Australia, this is indeed happening.

## VOLUNTARY CODE FOR CIGARETTES SCRAPPED

On Thursday 14th July, the chairman of the Standing Committee of Health Ministers (SCOHM), Mr Brereton, announced that the existing system of self-regulation of cigarette advertising will be scrapped. Legislation will be drawn up to define legal standards for cigarette ads.

This move, which has taken the tobacco and advertising industry by surprise, is the result of fruitless attempts at making the self-regulatory system more effective by tightening the codes and ensuring they were adhered to. Previously, SCOHM had repeatedly called on the tobacco industry to revise their ad code, but the concessions they were prepared to make were nothing short of an insult to the Committee.

Hopefully the new legislation will severely limit the range of imagery acceptable so that cigarette ads will no longer be allowed to appeal to the sports conscious, status seekers or children. It may also include effective control over "incidental" advertising on TV by way of sponsorship.

However, the small amount of ad-industry press devoted to the threat indicates that once again the tobacco and advertising industries have the situation well in hand. No doubt, the proposed legislation will be sufficiently weak so as not to seriously tread on any toes, while still allowing the Health Ministers to save face by claiming that they have done all they can.



## THROWAWAY LINES FOR THE CHRISTIANS

B.U.G.A. U.P. field officers all over Sydney have been reporting cases of 'poaching' on some of their favourite billboard sites.

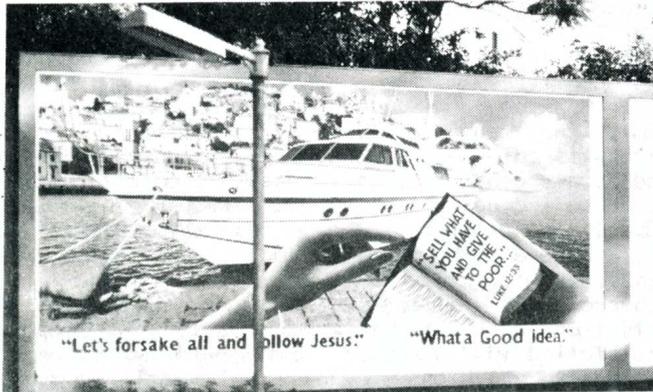
It seems that a group of radical Christians have seized a number of sterling billboards for their own use. The re-facing has been artfully executed in every case, using pre-painted sheets pasted over areas of the offending ad.

On the earliest billboards re-faced, the cigarette packet in the hand had been changed into a bible, so that it appears that it is being offered to the other person, and the words changed to "Let's forsake all and follow Jesus.. What a Sterling idea".

In later versions, the word "sterling" was changed to "good", so that there was no indication that it was ever a cigarette ad.



*Better...*



*Best!*

## NEW LEGAL ANGLES?

Under the headline "Overcoming the Cancer of Cigarette Promotion" in the Canberra Times of April 14, legal writer Crispin Hul1 explores some interesting, if rather far-fetched, legal arguments which could be used in defending B.U.G.A. U.P. cases.

He says 'Members. of B.U.G.A. U.P. who face charges after using spray paint to expose the cancer of cigarette advertisements need to change their legal tactics.' He goes on to say that objects such as unlicensed guns or illegal drugs are not capable of being treated by the law as property in cases where such things are seized or destroyed to prevent their criminal use. It could be argued that the same applies to a cigarette ad which is part of a criminal conspiracy to entice people to kill or injure themselves.

## CIG PROMOTION PROTEST ENDS IN ARREST

Well-known Sydney B.U.G. Fred Cole was arrested at a rothmans promotion at Centrepoint shopping plaza on the 9th of May.

The promotion consisted of an exhibition of press photographs sponsored by rothmans at which women wearing blue and white rothmans costumes mingled with the crowd and offered free cigarettes.

Fred Cole arrived with a tape recorder and began interviewing members of the public. He was asking them about their attitude to cigarette promotions. The interviews were to be used for his weekly radio programme, "Puff Off" on 2SER.

The operators of the promotion were clearly displeased with the responses Fred was getting, and security guards soon moved in. They asked Fred to leave, and when he asserted the belief that he had every right to conduct interviews in a public place, he was unceremoniously dragged out of the plaza and dumped on the footpath. Shoppers stared in disbelief.

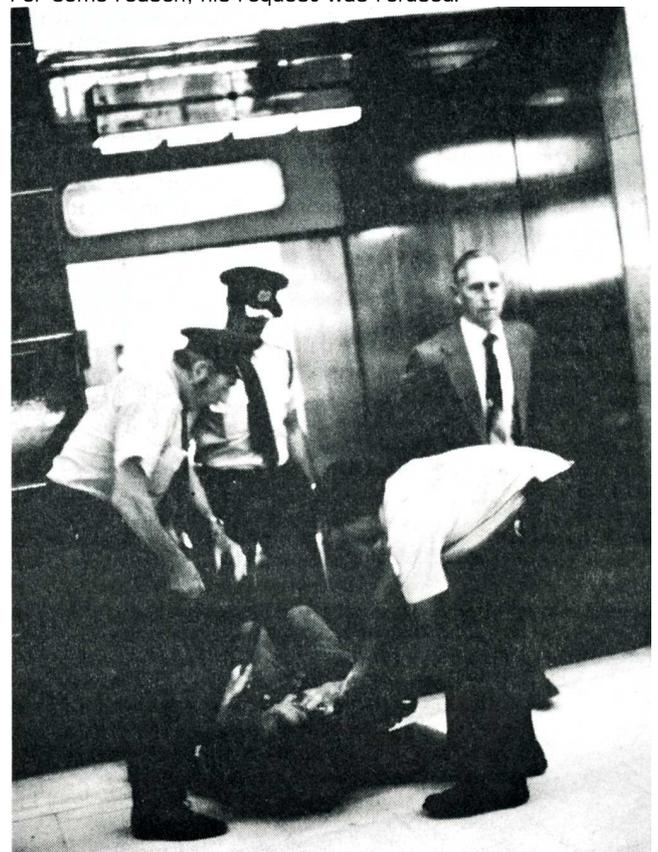
A few minutes later, Fred returned to the plaza, saying that the security guards' actions had constituted assault and that he had called the police.

In due course, two carloads of police arrived. One vehicle was a station wagon full of riot shields from the newly-formed "tactical response unit" (riot squad). Two policemen had a brief chat with a representative of Centrepoint management. They then approached Fred and told him to switch off his tape recorder. Fred refused to comply, and produced his press card. Without further discussion, Fred was carted off screaming and placed in the police car.

Fred was charged with two counts of resisting arrest, as well as remaining on enclosed lands.

When he was released from the police station later that day, he asked for the return of the cassette tape on which he had recorded the interviews and the discussion leading to his abduction.

For some reason, his request was refused.



*Centrepoint manager looks on as Fred is helped up the stairs*

## ADS REMOVED THROUGH GUILTY CONSCIENCE

The Winfield Masters was the ultimate in tobacco-sponsored sporting events where the etiquette of the game demands that spectators sit rigidly still without speaking or even smiling while the players battle for points on a T.V. sound stage comprising a billiard table, a winfield scoreboard, and four winfield "perimeter" signs.

The TV matches on channel 10 were one continuous cigarette commercial. Cliff Thoburn puffed away between shots in perfectly framed compositions of winfield paraphernalia that must have made tobacco account executives glow with pride.

Snooker is renowned for the bizarre antics of its leading exponents. Chain smoking and ritualistic costumes aside, one obese gentleman explained how he drank up to 40 pints of beer daily to ward off a rare disease.

Hours of red winfield logos and red balls trundling across the screen culminated in the Grand Final and a presentation marked by an outbreak of Parkinson's Disease. Blonde winfield "spunkies" in red costume flanked the well-known Yorkshireman, grinning mutely as he handed over the trophy whilst trying to get the winner to wave his winfield-packlike cheque ostentatiously in front of the cameras.

But somehow winfield had been snookered. For the Grand Final match, the studio set had been redecorated. Two of the winfield signs had been replaced by blank red panels, and the huge word "winfield" on the scoreboard had been replaced by a much less conspicuous "FINAL".

One can only speculate as to the cause of this sudden bout of adherence to the Broadcasting Act. Did it take the producer a while to notice that some cigarette advertisements had \* accidentally slipped into view? Or was it related to the announcement by the Broadcasting Tribunal around that time that they were investigating abuse of the Act?

## ASIO TAPES EXPOSE TOBACCO LOBBYING

Buried in the phone-tap transcripts of the recent Ivanov "spy affair", lurk a few paragraphs which reveal the level at which the tobacco industry manipulates the government. A section of one of the ASIO phone-tap tapes revealed that David Combe had been acting as Canberra lobbyist for Richard Whittington, a Sydney business consultant working for the tobacco industry.

Following a SCOHM meeting in April this year, the Federal Health Minister, Mr Blewett, announced that the Government was looking into banning advertising of cigarettes by means of billboards at televised sporting events. He admitted that this was a compromise move, because the alternative would be a total ban on broadcasting of any incidental cigarette advertising.

The ASIO tapes revealed that a few days later, Richard Whittington congratulated David Combe on having averted disaster for the tobacco industry. He said the decision was a victory for the industry, although it could not be depicted as such by the press, and David Combe added that it was a good "face saver". Whittington added "I mean, I guess to look at the press coverage, it looks like a bit of a slap, but I've been at pains to assure them that it's not."

Whittington was so pleased with Combe's assistance that he suggested that he bill his tobacco principals for an extra day's work.



*There have been no cigarette ads on TV since 1975!*

## KIDS' ADS "REGULATION" SLAMMED

B.U.G.A. U.P. is not alone in its condemnation of so-called "self regulation" through which the advertising industry places itself above the law.

The Australian Council for Children's Film and Television is fed up with the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal's failure to act on its own recommendations, and has called for an end to self

In May last year, the Tribunal's Children's Programme Committee issued draft advertising standards, and these were amended in January this year. Speaking at the Council's Annual General Meeting, ACCFT TV officer, Barbara Biggins, said "it's time for the Tribunal to decide what should be done - and then do it." She said that whatever arguments there may be for continuing with self-regulation in other areas, TV advertising aimed at children should be subject to legislative control.

"There must be minimum standards which can be seen to be independent of the industry, which has usually kept to the letter of Tribunal standards and its own self-regulatory codes. But it has often, we believe, failed to achieve the spirit of the codes" she said.

At the same meeting, Michael Blakeney, Senior lecturer in law at the University of N.S.W. said "Given the Tribunal's history of enforcing its standards, any detailed evaluation of the existing or of the foreshadowed standards is largely a waste of time. The Tribunal could make licence renewals subject to a good record in observing the children's television advertising standards, but has not yet done so."

Another speaker said that "Regulation in the interests of parents and children should be the responsibility of government regulatory agencies, with powers of enforcement and resources for monitoring, and answerable to our elected representatives.

"It should not be in the hands of those commercial vested interests who have most to gain from minimisation of control."



## TV DRUG PUSHERS-DIG THEIR OWN GRAVE

The broadcasting of a 10 minute winfield promotion before the Sydney Rugby League Grand Final last year may have been the last chapter in the long story of abuse of the TV cigarette ad ban.

The Victorian Anti-Cancer council sent a tape of the promotion to the Broadcasting tribunal, who in turn asked the Attorney General for guidelines as to the limits of "incidental" advertising allowable under the Act. The Attorney General instructed the Tribunal to draw up a draft policy, which is now being circulated for industry and public comment.

The new policy attempts to close the loophole which has allowed cigarette advertising to continue through sponsorship. The Tribunal's attitude is that cigarette advertising will not be regarded as accidental if the circumstances of the broadcast show it to be more likely than not that the broadcaster intended to promote a particular brand of cigarette or smoking in general.

The intention is that, the broadcasters themselves will enforce the restrictions, as their licence renewal may be in jeopardy if they don't.

Aware of the dismal failure of self regulation in other areas of the media, the Tribunal has already warned that if stations are unable to cooperate with the spirit of the Act, special legislation will be introduced.

## INDUSTRY REACTION

The draft policy is extremely thorough in its definition of cigarette advertising, and pre-empts most of the devious plays the advertising industry will turn to. The Policy covers advertising of "same brand" products (dunhill fashion accessories, camel sports jackets etc.) and even situations where no brand is mentioned, for example a cowboy on a horse smoking a cigarette while a well known advertising theme tune plays.

The Draft Policy's greatest recommendation came from the tobacco industry itself. The swift and violent reaction to the threat of losing TV advertising indicates that the new policy has no immediately obvious loopholes.

The Tobacco Institute called a meeting of 600 sporting organisations who accept tobacco sponsorship. Draft letters to the tribunal were handed out to the sporting bodies for distribution to members.

Over the next few weeks form letters urging the Tribunal not to ban tobacco company sponsorship will be handed to spectators at major sporting events.



**LET'S END UNHEALTHY PROMOTIONS**

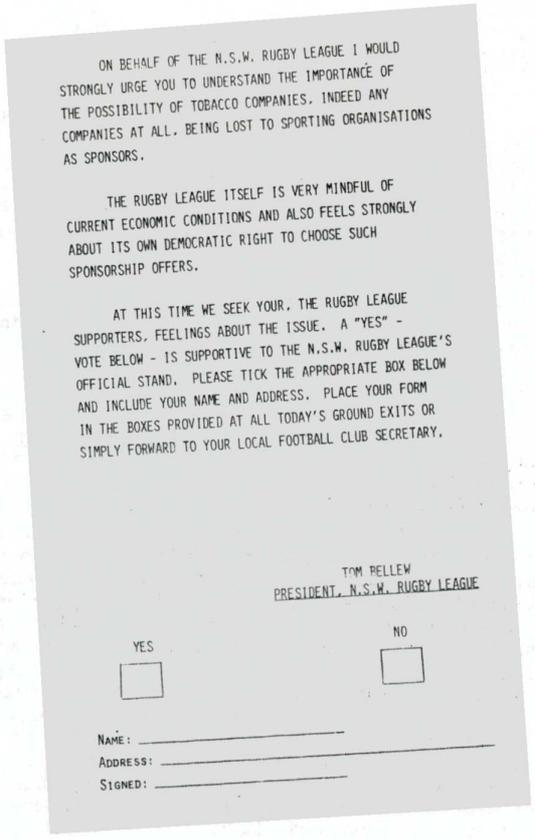
*YOU CAN HELP*

Write to B.U.G.A. U.P. at

N.S.W: Box 78, Wentworth Building  
University of Sydney 2006

Vic: Box 285 Fitzroy, Victoria 3065

New Address in Western Australia:  
Box 598, Subiaco, W.A. 6008



Democracy In Action-  
Form letter distributed at Rugby matches. Note the wealth of in-depth argument on which the reader can base his decision.

## ALCOHOL AD CONTROVERSY

Pressure for stricter control of alcohol advertising has been steadily growing since the 1977 Senate Select Committee expressed concern that in Australia one in twenty men and one in one-hundred women have serious alcohol problems.

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons recently added fuel to the debate over alcohol advertising by calling for health warnings to be put on bottle labels. The warnings would state that drinking can be a health hazard, and give an estimate of how much of the particular drink could be consumed before health was impaired. The College is also asking the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal to introduce similar warnings for alcohol ads on radio and TV.

In July, a parliamentary committee investigating the use of motor vehicles in ads began questioning witnesses about the way alcohol advertising may exacerbate the problem of drink-driving.

