A young Sri Lankan protester ''improving'' one of the BAT sponsored signs in the Sri Lankan National Remembrance Park. The completed message read ''CTC kills children''.

Doubtless the BAT/CTC people responsible were sincere in their appreciation of the fallen, but a cynic might consider the irony that tobacco executives may hold a parallel, sincere appreciation of all those who are addicted to their company's products. These customers risk sacrificing their lives by the daily satisfaction of their addiction, in a commercial process encouraged by massive promotion, so that the executives and shareholders may live in greater personal, economic peace than might otherwise be likely.

Interestingly, the exploitation of such an important national landmark by a tobacco company has prompted one of the first acts of civil disobedience prompted by tobacco in a developing country. In a scene reminiscent of BUGA-UP, that famous group of early graffitists in Australia, a young Sri Lankan protester was captured on film ''improving'' one of the signs, as BUGA-UP might have put it. His message, when completed, read, ''CTC kills children''. Whether he had in mind children who die because of malnutrition due to the drain on family income caused by their fathers' addiction, or to future deaths among the children of today currently being recruited to smoking, the appearance of such protests must be worrying for tobacco companies.

## Pakistan: seizing the moment

Not many of us have walked up to the head of state of our country and personally pointed out shortcomings in the government's public health policies, with prima facie evidence at hand to back up our case, far less repeated the process a few minutes later with the prime minister. But in March, Dr Saeed ul Majeed, president of the Pakistan College of Family Medicine, did precisely that. His audacious but exemplary use of the ultimate lobbying opportunity came at a ceremony in the capital, Islamabad, where he was one of an elite group being awarded the distinguished honour Tamgha-i-Imtiaz (Medal of Distinction), with which the government recognises distinguished merit in the fields of literature, arts, sports, medicine, and science.

After the investiture, Dr Majeed noticed people smoking in the hall, in contravention of Pakistan's law on smoking in public places. Wasting not a second of time, he went up to the country's president, General Perveiz Musharaf, and pointed out that the Ordinance issued by him against smoking in public places was being violated in his presence. He also mentioned his disappointment that Pakistan had not yet signed the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), despite the fact that 71 other countries had seen fit to do so. Next, he approached the prime minister and asked him to get the FCTC signed by the government—just like that; as one does. Like the consummate advocate that he clearly is, when he got home he wrote follow up letters to the president and the prime minister, with copies to the federal health minister, reinforcing the importance of signing the FCTC. That's the way to do it.

## Australia: a career in cancer promotion?

Last year protests by staff and students at the University of Sydney saw the university senate vote to not endorse the chancellor's appointment of former state premier and current BAT Australia chair Nick Greiner to an advisory position in political science at the university. As if to rub salt into Greiner's public humiliation, the university then advised BAT that they were no longer welcome to set up a stand at the annual student careers fair and extol the virtues of working for a tobacco company—''You get to do lots of great stuff like talking to government and the media,'' one student was told by a gushing BAT staffer.

Website checks this March saw BAT poised to woo students at three other Sydney university careers fairs. Alerts to

Madagascar: selling dreams. Even in the poorest countries, such as Madagascar, whose more than 15 million inhabitants have an average annual income of around US$250 and a life expectancy of under 60 years, there is always a market for tobacco. Cigarettes usually cost about US$1 for 20, and advertisements such as the one shown above often portray a lifestyle far beyond the reach of most people. Imperial Tobacco of the UK, whose recent takeovers enable it to boast being the world's fourth largest tobacco company, has been investing there. One of the few links from its website's home page is to a section dealing with its operations in Madagascar, which it describes as its most extensive in Africa. Last year, Imperial launched its West brand at the Hilton hotel in the capital, Antananarivo, where West's much vaunted sponsorship of Formula One motor racing seemed about as far as could be imagined from the home made model cars handled by the country's younger generation.

Mr Sigi Butt, who enthusiastically urges students to sign up with BAT to help kill thousands of Australians each year.

staff and student bodies saw swift action. The University of Western Sydney reversed its decision to allow BAT to participate within hours of a 'phone call being made. Macquarie University expressed regret that nothing could be done this year to reverse its acceptance of BAT, but has said it will be the last time. As we go to press, the University of New South Wales is bracing itself for a rowdy reception for BAT led by Mr Sigi Butt, who enthusiastically urges students to sign up with BAT to help kill thousands of Australians each year while making lots of money.

Mary Assunta and I accompanied Sigi to the Macquarie careers fair, and before being evicted by some rotund security guards, managed to get a flavour of the latest company line fed to BAT's new recruits. Lavina, a chirpy media graduate, was unfazed by my question about whether she felt comfortable working for a company whose products kill thousands of its customers each year. ''Oh, you can't say that!'' she trilled. ''There are many other things that cause cancer. You just can't put it down to smoking,'' declining to allow the conversation to be recorded by a radio reporter. I congratulated her on how well she had absorbed her training, and enquired whether they were any companies producing legal products for whom she would not work. Mercenary recruitment agencies, perhaps? ''What do they do?'' she asked. ''They pay you to go to other countries to kill people,'' I explained. Lavina said BAT was a ''great company''. So, I understand, it was said of some of those who supplied slaves to America, ran opium out of China, and sent children down mines in the 19th century. All legal activities then.

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## USA/Brazil: the flavour of things to come?

As more countries sign and ratify the FCTC, giving the structure for ending all forms of promotion, naturally people are asking how it will really affect the tobacco companies. Does the fairly unconcerned image they project mean they have worked out sufficient ways of getting round the national bans that should ensue to keep pushing their products, especially to the young, or have they done deals with some countries to get bans with built-in loopholes? Perhaps, as usual, they will simply try any and every avenue they can think of. In the last few years, after all, we have seen a spate of new techniques being tried, including exclusive invitation only parties and nightclub websites aimed at trend setting young people, and the increasing use of carefully built up mailing lists. Another practice that has intensified recently is brand extension, using colours, images, and other associations that are not necessarily a logical development of the original brand, but which can reach a new sector of the market. With around 90% of smokers starting to smoke before they are out of their teens in many countries, it is not surprising that the youth market is the usual target.

In the USA, for example, Brown & Williamson Tobacco (B&W), the US subsidiary of BAT, has introduced a flavoured extension of its menthol brand Kool. Called the Smooth Fusions range, flavours include Caribbean Chill, Mocha Taboo, Mintrigue, and Midnight Berry. Take Midnight Berry, which at first hearing might be mistaken for some sort of grim drugs underworld slang, perhaps for the sort of dark and slimy blood clot that a terminally ill tobacco junkie might cough up in the delirious, hacking depths of the last night of this mortal life. In reality, it is a new brand in a highly coloured pack with an unusual design: it has rounded corners and opens out like some of the personal digital assistant (PDA) gadgets that many get-ahead young people carry nowadays. Opened out, it holds 13 cigarettes on one side and seven on the other. What health campaigners are most concerned about, in addition to this new level of absurd glamourisation of an addictive and lethal product, is that the cigarettes' strong fruit flavour may mask the retch inducing effects of

Tobacco companies continue to seek new ways of promoting their products to get around the restrictions imposed by the FCTC. Flavoured cigarettes are now being promoted in Brazil (left panel: Carlton Crema and Carlton Mint) and the USA (right panel: Kool Midnight Berry fruit flavour).