

# BILLBORED

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THE UN-OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF B.U.G.A. U.P.  
Billboard-Utilising Graffitiists Against Unhealthy Promotions

## BUNFIGHT OVER JUNK FOOD ADS

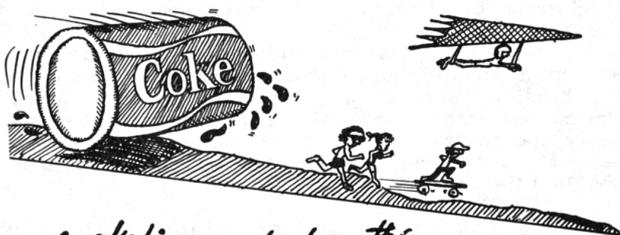
Advertisers are upset about proposed amendments to the regulations concerning television ads during children's viewing hour (4pm to 5pm, Monday to Friday). The principal proposal is that total advertising time be cut from ten minutes to eight.

The Association of National Advertisers claims that the reduction will result in less revenue being available for production of programmes, resulting in a lowering of the standard of children's programmes. (How touching ... ed.). Furthermore, they claim that "research has shown that advertising does not harm children. It can persuade them, but not make them more persuasible."

Sydney TV broadcaster ATN 7 claims that the move will lead to "domination by budget". They claim that the two lost minutes will force up advertising costs, leaving only the large corporations who can afford to advertise during children's time. This "domination by budget" would be counter-productive to the Tribunal's aims, as "rational consumer decision-making can only spring from assessments of claims between competitors". (If they believed children really do assess the claims made in their ads, they would stop using TV altogether ... ed.)

Another "controversial" suggestion from the Tribunal has been the possibility of allowing one minute of "pro-social material" including health, safety and nutrition. This would allow any advertiser with something pro-social to say to buy an extra minute of juvenile brainwashing time.

The loudest complaints about this have come, not surprisingly, from the Confectionery Manufacturers of Australia (C.M.A.), who are indignant that the Tribunal should make specific reference to "pro-social" messages, implying that their advertising is antisocial. In a submission to the Tribunal, the director of the C.M.A. said that the proposal "implies that advertised children's products are in some way harmful to children. Advertising is a fundamental right of every manufacturer as long as the product is not harmful and the advertising is carried out in a responsible way. Confectionery products are not harmful, but have an important role as a snack food in today's diet." He said that the Tribunal's proposal was a "hasty over-reaction to small but vociferous minority groups". (Where have we heard this before? ... ed.)



Marketing strategy #6:  
capture the youth market—ANY WAY.



*Coca-Cola's product claim: a contribution to rational consumer decision-making..'*

Another proposal which wrought terror in the confectionery industry was the requirement that ads be clearly distinguished from programme by a break of at least three seconds. The C.M.A. claim that there is no evidence that children can't separate ads from programme (they haven't watched Humphrey Bear or similar ... ed.) and that any further regulation is therefore unnecessary.

The final blow was the Tribunal's suggestion that "a licensee may not transmit any advertisement designed to encourage children to ask their parents or other people to purchase the product or service, whether encouragement is implicit or explicit. Australian United Foods, marketers of Peters and Pauls ice cream, said that this standard was "imprecise, uncertain and impossible to comply with".

The standard is most precise and certain, but unfortunately for the advertisers, it is adults who hold the purse strings: they can't comply while still effectively pushing their junk to kids.

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Mr N. Trethowan, spokesperson for the Outdoor Advertising Association, said that BUGA UP costs the industry an estimated \$60,000 a year. He commented that while the Association had taken action against more than 10 members of BUGA UP "most had not had enough money to pay their fines". (Although fines have been typically less than \$100, BUGs have refused as a matter of principle to pay, some choosing to go to jail instead.)

## DRUG PUSHERS TO THE RESCUE

A letter from New Zealand tells a story which could be a warning of things to come:

"Dear BUGAs,

I've heard a lot about your activities against cigarette company sponsorship of sports and arts, and I thought you might be interested in the latest in sponsorships over here.

Rothmans has given \$150,000 towards a rescue helicopter called the Winfield Rescue Helicopter. The idea is that it will fly around the beaches watching for drowning surfers, and then pluck them to safety, or better still, fly them to hospital. Pretty clever huh? The helicopter is painted red and yellow like a Winfield pack, and all eyes and T.V. cameras will be on it as it executes its missions of mercy.

New Zealand ASH wrote to the Governor General, asking him not to officiate at the opening ceremony in light of the fact that 3600 New Zealanders die from smoking each year, but he denied that he was endorsing smoking and went ahead.

MOP UP picketed the opening ceremony, and gained national T.V. coverage through placards saying things like "Kids need Winfield like a growth in the lung".

We don't have many billboards here to take out our frustrations on so things like this helicopter will receive much of our attention.

Good luck with your campaign, keep "UP" the good work.

Yours sincerely,

..... (Name withheld to protect the guilty)"



*We're in the news again...*

## MOVES TO EXPOSE PILL PUSHERS

The international Organisation of Consumer Unions (IOCU) has launched a campaign for the banning of advertising of pharmaceuticals, except at point-of-sale. The threat is being taken seriously by the industry, in view of IOCU's successful campaign against the misleading advertising of infant formula in Third World countries.

In a bid to head off regulation by the World Health Organisation, the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers brought out their own voluntary code last year.

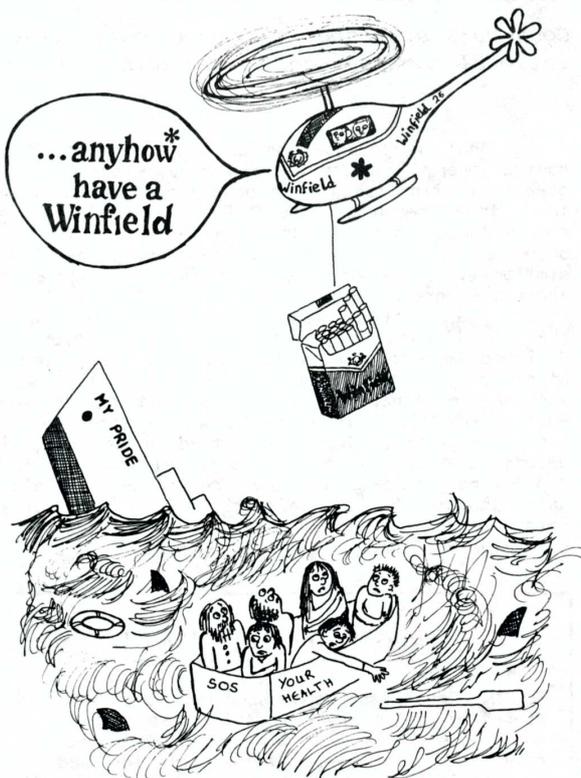
IOCU plans to expose the many ways the pharmaceutical industry evades government regulations and uses deceptive advertising techniques to push products, some of which have been banned in Western countries, in the Third World.

These unethical practices are also the subject of a book to be released here next month. (Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1984). "Corporate Crime in the Pharmaceutical Industry" by John Braithwaite, draws the analogy between trans-national corporations who promote harmful and addictive drugs and the shady character on the street who pushes heroin. The book concentrates on the role of advertising in promoting irresponsible drug use both to doctors and consumers. Doctors' decisions about the best drug to prescribe are often based not on information, but on the company who gives him the nicest free gifts, or sponsors their golf tournament, or the cleverness of the glossy ads in the medical journals. In some countries drug companies are not allowed to give gifts, but they get around this by lending doctors expensive equipment for their surgery, and never ask for it back.

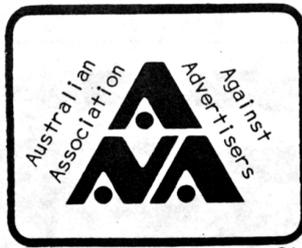
Mood-modifying drugs like Valium are the most heavily promoted, and also the most abused. Valium has been advertised in a medical journal as producing "a less demanding and complaining patient". Ads for the tranquilliser Vistaril show the tear-streaked face of a young girl, suggesting its value for children who are frightened by "school, the dark, separation, dental visits".

Many drug ads are deliberately misleading. An ad for a sleeping pill showed a pregnant woman, with the heading "Give us her nights". The fine print at the bottom warned that this drug should not be used in early pregnancy. The drug company argued that the ad was not misleading, because the woman in the picture was in late pregnancy.

Judging by the picture painted by this book, IOCU will certainly have its hands full combating the world's most powerful Unhealthy Promoters.



*Drug pushers snatch potential clients from the jaws of death. The Kiwi tobacco industry launches a desperate attempt to rescue its sinking public image.*



# IRRATIONAL ADVERTISER

AGAINST  
OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF ADVERTISERS

Published ~~monthly~~ on behalf of the Australian Association of ~~National~~ Advertisers as a supplement to ~~B&T Weekly~~

## BROADCASTING FEATURE

### NEW MOVES ON SEXIST ADS

The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal has announced the establishment of a special committee to gauge public concern about the portrayal of women in the electronic media.

The advertising industry, ever anxious respond to community wishes, reacted swiftly decisively to the committee's call for submissions.

B&T Weekly said that "the topic rates about as much interest among the public as the mating habits of a glow worm". The evidence of this, says the editor, is the fact that only 15 complaints were lodged against sexist TV ads during 1982-1983. Surely it is surprising that even 15 complaints were received, given the widespread public ignorance of the existence and role of the Advertising Standards Council, not to mention the farcical constraints within which it operates.

Ad News went even further, and called upon the ad industry to ignore the inquiry. An editorial typifying the diplomacy with which the ad industry bites the hand of the regulatory bodies which feeds it, said that the Tribunal "must be rapidly developing a reputation as one of Australia's greatest time-wasting bureaucracies." The editor went on to ask "is the advertising industry expected to respond to the Tribunal's call on the basis that there will be some criticism of commercials? Is it expected to explain the rationale behind using a caricature of a tired housewife in soap powder commercials or apologise for soft drink manufacturers which have a propensity for casting voluptuous girls?" He concludes by saying the industry should "treat this inquiry with the contempt it deserves."

No doubt, when the findings of the committee are published, the industry will "bitch" that their views are not adequately represented.

The enquiry invites submissions from any interested parties, including members of the public, and should be addressed to:

Rosemary James or Catherine Weigall  
Australian Broadcasting Tribunal  
PO Box 1308  
North Sydney 2060 NSW



### AD INDUSTRY "DOES ITS BLOCK"

In yet another bid to force the television industry to act responsibly towards their audience, the Broadcasting Tribunal has proposed that ads be run in "blocks" between features.

Predictably, the advertising industry has reacted angrily to this loathsome infringement on their rights. The Australian Association of National Advertisers has even gone so far as to claim that viewers actually like ads sprinkled through programmes. The evidence of this, they claim, is that so few people watch the non-commercial channels.

"Block advertising" has been in use in European countries for many years. When ads do not suddenly appear at strategic points during a programme, they must be made sufficiently interesting and informative to be worth watching. The Australian advertising industry obviously acknowledges that for them this would be an impossible task.

### GET YOUR STORY STRAIGHT, ADVERTISERS

In response to comments in 1B&T Weekly" suggesting that BUGA UP has put advertisers off outdoor advertising, Arthur Davis, national marketing and sales manager of Levingston Posters said:

"The activities of this nuisance group, while utterly deplorable, affects only a specific minority of advertisers and we credit most with more common sense, than to refrain from buying outdoor because of BUGA UP."

Meanwhile, the Tobacco Institute claims that BUGA UP is totally indiscriminate, attacking everything from air conditioners to milk-arrowroot biscuits. The Advertising Industry Council insists that BUGA LP is simply "anti-business" and insanely jealous of anyone who makes a profit from their work.

Maybe the visual pollution industry should get together with the brainwashers and drug pushers and agree among themselves what BUGA UP's motivation really is.

### AD RULING IRKS PORN-BROKERS

The advertising industry is concerned about new regulations legalising the sale but banning the advertising of X-rated videos.

X-rated cassettes are estimated to constitute 30 percent of the \$240 million market, even though to date they have been illegal throughout Australia. In an interesting twist on the illegal to sell it, legal to advertise it" theme, some publications claim that up to 10 percent of their advertising revenue will be lost if the ads for this illegal product are stopped.

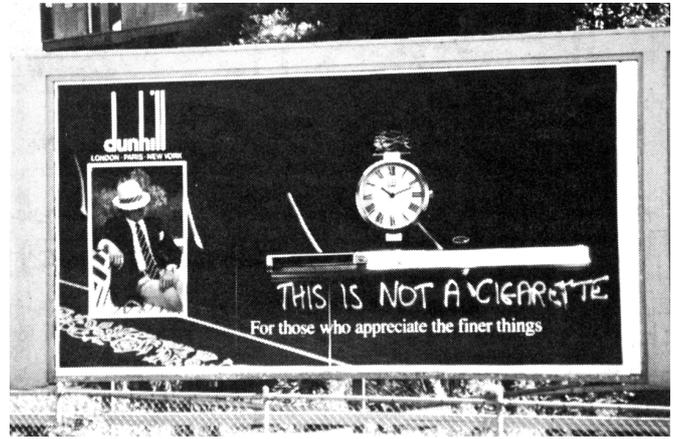
The publishers of "Truth" magazine have already announced that they believe that it won't be difficult for advertisers to use indirect methods to advertise X-rated videos without breaking the law.

There may not be much truth in advertising, but there is no limit to the ads in Truth.

## THE ROTHMANS CONNECTION - PART 6

Not all cigarette manufacturers have been equally disadvantaged by the State Government's decision to ban cigarette advertising on public transport property. Winfield (rothmans) ads are still going up in place of signs along tracks indicating distances between stations, and on many station platforms, prime sites previously sporting ads for benson & hedges, sterling or JPS (w. d. & h.o. wills) have been taken over by ads for dunhill "accessories" (also rothmans). In anticipation of public outcry, the name "dunhill" was registered as a trademark by Alfred Dunhill of London on 13th February this year, just in case anyone should mistake it for a cigarette ad.

Quite a nifty manoeuvre.



## CIG AD RULING HIGHLIGHTS HYPOCRISY

The Advertising Standards Council has upheld a complaint against a cigarette ad which appeared recently without the mandatory health warning.

The advertiser, Amati1, has for some time been running cigarette ads in the journal "Pacific Islands Monthly" which is circulated primarily throughout the Pacific region. Because the magazine is mainly for overseas distribution, Amati1 presumed that there was no need to adhere to the Australian voluntary code, which says that if a packet of cigarettes is shown in an ad, the health warning must be included.

The subject of the recent complaint was an ad for kool cigarettes in the October issue. The complainant said in his letter to the A.S.C.:

"It is disgraceful that Amatil and the publishers of the magazine should seek to withhold the warning in a magazine which is widely circulated throughout the Pacific Islands where the health risks of the smoking habit may not be fully appreciated."

After due consideration, the Council decided that:

"Noting that the Pacific Islands Monthly magazine has a circulation within Australia in addition to its overseas circulation, Council found that the advertisement the subject of the complaint was in breach of the Voluntary Code for the Advertising of Cigarettes."

The Council made it quite clear that the complaint was only upheld because the magazine was on sale in Australia. Had it not been, Amatil would have been free to push their drugs to the Pacific Islanders by whatever means they could.

The lengths to which the advertising industry will go to evade even their own system of regulation was again demonstrated when a similar complaint against the QANTAS in-flight magazine was dismissed on the grounds that the magazine has no distribution within Australia. When informed that the magazine advertises "subscription in Australia \$15; Overseas \$2011, the ASC replied that this "merely indicates the rate payable inside Australia", and does not mean that it is actually available here.

A direct enquiry to QANTAS revealed that as from January 1984, the magazine is no longer available by subscription. The complaint was lodged in December 1983.

It is a sad reflection on Australia's national airline that faced with a choice, circulation within Australia has been sacrificed to appease the tobacco gods.

## THOUGHTLESS GRAFFITI: ADS INSULT TO INJURY

A letter received by B.U.G.A. U.P. recently highlighted the need to think carefully before spraying to avoid trading one unhealthy promotion for another:

Dear People,

Whilst I applaud your intentions, I'd like to point out that to write 'The Marlboro Man is a fag' over a cigarette ad is not doing the health of gay men - battered by oppression - any good either.

This was on a North Shore line station.

How about raising your consciences a little in this regard.

Yours sincerely, (Name supplied)

P.S. It's O.K. to be a fag."

B.U.G.A. U.P. is not an organisation with any "rules", nor does it have members or meetings, so it is not possible to regulate what graffitists may express. There is no way of knowing who was responsible for this particularly thoughtless slogan, but hopefully he or she will read this letter and avoid adding insult (to gays) to injury (by the billboard) in future.

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

If you would like to join the campaign against Unhealthy Promotions, or would like further information about B.U.G.A. U.P. write to:



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W.A. 6008

**LET'S END UNHEALTHY PROMOTIONS**

**GO FOR IT!**