

(Melbourne)

THE AGE, Monday, February 16, 1976

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

# The smell of smoke ads back on air

SIR, — I am seriously concerned about Press reports which have appeared recently which suggests that the Commonwealth Government is considering re-establishment of cigarette advertising on radio and television. I believe the public should be aware of the reaction of the Anti-Cancer Council to this suggestion.

The anti-smoking programme has been gathering headway rapidly over the past few years after a very long battle to get it off the ground. As a result, there has been a substantial decrease in the smoking rate of Australian males over the age of 40, and in association with this there has been a decrease since 1970/71 in the number of lung cancer deaths occurring in the males aged 55-69 years.

After much research and preparation, a well-based education programme has been established in the schools and is now developing well.

One of the most important obstructions to this education programme is the persistence, particularly on radio and television, of glossy image-building advertising which contributes to the development of smoking in young people.

Australian smoking rates in people under 18 are increasing, whereas in America, where television cigarette advertising was banned in 1972, they have recently decreased.

If the Commonwealth Government were to allow the continuation of broadcast advertising of cigarettes, it would represent a staggering blow to one of the most important public health measures of this decade. Such a decision should not be taken at a time when the costs of curative medicines are skyrocketing and we have a major preventive programme within our reach.

I would suggest that many of your readers are interested in this situation and if they are, that

they should write to the head of Government and say so.

NIGEL GRAY (Director, Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria).

**IN BRIEF**

## Council bans smoking ads

Kyabram Town Council has followed the lead of Warrnambool City Council in banning all cigarette and tobacco advertising from its properties.

The Victorian Anti-Cancer Council sent circulars to all Victorian councils asking them to ban cigarette and tobacco advertising.

The Anti-Cancer Council's director, Dr. Nigel Gray, said last night the circulars followed the example by Warrnambool council which he said was involved in "guerilla warfare" against giant tobacco companies.

Kyabram's town clerk, Mr. E. T. Cornish, said yesterday he expected that within a few weeks several other councils would ban the advertising.

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