

# BILLBORED

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

## BUGA UP's Adventures in Adland

On May 1st, a mobile "Embassy" was established at North Sydney outside the offices of Leo Burnett, the advertising agency responsible for the promotion of Marlboro cigarettes.

Leo Burnett has been chosen as the site for the Embassy because it is their billboards which attempt to turn the Australian "Land of the Dreamtime" into "Marlboro Country".

Needless to say, there are no such billboards in the heart of advertising country. BUGA UP erected a large billboard on site, so that it could be utilised according to tradition. A picture depicting the immorality of cigarette advertising was painted on the billboard during the week. It showed an advertising executive seated at a desk, clutching fistfuls of \$100 bills. On the wall behind him was a sign saying "THANK YOU FOR NOT SMOKING", with the word "not" crossed out. The caption read "GREED BREEDS MEAN DEEDS".

The Embassy consisted of a large van decorated with anti-advertising slogans and a tent with a sign outside inviting advertising executives to come and "confess" their nefarious deeds.

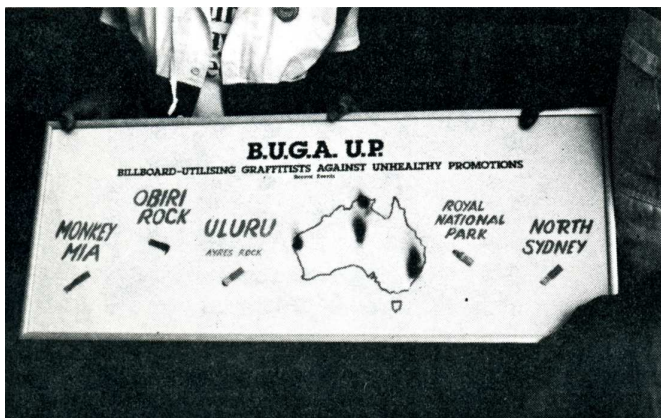
Various pamphlets were available to explain the protest to passers-by.

## LAND OF THE DREAMTIME OR MARLBORO COUNTRY?

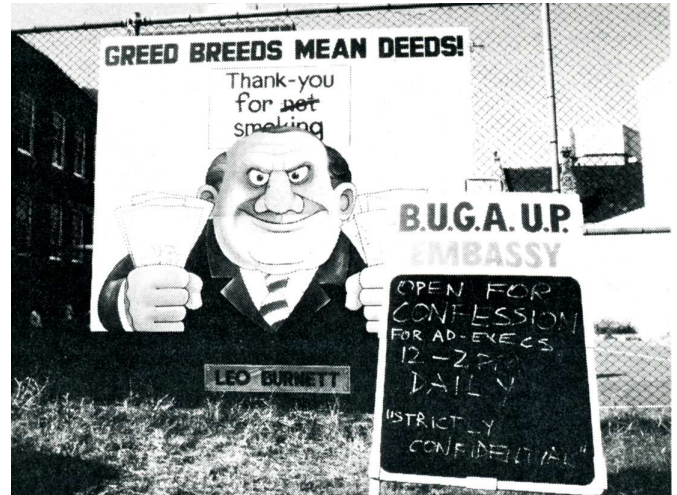
Also on display were 15,000 cigarette butts collected from Aboriginal sacred sites around Australia. Bill Snow, one of the group who had collected the butts said in a press interview "Cigarette ads encourage smokers to smoke wherever they may be, and carelessly discarding butts is part of the smoking ritual. How would we like it if Aboriginals came and dropped butts in our war memorials and museums?"

Mr Snow suggested that the butts might "boomerang" back to the plush carpets of Phillip Morris, promoters of Marlboro Country.

A spokesman for Phillip Morris said Mr Snow was being ridiculous, because "Aboriginals light fires all over the place".



*Trophy celebrating the advertising industry's contribution to Australia's heritage.*



*At the BUGA UP Embassy*



*Ambassador Snow talking to interested passers-by.*

## DIPLOMATIC ENVOY REJECTED

On Thursday, May 10th, an envoy was sent to the offices of Leo Burnett in a vain bid to establish diplomatic links with Marlboro Country. As a token of esteem, a valuable trophy was to be presented. Lovingly constructed from recycled billboard components, the trophy comprised a map of Australia with cigarette butts marking the Aboriginal sacred sites from which they had been collected.

When the envoy arrived at Leo Burnett's reception desk, they asked to see the Phillip Morris account executive so that the trophy could be presented, but were told that he was "out to lunch". The envoy, suspecting a political manoeuvre, was not convinced, and a lively discussion ensued. The foyer was soon filled with office staff who came to join the fun. A few minutes later, an unsuspecting man emerged from one of the offices and was immediately identified as the Phillip Morris account executive by his fellow employees.

When the Ambassador attempted to present the trophy to him, he retreated behind a locked door, obviously embarrassed by such an honour bestowed so unexpectedly.

The envoy returned to the Embassy, their mission a failure.

## THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Shortly after this mission, the advertising industry abandoned its tactic of ignoring the Embassy in the hope that it would go away, and decided to strike back.

The first sign of trouble was a visit by officials from the Education Department, who claimed to own the land where the Embassy was established. They had been asked to move the Embassy off, but after negotiation with the Ambassador, they were forced to agree that BUGA UP was providing an important educational service and was therefore using the Department's land quite properly.

Next came the local police, who said that local shopkeepers had complained to North Sydney council that members of the public were being harassed. The Council was obviously not keen to press the point, as it was the same Council that had been taken to court by a poster company for refusing permission to erect a cigarette billboard. Furthermore, it was the North Sydney electorate who voted in last year's referendum to ban all cigarette advertising in the municipality. The police had traced the name of the registered owner of the Embassy van, Phillip Morris, and said they want to speak to her. Only after much prompting and the explanation that she was away caring for her mother who was dying of lung cancer did the police make the connection and abandon their attempts to contact her.

After more than a week of successful operation of the Embassy and much warm response from the public, the Advertising Federation of Australia wrote to the Premier of N.S.W., saying that the Embassy was "producing a media event and vilifying the agency (Leo Burnett) by sight and sound for allegedly contributing to anti-social activity and endeavouring to suborn employees". The statement concluded by saying that while the A.F.A. supports healthy public debate on contentious issues we condemn this particular group which openly encourages vandalism."

This statement, released to the media, resulted in much valuable publicity, and business at the Embassy, which had been tapering off as local workers and residents became accustomed to its presence, started booming again. Such is the power of advertising.

## MURPHY'S LAW

On the first day of operation of the Embassy, a diplomatic mission had been sent to North Sydney Police Station to explain the purpose of the protest, and to reassure the police that it would be a peaceful event. At that time, Bill Snow introduced himself to the officers present and went to some lengths to explain the BUGA UP campaign in general.

This seemed to establish a harmonious relationship with the police who did not intervene until the end of the third week when Sergeant Murphy returned from holidays. Apparently unaware of the background of the protest, he obviously drew the short straw and was given the unpopular task of closing the Embassy down. When Sergeant Murphy arrived at the scene he asked Ambassador Snow for his name and address, and also why he was there. Snow thought Murphy must be joking, given his earlier visit to the police and a recent page-one story in the local newspaper including a large photo of him bearing his name.

Ambassador Snow expressed his incredulity and was duly arrested on a charge of trespass, his pleas of diplomatic immunity failing on deaf ears.

Snow refused to accept bail conditions which included a prohibition on handing out pamphlets in North Sydney, and while negotiations with police continued from behind bars, remaining Embassy personnel voted to stay and be arrested rather than move off voluntarily.

That night, police made a midnight raid and the Embassy was packed up and towed away to be impounded.

The next morning contractors to the Education Department arrived and built a sturdy metal fence around the site where the Embassy had previously stood.

Bill Snow pleaded "not guilty" to the charge of trespass, and the case has been put down for hearing later this year.

## MISSION SUCCESSFUL

Judging by the overwhelmingly positive response of passers by, including many working in the advertising industry, the Embassy had been a success. Members of the public welcomed the opportunity to meet BUGs and discuss the contentious issue of Unhealthy Promotions. Even advertising people who came to harangue left a little wiser, or at least better informed.

## B.U.G.A U.P. EMBASSY

Established 30th April, 1984 Miller St, North Sydney (opposite Leo Burnett)

**WE ARE** the so-called "motivated minority" who believe that it is immoral to promote cigarettes. This "minority" also includes 54% of West Australians and 65% of the North Sydney electorate (recent surveys) as well as the AMA, Australian Consumers' association, Cancer Council, Heart Foundation, Royal College of Physicians, World Health Organisation and other such radical ratbags.

**WE ARE HERE BECAUSE** in addition to its legitimate clients, Leo Burnett has Phillip Morris, manufacturers of Marlboro, Peter Jackson, Alpine, Chesterfield and others. As well as defacing Australia's urban and rural landscape by propagating the image of the Marlboro cowboy, Leo Burnett is contributing to an anti-social activity which is hooking thousands of kids each year. This is contrary to the wishes of the majority of Australians, and in many cases in conflict with the personal morality of the individuals who handle these accounts but are too embarrassed to object.

**WE CALL UPON** the management of all advertising agencies to end their addiction to tobacco money and put people before profits. The Advertising Industry Council recently announced a massive media campaign to improve advertising's public image. We call upon advertising professionals to improve the reality of their trade, not just the image.

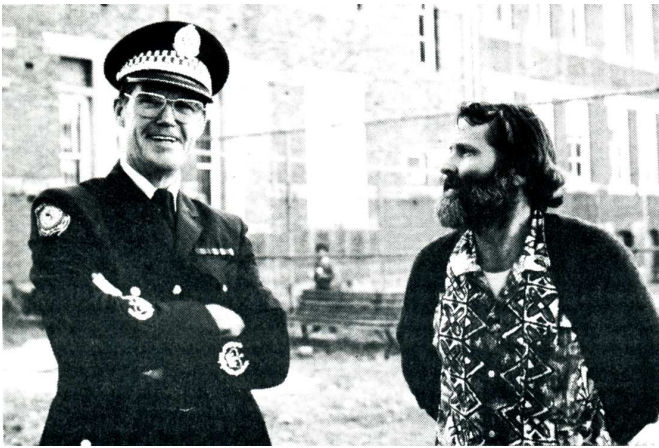
**ADVERTISING EXECUTIVES,** demonstrate good faith, to your employees as well as the public, by phasing out cigarette accounts and shifting those involved to other areas, rather than holding out until the inevitable legislation against tobacco advertising causes loss of jobs.

Employees of Leo Burnett are invited to visit the Embassy. We will be pleased to offer advice on improving your graphic art skills. We are here on a mission of peace, our spray-cans are not loaded. We claim diplomatic immunity.



AUSTRALIA- LAND OF THE DREAMTIME, OR MARLBORO COUNTRY?

*Pamphlet distributed outside Leo Burnett which is alleged to have "vilified the agency"*



*Sergeant Murphy listens attentively as Ambassador Snow explains the purpose of the Embassy and some of the finer points of BUGA UP's "modus operandi".*

## Self-Regulation to End (again)

The Australian Health Ministers' Conference recently published its draft report proposing new controls and regulation for the advertising of tobacco products, and asked for public comment. This report follows on from the announcement in July 1983 that self-regulation of cigarette advertising will be replaced with new legal standards (and similar announcements dating back to 1979).

BUGA UP has made a submission to the Ministers, deploring their lack of initiative in failing to ban tobacco promotions outright. The submission started by stating that

"The notion that a Tribunal should be established to regulate corporate irresponsibility which our society should not tolerate in the first place is absurd".

However, it was reluctantly admitted that short of a total ban, any form of regulation which makes life harder for the legal drug pushers is a step in the right direction.

### FEDERAL TRIBUNAL TO REVIEW ADS

The main proposal put forward by the Standing Committee of Health Ministers (SCOHM) is the establishment of a federal Tribunal to monitor tobacco advertising, and review complaints from the Health Minister or the public. This Tribunal will administer a new Statutory Code for the regulation of advertising and will be empowered to order the withdrawal of an advertisement, the discontinuation of a particular claim by an advertiser, or corrective advertising.

While the Statutory Code is based on the present Voluntary Code, a significant improvement would be in the fact that express guidelines would be supplied as to the application of its rules, and that proceedings of the Tribunal would be public. This would be in marked contrast to the activities of the Advertising Standards Council, who make their unashamedly biased decisions behind closed doors, and then shuffle out of accountability by refusing to give reasons.

The proposed Code also includes stringent application of rules relating to a more prominent and better-worded health warning to be displayed on all advertisements for tobacco products - a measure long overdue in this country.

### BUGA UP HIGHLIGHTS DRAWBACKS

As well as criticizing the Government for once again staving off the inevitable ban on tobacco promotion, the BUGA UP submission pointed out several serious shortcomings of the proposal.

The main objection was that several provisions of the proposal indicated that the Ministers do not seriously intend to enforce the rules. BUGA UP said that:

"The document is internally inconsistent, in that if, as required... advertisements shall not be misleading or deceptive... the health warning would be redundant. Any cigarette ad which does not mislead would by definition carry a long series of prominent health warnings. Furthermore, if the Ministers are truly serious about enforcing the proposed regulations ... then the proposal is in effect a prohibition of all cigarette advertising, as only those ads which discourage smoking would be acceptable. The onus should be on the cigarette industry to prove their outrageous assertion that their ads serve only to affect brand preference. Even if juvenile smoking recruitment were shown to be only an accidental and very minor by-product of their campaigns, they would be incompatible with the requirement that they do not seek to recruit smokers."

Another drawback is that the Tribunal is to comprise a President plus representatives from the medical profession, consumer organisations, the Media Council and the Tobacco Institute. This will mean that on any subjective interpretation of an ad the decision will inevitably be split two and two, with the President casting the deciding vote.

The proposal also fails to address the question of the definition of advertising in relation to the sponsorship of arts and sports, and the problem of dealing with ads now being run by tobacco companies promoting other products. If, for instance, as proposed, ads should not "claim or imply, directly or indirectly, that smoking is associated with success in sport", where does that leave the rothman's medal or the winfield cup?

The final objection was that if the Ministers really wanted to curtail tobacco promotions, they could have done so long ago using the Trade Practices Act which prohibits misleading advertising.

The BUGA UP submission concluded that:

"The proposed legislative "control" of cigarette advertising will serve only to exonerate the tobacco industry from product liability, provide a soft option for politicians, squander taxpayer's money on an inherently ineffective bureaucracy, and usurp the powers of the Trade Practices Commission.

## Queensland BUGA'd Up

While conscientious graffitists have been refacing ads in and around Brisbane for some years, Brisbane BUGA UP was formally launched in early June. At a meeting at the university chaired by David Barbagallo, fourteen people discussed tactics for reaching and refacing billboards. While admitting that BUGA UP is generally a loose association of individuals with similar aims, it was pointed out that it is useful to have some kind of central group for information, media liaison and fund-raising purposes.

David Barbagallo stressed the fact that graffitists run the risk of arrest and discussed the provision of legal resources. Asked to comment on B.U.G.A. U.P.'s activities, Mr Ron Redmond, the Assistant Police Commissioner said "People are entitled to their views, but this amounts to wilful destruction of property and action will be taken."

The inaugural meeting was reported in Brisbane's Sunday Mail and a graffitist disguised in balaclava and dark glasses was interviewed on Brisbane television. The group reports that it has already received widespread public support for its initiative.

*See back page for Queensland address.*



the exaggeration of the likelihood of winning. Ads saying "prizes guaranteed" and "a million dollars to be won every week do little to inform consumers of the actual probability of winning. The few ads which do mention odds do so in order to mislead. An ad for the "Pools" says "six out of thirty-six, you work out the odds" In a bid to give viewers the impression that they have one chance in six of winning. Of course, the chance of selecting any six particular numbers out of thirty six is very remote indeed, and without having studied probability theory the average person could not be expected to work that out.

An ad for Lotto included tables giving the statistics of past winning number combinations. A complaint was lodged with the ASC, pointing out that numbers drawn in the past cannot influence future probabilities, and that the ad would therefore give readers a false understanding of probability theory. The ASC "did not find that the advertisement suggested that numbers have memory or that people would be induced to gamble by use of misconceptions of probability theory."

One can only wonder whether the ASC has given the advertiser the bad news that the money they spent on the ad in question had therefore been wasted.

## IF You Win the Lottery

It is interesting that lotteries and art unions are considered pernicious enough in NSW that there is an Act devoted to the banning of promotion of gambling in this form. There is also a special Act exempting the State Government from the Act, allowing it to participate in organised crime and advertise its lotteries. And it certainly does.

The promotion of gambling is definitely on the rise. Turn on the TV and it's telling you to "be a winner not a flop", walk down the street and every shop window that isn't obliterated by winfield or peter jackson stickers is covered with ads for the pools or the scratchies. You've seen the commercials, now read the billboards.

Probably advertising gambling was banned because it is by definition misleading and entices the poor worker to waste hard-earned cash. There is unlikely to be a lottery ad which tells you in real terms what your chances of winning are, and all the recent advertising we have seen has been based on the theme "when you win the lottery". "If you win the lottery" just doesn't seem to have the same ring to it. The latest billboard campaign is no exception. It reads "Buy the kids a home, buy a lottery ticket today", and it shows a happy mum handing over the title deeds for a new house to her children. Playing on the emotions, this ad makes gambling your ready money away seem like a selfless thing to do, because of what you will be able to buy for your family when you win. What it doesn't suggest is that spending cash on lottery tickets week after week is (for most people) as good as throwing away money which could really be providing a home for the kids.



Predictably, complaints about this new way of taxing the poor have met with little sympathy from those guardians of the consumer's interest, the Advertising Standards Council. The most common objectionable feature of lottery advertising is

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*fabulous Queensland*

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<p>Vic. B.U.G.A. U.P. Box 285 Fitzroy Victoria 3065</p>	<p>QLD. B.U.G.A. U.P. Box 76 St Lucia Queensland 4067</p>

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