

SM 'Surprised' by explanation

MELBOURNE: A magistrate said in the City Court yesterday that he was surprised by the explanation given by a Sydney member of BUGAUP for allegedly stealing a billboard which advertised cigarettes and that he thought such advertisements should be more closely monitored.

BUGAUP stands for Billboards Utilising Graffitists Against Unhealthy Promotions.

Mr Frederick James Cole, 56, of Ultimo, appeared before Mr Wheelhouse, SM, on a charge of stealing an advertising promotion in North Fitzroy last week and of unlawfully possessing an advertising promotion.

Mr Cole, who pleaded not guilty, told the court that the billboard was "absolutely disgusting" and that he had intended to change the wording of the advertisement from "move up" to "cough up" and then return it.

It was specifically aimed to attract women, as the woman was in a higher position on the advertisement and was in the dominant colour.

Mr Wheelhouse asked if Mr Cole was suggesting that the woman should not be the dominant sex.

"No, I am saying that the advertisers are changing their methods in the advent of feminism," Mr Cole said.

The sexual content of the advertisement was absorbed sub-consciously by the person looking at it.

Mr Wheelhouse said, "He has convinced me we must look at these advertisements more closely. I was surprised by his answers."

Constable Verinder, for the prosecution, said that Mr Cole had been seen on January 28 removing a Rothmans cigarette advertising billboard and walking off with it down the street.

Mr Cole told the court that BUGAUP was interested in "cleaning the money-lenders' temple". The organisation was dealing with "multinational mass murderers".

Mr Neil Cole, for Mr Cole, said 16,500 Australians died every year from smoking. A NSW judge had outlawed Winfield cigarette advertisements which used Paul Hogan because of the effect it had on young people.

Mr Wheelhouse dismissed the charge of theft and placed Mr Cole on a 12-month, \$50 good-behaviour bond for the charge of unlawful possession.