

BILLBORED

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

NUMBER 11, JANUARY 1984

PRICE
20 cents

S.R.A. BILLBOARDS STILL GOING UP IN SPITE OF BAN

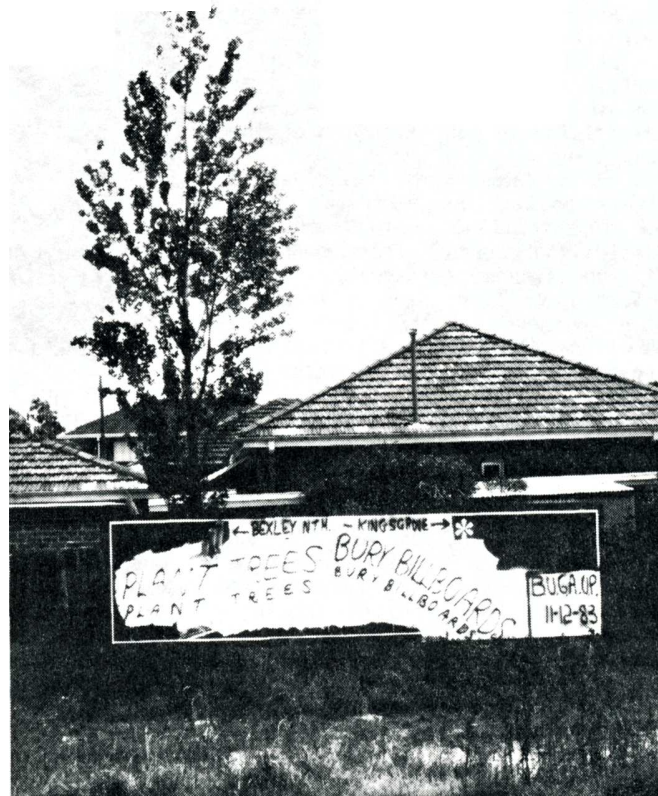
Although the State Rail Authority announced last March that cigarette advertising would no longer be allowed on its property, there has been a recent spate of brand new billboards erected along Sydney's suburban rail lines.

The new billboards, of steel construction and supported by steel posts, have replaced old wooden ones which have in the past fallen prey to particularly vicious termites which seem to attack only cigarette billboards. And many extra ones have been added for good measure.

The previous billboards were affixed to signposts between stations, giving the distances and names of the adjacent stations. The new ones have dispensed with the signposts, and are exclusively winfield ads.

As a special Christmas treat for Sydney commuters, B.U.G.A. U.P. field officers tolled long into the night of December 11th, refacing almost all of the offending signs. In some cases, the ad was completely eradicated and the station information returned to its rightful place.

This blitz was a particularly welcomed windfall to the S.R.A. poster-pasters who really "cleaned up", working at penalty rates over the Christmas holidays, defacing the signposts with new winfield posters.



GRAVE SITUATION AT TENNIS

For the past three years, the finals of the Australian Open Tennis competition, held at Kooyong in Melbourne, have been the scene of colourful protests by MOP UP, the Movement Opposing the Promotion of Unhealthy Products. The tennis series is sponsored by the philp morris tobacco company, as part of their broader conspiracy to associate smoking with healthy activities, and at the same time achieve cheap television advertising in contravention of the ban.

To commemorate this year's finals on December 10th and 11th, MOP UP established a mock cemetery outside the courts. This comprised 44 tombstones, inscribed with suitable epitaphs to well known drug pushers. MOP UP is now familiar 10 metre tall inflated cigarette stood in the midst of the graveyard, bearing an invitation to "Come to Cancer Country". To add that tennis touch, a large scoreboard was erected to keep spectators informed of the progressive demise of smokers as the day went on, as well as the yearly toll. The 44 tombstones were erected to symbolise the 44 smokers who would die of smoking related disease on each day of play.

The life-size (or, more correctly, death-size) tombstones were constructed by a dedicated team of MOP UP activists, with technical advice on choice of slogans being supplied by a team of specialist BUGs.

DRUG PUSHING PRESS BOYCOTT

Apart from this photographer, the marlboro promotional machine was conspicuously absent outside the stadium. The only external sign of the nefarious activities inside were the girls at the gates selling programmes who were much younger than their counterparts of previous years. Could it be that philp morris is employing child labour to cut costs, or is it becoming increasingly difficult to recruit adult drug pushers?



MOP UP's promotional team, on the other hand, were very active and conspicuous to tennis fans and passers-by. Dressed in appropriate wester gear but with a difference (Tee shirts showing a riderless horse by a graveside with the slogan "Gone to marblerow country" and skeleton masks) they distributed green and gold badges bearing the slogan "Smokers are Dying to Bring you the Tennis".

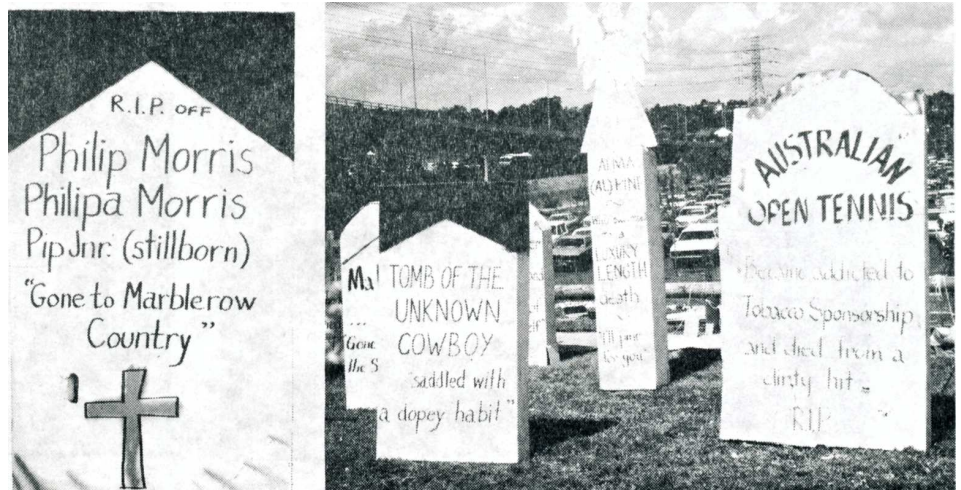
Putting on a brave front, John Doillon of the Tobacco Institute and Phil Scanlan of Amatil took the badges offered to them, but on discovering the wording threw them away (one of the gentlemen was even seen to jump on his). Most other spectators were eager to wear theirs. Last year, green and gold sun visors were handed out, and although they were more visible on the television coverage of the event, most of them were grabbed by philp morris people handing out their own version inside the grounds.

MOP UP DISAPPOINTED

In spite of the good television coverage of the protest and its outward success, one aspect of this year's protest disturbed MOP UP philp morris had incorporated the green and gold colour scheme (chosen by MOP UP for its contrast to marlboro red) into their own promotional gear. A green and gold emblem appeared on their plastic sample bags alongside the traditional red chevron and black brand name.

Is it possible that the MOP UP protest has been successfully integrated into the whole Kooyong tennis scene, making it counterproductive? Maybe next year something a little less fame will be required to make the point.

MOP UP has called in consultants from BUGA UP to discuss possible tactics.



BROADCASTING TRIBUNAL'S ABOUT-FACE

Earlier this year, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal issued a draft policy statement on "incidental or accidental" televising of cigarette advertising. The strictness of these guidelines sent shock waves through the legal drug industry. (See "Billboarded" numbers 7 and 8).

After reviewing 35,000 submissions on the Draft, the Tribunal finally issued their final policy statement on the 29th December. And what a Christmas gift to the tobacco industry it was!

Unlike their draft, which was quite explicit in defining accidental and incidental advertising, and which would certainly have meant an end to cigarette billboards on playing fields, the final policy contains clauses which are so confusing and inexplicit that even the newspapers couldn't agree on how to report the ruling. Conflicting headlines read "Cigarette Ads May Have Gone Too Far" (Sydney Morning Herald), "Tobacco Firms Get Green Light for Sport Sponsorship" (The Australian), and "Tobacco Advertising Debate Unresolved" (Financial Review).

The six-page Policy gets off to a good start by stating a fairly reasonable position on the question of what constitutes a cigarette ad. They will apply the following test:

"Would a reasonable person regard the advertisement, in all the circumstances, as seeking, directly or indirectly, to promote cigarettes or cigarette tobacco or to encourage the smoking of cigarettes or cigarette tobacco".

The inclusion of the term "reasonable person" fortunately excludes complication of the issue by the opinions of advertising or tobacco industry people.

INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS

The statement goes on to say that an advertisement will not be "accidental" if "it is more likely than not that -

(a) the licensee intended to promote a particular brand of cigarettes, or cigarette tobacco, or cigarette smoking in general; or

(b) a reasonable person would have foreseen that advertising matter for cigarettes, cigarette tobacco or cigarette smoking would be transmitted.

So far so good - Then comes the "out". The Tribunal says that "incidental accompaniment" is permissible. "Matter will only be regarded as an incidental accompaniment if it is subordinate to the main matter being transmitted". The definition of "subordinate" is not given, the statement saying only "this is a question or judgement which must be made having regard to the facts of a particular case". This, in effect, means that the situation is no better defined than before.

GUILTY CONSCIENCE

Along with the Policy Statement, the Tribunal released a document called "Some Questions and Answers About the Tribunal's Policy Statement on Advertising of Cigarettes". This, in effect, was an apology designed to pre-empt criticism from the health lobby, whose hopes had been raised by the strength of the Draft Policy. Under the question "Why does the final statement differ in so many respects from the Draft Statement?", the tribunal offers the lame excuse that "... The object of releasing drafts for comment is to provide the maximum opportunity for

difficult issues to be fully explored. The changes in the final Policy Statement reflect the uncertainty in this area of the law and clearly demonstrate the value of public submissions on questions of interpretation." This evasive non-explanation can only confirm suspicion that the Tribunal did an about-face when they realised what a political "hot potato" they were dealing with.



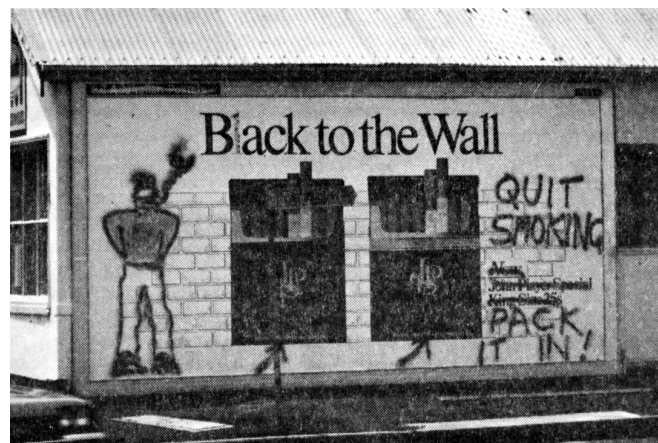
Newspaper headlines on release of the Tribunal's statement reflect the "each way bet" policy adopted.

The question "is the Tribunal simply jumping on the anti-tobacco bandwagon in releasing the Policy Statement at this time?" was further evidence of their defensive attitude. Their answer is "There is no doubt that the issue of cigarette advertising has assumed greater prominence in the last year or so... The Tribunal is not jumping on any bandwagon, but is anxious that its own area of responsibility should be properly understood and administered according to law".

NON-SMOKERS' RIGHTS TO ACT

In response to the Policy Statement, the President of the Non-Smokers Rights Movement announced that the Movement would be issuing a writ against the Minister for Communications for failing to uphold the law, and requiring him to do so.

Broadcasting Tribunal notwithstanding, the ban on televising cigarette ads is part of the Broadcasting Television Act and can therefore be enforced by law. It will be interesting to see whether the Minister is willing to take effective action against not only the tobacco lobby but the broadcast media as well.



Once again the tobacco industry has ensured that the Broadcasting Tribunal have their backs to the wall on the issue of illicit TV advertising.

AD INDUSTRY SLAMS AD EXPO

BUGA UP'S educational project for schoolchildren, "AD EXPO" has sparked off a storm of protest from the advertising and tobacco industries.

AD EXPO was launched during the last school term of 1983. A teacher's manual sub-titled "A Self-Defence Course for Children" was offered to teachers who wished to participate in the project, designed to help children understand the techniques of advertising. The manual particularly emphasises "Unhealthy Promotions" which use psychological ploys to induce people to buy products which are useless, wasteful or harmful.

The content of the teacher's manual was described in "Billboard" Number 9, December 1983. Briefly, the book discusses some common features of advertising, such as use of misleading language, images of glamour, appeals to adolescent insecurities, and sexist stereotyping. It also includes a number of suggested exercises for students, one of which involves "refacing" advertisements. Students are invited to submit refaced ads for inclusion in a compilation book to be published by BUGA UP.

"VANDALISM KIT"

The manual was distributed to teachers on request during third term last year. The first sign of trouble came on November 10th, when the Opposition Leader in the N.S.W. Upper House told parliament about the project. He called on the Attorney-General, Paul Landa, to urgently investigate to make sure that defacing of billboards was not encouraged.

Mr Landa, a former Minister for Education, said that he knew about B.U.G.A. U.P. and shared "a great deal of sympathy with their activities." He said that it was up to parents to complain to teachers if they believed their children were being urged to break the law.

A few days later, the Australian Advertising Industry Council issued a press release saying that AD EXPO could "disorient" children, and encourage them to flout the law. It said: "To carry this sort of project to the classroom is like running a course in vandalism at public expense". A spokesman said that the Council had sent letters of complaint to Police Ministers and Police Commissioners in all states calling on them to "put a heavy foot on this sort of activity". Could they be envisaging spot checks on classrooms for concealed spray cans and magic markers?

Meanwhile the NSW Education Department responded to pressure by writing to regional directors asking them to instruct principals that NSW Government schools should not participate in AD EXPO.

Although AD EXPO did not single out tobacco advertising - only 5 out of 56 ads used as illustrations were cigarette ads - the tobacco industry was the only one which came forward to condemn it publicly. In a debate with Sydney B.U.G. Peter Vogel, Mr Scanlan of Amatil explained that the most objectionable part of the manual was the exercise which suggested children reface an ad of their choice and write a short essay on why they think it is an "unhealthy promotion". He believed that if children get used to refacing magazine pages, they will progress to Amatil's billboards. Throwing the tobacco industry's own "brand-changing" line back at them, Mr Vogel said that he might "cynically reply that we are not encouraging children to take up vandalism, but rather encourage those who already vandalise something else to turn their attentions to billboards". Mr Scanlan did not reply.

POPULAR DEMAND

As a result of extensive national press coverage - courtesy of the A.A.I.C. - B.U.G.A. U.P. was swamped with enquiries from teachers. Many were disappointed that they had learned about AD EXPO too late to participate, and the unforeseen

demand outstripped the supply of manuals. A second printing has now been completed, and the deadline for submissions for the AD EXPO book has been extended to the end of first term 1984.


Manuals are available from:

AD EXPO

P.O. Box 80

STRAWBERRY HILLS N.S.W. 2012

Price: \$5 (free in case of hardship)



"Vile as can be... yet they satisfy"

Crazy PEOPLE

CRAVEN
Special Mild

SMOKING ADD.

The advertisement shows 2 people sailing and it looks really fresh. Another thing is that the 2 people are young and healthy and smoking is bad for you. They say that it is really mild. Why don't they show the real effect of smoking like a bloke coughing and almost choking? Or an old woman with cancer and all her teeth covered with nicotine? Or young kids saying, "This stinks and is vile." Or a little kid saying, "Daddy that stinks", and the dad replies "Yeh, I know son." Or in big letters THIS IS A HEALTH HAZARD and not down the bottom and the name of the cigarette in small writing. Another is that they are always boasting about how their filters are better than all the rest. They are always saying all the time, "New improved filter and new milder taste. "Like when smokes first came out they did not say how good they were, all they said was the name brand and what they were made of. But now they have to compete against each other and all they say now is a load of garbage. So I have changed it to "VILE AS CAN BE ... YET THEY SATISFY CRAZY PEOPLE". That is my impression of smokes and all adverts on smokes are a load of garbage and they should be made to tell truth or nothing at all.

JASON WILLIAMS.

THE END

AN AD EXPO SUBMISSION

B.U.G.A. U.P. NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

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