

## EDITORIAL

# If the law goes, it's back to the jungle

AUSTRALIA is at crisis point. The whole principle of legal stability and democratic rights is under threat from law-ignoring minority groups.

Around the country there are growing incidences of people taking the law into their own hands to express disapproval and to force their point of view. If this is allowed to continue, the chaos ahead is frightening to contemplate.

The structure of society and civilisation is built on observance of the law. If the laws of the country are ignored, there is only one law left — the law of the jungle.

Everyone is entitled to protest at what he or she sees as an injustice or social wrong. But protests must be kept within the framework of the law, or they themselves become a social wrong.

This newspaper yesterday gave some prominence to a group which openly admits to daubing advertising billboards with painted graffiti. We did this not to support illegal activity, but to make the community aware of the blatant cheek of these people who mutilate property and flaunt their activity as if it were justified.

We did it in the hope that there will be a great upsurge in public insistence that the law be upheld; that people's rights and property be respected.

These self-confessed paint-daubers have the hide to claim that they do it partly out of concern for the visual environment. What rot! If they had any concern for the visual environment they would not pollute it with their childish scrawlings.

Many people object to outdoors advertising as environmental pollution, and they are entitled to their opinion. Many people also object to some of the products being advertised, and they are entitled to that view, too.

But there are ways and means of opposing such things without regarding the law as something to be manipulated or broken for a principle.

Property must be protected by law, as must people's rights. If one section is allowed to go to any lengths to get their viewpoint across, what hope is there for law-enforcement in the future?

What if one of these vocal groups decided that the motor car is an environment polluter — as it is — and wages a campaign to clear the roads of them?

Or if one of them sees industry as an environment polluter — as it is — and decides that it must go?

We live or die by our laws. They must apply to all people.

There must be no double standards for those who dare to stand ...