



**Evaluation of the Excuses Campaign:  
Results of a telephone survey  
conducted immediately after the  
1996 media campaign**

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## Introduction

In 1996, the Victorian Quit Week Campaign was held between May 31 and June 7. Quit Week focussed on encouraging adult smokers to quit. Research conducted by the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer in 1995 indicated that 78% of smokers have made at least one attempt to quit in the past and 36% considered themselves likely to quit in the next three months (Mullins, Morand and Borland 1996). These statistics indicate that a significant majority of smokers have attempted to quit and/or intend to attempt to quit again in the near future. The campaign therefore addressed the excuses smokers use not to stop, the perceived difficulties in quitting, the dangers and everyday health effects of smoking and where smokers can go to get help to quit.

The media campaign was supported by the assistance of over 600 community organisations throughout Victoria who ran activities and promotions at the local level. Every pharmacy in the State (approx 1,500) was mailed 20 copies of *The Can Quit Book* for Quit Week and a background brief on nicotine patches, suggestions for a Quit Week display and an order form. All general practitioners in Victoria (over 4,000) were also mailed copies of *The Can Quit Book* in late April in preparation for Quit Week.

### Excuses television advertisement

The media campaign consisted of television advertisements depicting a man sitting on a couch about to light up a cigarette. He immediately defends his habit by making excuses about why he cannot give up. A voice-over responds to each of his excuses with the facts (see Appendix 4A for script). The excuses television advertisement, which was originally produced in 1991, was updated and used during the 1996 Quit Week. It was screened between June 2 and June 7 1996 on daytime television between 9am and 6pm. In metropolitan Melbourne the advertisements were screened on Channels 9 and 10 at a cost of \$20,362. Regional television coverage was via Prime Victoria and Southern Cross, at a cost of \$4,052. A total of only \$24,402 was spent on the television campaign.

### Radio

Three different radio advertisements focused on the thin excuses smokers use not to give up, the addictive nature of cigarettes and the difficulty of giving up (see Appendix 4B). The commercials were broadcast from May 28 to June 7 1996. The cost of radio advertisements was \$47,772. Of this,

\$40,560 was spent on metropolitan radio advertising on Fox FM, 3AW/3MP/Magic and TTFM/Gold. The radio broadcasts were between 7.30am and 8pm. Regional radio broadcasts cost a total of \$7,212 and were also broadcast between 7.30am and 8pm. Commercials were also produced in 13 different languages and were provided to the ethnic radio stations.

### Press

Press advertisements in the Herald Sun and Leader Newspapers cost \$20,418. Herald cartoonist Mark Knight produced six cartoons using the excuses theme that were used as advertisements in the Herald Sun and Leader newspapers. Advertorials were also used in the Herald Sun and Leader newspapers. In the Herald Sun, a half page feature (written by Quit) focussed on the excuses people use for not stopping smoking. This was accompanied by a half page Quit advertisement. This strategy was also used in the Leader Newspaper. Regional newspapers throughout Victoria were mailed a feature piece which was widely published.

The total cost of the media campaign was \$92,592. This was significantly less than has been spent on media advertising in the past. The difference in funding makes it difficult to compare the success of this media campaign with other years in terms of awareness. This report details findings of a survey to measure exposure and response to the campaign. Also, findings on smokers' assessment of Quit and whether they would ever consider using Quit to help them stop smoking are reported.

### Method

A telephone survey of 501 respondents was undertaken immediately after the 1996 campaign. Respondents were interviewed over three week nights from 11–13 June. The interviews were conducted by the Wallis Consulting Group, a market research company based in Melbourne. Respondents were selected on a systematic probability sample using a current issue CD-ROM listing of all white pages telephone directories in Victoria to ensure the distribution reflected the populations of Melbourne and country Victoria. Selection of a respondent in each household was based on asking for the youngest respondent (aged 16 years and over) who was either a smoker or who had given up smoking in the previous six months.

### *Statistical analysis*

To test for relationships between variables, the chi square test of significance was used. Because the number of respondents surveyed was

relatively small, the probability level of significance adopted for this survey was 0.05 which indicates a probability of less than one in twenty that the relationship was due to chance. Three age categories were created: 16 to 29, 30 to 44 and over 45 years of age. Occupation categories were defined by asking the respondents the usual occupation of the main income earner in the household. Respondents were also asked how many children were living with the respondent aged under 16 and under five years old.

## **Sample**

The sample consisted of 254 males and 247 females, 37% were aged between 16 and 29, 34% between 30 and 44, and 29% aged over 45. Thirty-six per cent were living in professional or upper white collar households, 7% in lower white collar households, 15% in skilled trade households, 24% semi-skilled/unskilled households and the remaining 18% are classified as 'other'. Nearly half of this 'other' category is made up of retired pensioners and 10% were full-time student households. This category is therefore substantially made up of low income households.

Because the sample is small, three occupation categories were adopted. Upper white and lower white were combined into white collar (43%) and skilled households and semi skilled/unskilled households are combined into blue collar (39%) with other (18%) as the third household category. The majority of the respondents (70%) were living in Melbourne and the remainder (30%) lived in country Victoria.

## **Results**

### ***Smoking behaviour***

Eleven per cent of respondents had given up in the last six months (recent quitters) and the remaining 89% were current smokers. Of those respondents who were recent quitters, the vast majority (84%) had attempted to stop on more than one occasion: only 16% had not previously attempted to quit before. Respondents were asked what was the longest period they had ceased smoking prior to their current attempt at not smoking. Twenty-nine per cent had stopped smoking for over a year before starting again. Thirty-three per cent had managed to stop for between one month and one year, 20% had stopped for less than four weeks, 16% had not tried to stop before and 2% did not respond.

Two-thirds (67%) of respondents who were current smokers had been smoking for more than 10 years: 31% for 10-20 years and 36% for over 20 years. A further 16% had smoked for five to 10 years, 14% for two to five years, 3% for one to two years and just 1% for less than one year. Two thirds (66%) of current smokers had tried to give up in the past. The majority of these smokers (72%) reported they had tried to give up on more than one occasion.

Mean reported daily cigarette consumption was 17.9. Men smoked more on average (19.8) than women (16.1). Daily consumption was highest among the older smokers (45 years and over) (22.1) compared to 30 to 44 year olds (17.4) and 16 to 19 year olds (14.9). Consumption was also higher commensurate with number of years smoked (see Table 1). Average consumption was also found to be higher among respondents living in blue collar households (19.0) and other households (20.7) compared to white collar households (15.8)(see Table 1).

**Table 1: Mean daily consumption by number of years of smoking and occupation**

	N	Consumption	Significance
	444	17.9	
<b>Years smoking</b>			
Less than one year	4	7.8	
1 to 2 years	12	11.0	
2 to 5 years	60	14.6	
5-10 years	69	16.4	
10-20 years	129	16.3	
More than 20 years	170	21.6	p <.001
<b>Occupation</b>			
White collar	191	15.8	
Blue collar	172	19.0	
Other	81	20.7	p <.001

non-responses = 2

Addiction was measured by asking respondents how soon after waking up they had their first cigarette. The majority of smokers (76%) had consumed their first cigarette within one hour of waking up. The vast majority (89%)

of respondents smoked cigarettes every day of the week. The remaining respondents smoked anywhere from one day of the week to five or six days per week.

### Quitting history

Smokers were asked if they had quit before and if they had, how many times they had attempted to quit. Thirty-five per cent had never attempted to quit and 65% had, 18% had attempted to quit only once, 25% had tried two or three times, 22% had tried more than four times. No significant differences were found in the frequency of attempting to quit between men and women or between households with children. Multiple attempts to quit were more common among older smokers ( $p < .01$ , see Table 2). Of the smokers who had never attempted to quit smoking, around one-quarter (27%) had thought seriously about quitting in the past year, however, the majority (73%) had not.

**Table 2: Number of quit attempts by age**

	Total	16–29	30–44	45+
n=	441	157	151	133
Never	35%	43%	28%	33%
Once	18%	21%	22%	11%
Two or three times	25%	22%	27%	26%
Four or more times	22%	14%	24%	29%

Excludes those who could not say how many times they have attempted to quit (n=5)

Current smokers who had previously attempted to quit were asked when they had last tried. Ten per cent had attempted in the last month, 15% between one and three months ago, 28% between three and 12 months ago, and 33% between one and five years ago and 15% had not attempted for over five years. This indicates a substantial level of recent quitting activity. Attempting to quit recently was more common among respondents aged 16 to 29 ( $p < .01$ , see Table 3). No significant differences were found between men and women.

When these figures were collapsed into 'less than one year' and 'over one year', it was found that 53% of smokers, who have ever made a quit attempt, had tried to quit in the last 12 months. Older smokers were less likely (44%) to have attempted to quit in the past 12 months compared to

30 to 44 year olds (50%) and 16 to 29 year olds (63%). Those who had been smoking longest, over 20 years, were also less likely (47%) to have attempted in the past 12 months, especially compared to those who had been smoking for less than five years (74%). Once again this relationship was related to age. However, it is encouraging to see that even among respondents who had been smoking for over 20 years, over half had attempted to quit some time in the past year. No differences were found between household occupations. Smokers in households with children were also more likely to have attempted to quit in the past 12 months (60%) compared to no children households (47%).

**Table 3: Last attempt to quit by age**

	Total	16–29	30–44	45+
n=	290	91	109	90
1 to 28 days	10%	15%	6%	9%
1 to 3 months	15%	19%	13%	13%
3 to 12 months	28%	29%	31%	22%
1 to 5 years	33%	35%	31%	32%
more than 5 years	15%	1%	18%	23%

### ***Intentions of quitting***

Current smokers were asked three questions to measure their intentions of quitting. Firstly, they were asked ‘How likely is it you will try to give up smoking in the next three months?’. The responses listed below indicate only about one-third of smokers have any intention of attempting to quit in the near future. Very few (9%) were certain they would attempt to quit in the next three months. The majority of smokers (54%) reported that they are unlikely to try to quit in the next few months, 12% were ambivalent and 2% could not assess how they felt about quitting. Those who could not say were excluded from further analysis.

Men were a little more likely (36%) to feel they would attempt to quit than women (30%) (see Table 5). No significant differences in intentions to quit were found between age groups. However, a larger proportion of respondents in white collar households anticipated attempting to quit in the near future (36%) compared with respondents living in blue collar (30%) and ‘other’ households (23%). The likelihood of attempting to quit in the

next three months was more common among smokers who had made unsuccessful attempts to quit in the past (43%). Smokers who had never tried to quit before were still reluctant (15%) to consider an attempt in the near future (see Table 5). No relationship was found in intentions to quit and the period of time the smoker had been smoking. Nor was there any difference in intention to quit between daily and non-daily smokers.

**Table 4: Likelihood of giving up in the next three months**

Certain	9%		
Very likely	14%	Total likely	33%
Fairly likely	10%		
50/50	12%	50/50 (neither)	12%
Fairly unlikely	13%		
Very unlikely	21%	Total unlikely	54%
Definitely will not	20%		
Can't say	2%		

Smokers were next asked ‘Compared to one month ago (i.e. before the campaign), are you now more or less likely to quit smoking, or do you feel the same?’. Close to one-third (30%) of smokers felt they were more likely to quit compared to one month ago. The majority felt the same (67%), very few were less likely (3%) and a very small number (1%) could not say. No relationships were found between sex, age, or length of time smoking. Smokers who had attempted to quit before, were more likely to think they will attempt to quit now than one month ago (36%) compared to those who had never attempted (19%).

Smokers were then asked ‘Assuming that you try to stop smoking, how likely is it that you’ll be able to stop smoking permanently?’. Fourteen per cent were certain they could quit permanently, 15% felt it very likely, 13% thought it fairly likely, 21% were 50/50 about their chances. The remaining smokers were not confident they could quit permanently, 11% felt it fairly unlikely, 12% thought it very unlikely, 6% felt they definitely could not quit permanently and 7% could not say.

When those who can’t say were excluded from the analysis, 46% of smokers felt it was likely they will stop permanently, 23% were ambivalent and 31% felt it unlikely. Men and women were no different in their expectations of being able to quit permanently. However, those aged 16 to

29 were more likely to feel they could quit permanently (54%) compared to 30 to 44 year olds (46%) and those aged over 45 (37%). Respondents living in the 'other' household category felt less optimistic (32%) of their chances of quitting than blue (48%) or white collar (50%) households.

**Table 5: Smokers' intentions of attempting to quit in the next three months**

	Total	Sex		Previous attempts	
		Men	Women	Yes	No
n=	436	215	221	285	151
Likely	33%	36%	30%	43%	15%
50/50	12%	15%	10%	13%	11%
Unlikely	55%	49%	60%	44%	74%
			p <.05		p<.0001

Fewer smokers who had made previous attempts to quit felt they were likely to be able to quit permanently (42%) compared to those who had not made previous attempts (54%) ( $p <.05$ ). Those who smoked every day were less likely to believe they could quit permanently (42%) compared to non-daily smokers who were very optimistic of their chances of quitting permanently (79%) ( $p<.0001$ ). Smokers who are non-daily smokers seem to believe they are not addicted to smoking and will not have great difficulty in quitting when they decide to stop smoking.

Not surprisingly, those smokers who had earlier said they felt it likely they would attempt to quit in the next three months were most likely to believe they could quit permanently (58%). Those who were unlikely to attempt to quit in the next three months were less optimistic of their chances of quitting permanently (39%) ( $p<.0001$ ). Likewise, those who felt they were more likely to quit now than one month ago were also more likely to express optimism in any attempt they may have to quit (63%) compared to those who were less likely (8%) and those who felt the same about quitting as they did one month ago (40%) ( $p<.0001$ ).

### **Impact of media campaign**

As described in the introduction, radio, television broadcasts and newspaper advertisements, cartoons, stories and editorials on quitting

smoking appeared throughout Victoria in June 1996. To determine the impact of the campaign, respondents were asked a series of questions to measure their exposure to the campaign.

#### Awareness of anti-smoking message

Respondents were asked ‘At any time this year, have you read, seen, or heard any anti-smoking advertising?’. The vast majority (89%) of respondents had seen some form of anti-smoking advertising.

Those who had seen some form of advertising were then asked where they had read, seen or heard the anti-smoking advertising. Sixty-five per cent of respondents had seen some form of advertising on television. Thirty-six per cent had seen advertising in newspapers, 32% on radio, 18% in magazines and 16% on billboards. Responses mentioned by at least 5% of respondents are listed in Table 6. A weak but nonetheless statistically significant effect of the advertising was found among respondents who were current smokers. A greater proportion of those who had seen some form of advertising considered they were more likely (31%) than one month ago to quit than those who had not seen anything (25%) ( $p < .01$ ).

Respondents were then asked ‘What were the main things said or shown in the advertising?’. The range of responses to this question was enormous. Only 6% of respondents mentioned the Excuses advertisement specifically. Twenty-two per cent remembered the advertising concerned calling Quit or the Quitline and a further 2% mentioned Quit Week specifically. Twelve per cent mentioned ads used in previous years with sponge being mentioned more than any other previous ad (3%). When asked what the main message was, 53% of respondents said it was that smoking damaged your health and 14% mentioned lung cancer. Ten per cent mentioned aspects of quitting such as the difficulty of quitting and how to get help. Seven per cent mentioned the effects of smoking on others such as passive smoking and that smoking is harmful to a baby in pregnancy.

Those who had seen some form of advertising were then asked ‘What action if any did you personally take as a result of the anti-smoking campaign?’. The majority of respondents (76%) did not take any action as a result of the advertising. Of those respondents who did take action, 8% stopped/cut down/tried to quit, 9% reported increased awareness or changed smoking behaviour, 4% sought help and information, 2% gave a negative response and 2% said it had no impact/other/can’t say.

**Table 6: Where seen advertising**

	Frequency	Per cent of responses	Per cent of cases
Television	287	26	65
Newspapers	160	14	36
Radio	142	13	32
Cigarette packs	89	8	20
Magazines	81	7	18
Billboards	71	6	16
Doctors/hospitals	49	4	11
Pamphlets /t-shirts	46	4	10
At sporting events	35	3	8
Everywhere all media	31	3	7
Posters	25	2	6
Other	110	9	27
	1126	100	

442 valid cases

Respondents were then asked ‘Apart from advertising about non-smoking, in the past three weeks, have you read any articles, seen or heard any programmes about smoking?’. Twenty per cent of respondents (n=98) said they had. Age or sex made no difference in exposure to anything about smoking. Respondents were then asked where they had seen or heard or read articles or programmes on smoking. The greatest number had seen something about smoking in the newspapers (30%) followed by radio (27%) and television news or current affairs (21%). Twelve percent mentioned television advertisements specifically.

Next, respondents were asked ‘What did those articles say or show about smoking? What else?’. Around one-quarter (27%) of respondents mentioned the Quit Week or ringing Quitline. The remaining responses were similar to those responses made to the question asked earlier about anti-smoking advertising seen by the respondent in the last year. Responses included health related aspects (41%) and aspects of quitting (21%).

### Television impact

To measure how many people actually saw the excuses ad on television, respondents were asked ‘Have you recently seen a television ad that shows a man sitting in his lounge room giving reasons he can’t stop smoking?’. Forty-eight per cent of respondents said they had seen the ad. Having seen the advertisements was not related to age, sex, occupation or region. Those respondents who had seen the commercial were asked ‘What action, if any, did you personally take as a result of that ad?’. Eighty-six per cent said they took no action at all as a result of the ad.

Next, respondents were asked, in four parts, their reactions to the advertising. Those respondents who could not say what their reaction to the ad was were excluded from further analysis. Virtually no differences in demographic variables and responses to these questions were found. The exception was in different reactions between age groups to the relevance of the ads. Older respondents were less likely (53%) to find the ad relevant than either the 30 to 44 year olds (62%) or the 16 to 29 year olds (74%). No other demographic variable had a statistically significant relationship with response to the television advertisements.

**Table 7: Respondents’ reactions to the ads**

	Total	Age group		
		16–29	30–44	45+
n=	234	96	78	60
Smokers who had seen the ad finding it very or somewhat ...				
thought provoking	58%	58%	63%	52%
believable	83%	88%	79%	77%
relevant to you	64%	74%	62%	53%
encourage you to quit	28%	26%	35%	22%

The majority of respondents (58%) found the ad thought provoking, 64% found the ad relevant to them and an even greater proportion found it believable (83%). It is disappointing to find that the ad did not encourage many smokers to quit: only 28% felt that the ad encouraged them at all (see Table 7).

Respondents who had seen the ad were then read five statements about the commercial to which they could give one of five responses ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’. For the purposes of measurement and comparison, responses were converted into a five point scale. The lowest end of the scale denotes strongly disagree and the highest score for strongly agree. Where the question was asked in the negative, the response was reversed. Therefore, the higher the score in each response, the closer the response is to the achievement of the goals of Quit. The mean response to each statement can be found in Table 8.

**Table 8: Average rating in response to television commercial**

likely to try to quit	2.5
feel uncomfortable	2.6
applied to me	3.1
not interesting (R)	3.2
information exaggerated (R)	3.5

(R) Scale reversed

The findings show that people disagreed that the ad was not interesting. No differences in response to this statement was found between sex, age, occupation, region, or having children aged under 16 or under five years. The findings also indicate that the commercial did not successfully persuade respondents to consider quitting: reports on whether the ad made the respondent more likely to quit averaged in the middle. Again no differences were found within demographic categories. Also, people did not think the information in the ad was exaggerated.

The commercial failed to make the respondent feel uncomfortable about smoking. Those in the 30 to 44 year age group were a little more likely to feel uncomfortable about smoking compared to the other age groups: an average of 3.0 compared to 2.5 for both 16 to 29 and 45+ age groups. The statement which carried the greatest variation in demographic response was whether the ad ‘applied to me’. Respondents generally felt that it did, but it was not a strong feeling. Respondents in both blue and white collar households equally (3.2) felt the ad applied to them but those in the ‘other’ occupational group were less likely to agree with this statement (2.5). Also, respondents with children aged under 16 (3.3) and under five (3.4) were more likely to feel it applied to them than respondents without children (3.0) (these respondents being most likely to be within the 30 to 44 age group). This is an interesting finding because the campaign did not specifically target parents.

### Radio exposure

To measure exposure to newspaper and radio advertising, respondents were asked 'In the last three weeks, have you heard any Quit smoking advertising on the radio?'. Thirty-four per cent said they had heard something on the radio. No differences were found in demographic variables and exposure to radio advertising.

### Newspaper exposure

In response to a specific prompt, 30% said they saw something in the newspapers. Exposure to newspapers increased with age. Respondents aged 45 and over were most likely to have seen the ad (39%) compared to 30 to 44 year olds (36%) and particularly 16 to 29 year olds (22%). Newspaper exposure was the same for other demographic variables including region the respondent lived in.

### Overall impact

All respondents were then asked 'Has the Quit campaign had any effect on how you feel or think about your smoking?'. Forty-seven per cent said that it had affected them. Only 2% said they could not say and the remaining 50% said it had not affected them. Those who could not say were excluded from demographic analysis. Men and women said the campaign affected them equally. The perception that the campaign affected them was greater in the younger age groups. Fifty-two per cent of 16- to 29-year-olds and 53% of 30- to 44-year-olds felt the campaign had affected them. This compares with 39% of those aged over 45. Respondents with children aged under 16 were more likely to feel the campaign affected them (56%) compared to those with no children (43%). However, no difference was found for respondents with children aged under five.

The breadth of exposure indicated by respondents in answering questions about how the campaign affected them suggest that they may be responding to this question generally rather than assessing the impact of the Quit Week Campaign in particular. Initially, respondents were asked if they had seen read or heard anything in the last three weeks. Only 20% remembered seeing or hearing anything. When asked specifically about the advertisements, some memories appear to have been prompted. Forty-eight per cent said they had seen the TV commercial, 34% had heard the Quit campaign on the radio and 30% in the newspapers.

**Table 9: Exposure to television, radio and newspaper advertising**

	Television	Radio	Newspaper
had seen, heard or read	49%	34%	30%
had <b>not</b> seen, heard or read (progressively excluded from each question)	53% (263)	63% (166)	78% (129)

To determine how many respondents had not seen, heard or read anything in the last three weeks, respondents were progressively excluded from the analysis. Respondents who said they had not seen the TV commercial (n=263) were selected to see if they had seen the radio commercial. Sixty-three per cent (n=166) had not seen the radio commercial either. This group were then checked to see if they had seen any Quit advertising in the newspapers in the last three weeks. The majority (n=129) had not. Therefore, 129 respondents of 501 surveyed (26%) reported that they had not seen the TV commercial, heard the Quit Campaign on radio or seen anything about the Quit Campaign in the newspapers, suggesting 74% had seen it. The actual proportion of respondents who clearly remember seeing or hearing the Quit Campaign advertising may be lower since respondents do report having seen or heard advertising when there has been none. By contrast, any totally non-memorable experiences will not have been recalled.

To determine if the respondents who had been exposed to the campaign were any different to those who were not, two groups were created and compared for demographic variation. One group included respondents who had seen something during the campaign either on TV, radio or newspapers (74%) and the other group included respondents who had not seen anything during the campaign (26%). No difference in exposure between men and women or between age groups was found. Household occupation did have some influence on exposure. Blue collar households were most likely to have been exposed to the campaign (80%) compared to white collar (73%) and 'other' households (64%). Respondents with children aged under five were more likely (84%) to have been exposed than those without young children (72%).

### Assessment of Quit

Respondents were asked 'How well do you think the people at the Quit Campaign understand smokers' problems?'. A positive response was given by the majority of smokers. One-third (33%) felt Quit understood smokers' problems very well and 29% felt they understood quite well. Ten per cent

thought Quit understood only slightly, 12% not well and 16% could not say how they felt. After those who could not say were excluded, responses were recoded into a scale from 0 to 10. Negative response of 'not well' at the bottom of the scale to 'very well' scoring 10. The mean for the entire sample was 6.6. This indicated that smokers generally believe Quit staff do understand smokers' problems to some extent. No differences in this assessment of Quit were found between men and women. However, younger smokers were more likely to feel Quit understands them (7.4) compared to 30 to 44 year olds (6.7) and those aged over 45 (5.6). Respondents living in white and blue collar households were equal in their assessment (6.8) and were more favourable than those in 'other' households (5.5). No other demographic variation was found in perception of Quit's understanding.

Respondents were asked 'Do you think the Quit Campaign is supportive of smokers who want to stop smoking?'. The majority of smokers (72%) agreed with this statement. Eleven per cent felt Quit was not supportive and 18% could not say. No difference in this sentiment was found between men and women but again younger respondents aged 16 to 29 (81%) were more likely to consider that Quit was supportive of smokers than respondents aged 30 to 44 (69%) or aged over 45 (64%).

Respondents who were current smokers were asked 'Would you ever consider ringing the Quit Campaign for help or information about stopping smoking?'. Forty-one per cent said they would and a further 11% said maybe. Nearly half the respondents (46%) said they would not consider ever ringing Quit and 1% could not say. Men and women were equally likely to ring Quit. Younger respondents were more likely (48%) than 30 to 44 year olds (42%) and over 45 year olds (34%) to ring Quit. Respondents living in the 'other' household occupation category were the least likely (32%) to ring Quit compared to respondents living in white (45%) or blue collar (44%) households.

Respondents were asked 'If an ad was going to make you more likely to stop smoking, what sort of ad would it be?'. Many comments referred to showing the impact of smoking on the smoker (26%) such as the consequences of smoking on the inside of the body or dramatic scenarios as a result of smoking. Other suggestions were to show gory and graphic ads (14%) or ads similar in style to the sponge ad and TAC ads (10%), giving a total of 50% wanting confronting ads. Other respondents preferred a different approach. Seven per cent thought that ads should be

informative without scare tactics, 6% suggested ads that show the impact on others and 6% suggested ads that show the benefits of giving up.

More younger people (16 to 29 years old) were found to favour the idea of showing the impact on the smoker (30%) than people aged 45 years or older (19%) and females (9%) were more likely than males (4%) to suggest ads that show the impact on others. Significant differences were also found between white collar households (21%) and 'other' households (7%) in favouring gory or graphic advertisements. No other significant demographic differences were found in respondents' suggestions for ads. In addition, 17% said nothing and 16% couldn't say.

### Conclusion

The evidence from this evaluation suggests that the campaign failed to encourage most smokers to quit. The ad was seen as credible (believable and not exaggerated) and applicable, but it did not make smokers feel uncomfortable about smoking.

Although the media buy was small, a large proportion (74%) of respondents said that they had seen the TV commercial, heard radio advertising or seen something in the paper over the campaign period. However, very few remembered the excuses theme or that they had seen or heard anything unless prompted.

Smokers reported that they feel that Quit understands their problems and are supportive of smokers who want to quit. This sentiment was stronger among younger smokers which is encouraging. Two-thirds (66%) of current smokers in this survey had attempted to quit. This is a lower quit rate attempt than that found in previous quit evaluation studied (Mullins, Morand and Borland 1996).

The results suggest that Quit may achieve more by using stronger and more confronting ads. However, the low media buy may also be responsible for the relatively low impact of the 1996 campaign.

## References

Mullins R, Morand M & Borland R. Key findings of the 1994 and 1995 household surveys. In Mullins R (ed). *Quit Evaluation Studies No. 8*. Melbourne:Victorian Smoking and Health Program, 1996.

## Appendix 4A

### Script for TELEVISION advertisements

#### *Title 'Excuses' 30 seconds duration.*

Pommy: "Give up smoking? Its too late for me"

V/O: Even if you have smoked for forty years you can benefit from quitting.

Pommy: "I'll put on weight"

V/O: You might but you don't have to

Pommy: "But it relaxes me!!"

V/O: Each cigarette actually increases your blood pressure and heart rate. It can relax you to death.

Pommy: "Everything's dangerous today."

V/O: Smoking kills more Australians than road accidents, alcohol and all other drugs combined. So even if you're just thinking about giving up smoking-call on Quit—131848

Commercial opens on Pommy relaxing in an old style lounge chair. He notices the camera just as he pulls a cigarette from a pack. Initial embarrassment is quickly replaced by a prickly defensive attitude. Pommy tries not to pay too much attention to the facts being laid out in front of him but he keeps getting drawn into the teletype supers that precis the voice-over he is hearing. While he manages to put on a brave face as he comes up with a new excuse, his fences fall each time the voice-over replies.

## Appendix 4B

### Script for RADIO advertisements

#### *Scripts of 60 second radio commercials*

##### **Weight**

If you've never been a smoker – don't even try to make sense of it. 'Cause if you've spent a bit of time attached to the rear end of a lit cigarette – you'll appreciate the grim logic of it.

There you are, you're a perfectly sane, capable adult, and you find yourself saying things like, 'I can't give up smoking because I'll put on weight'. Put on weight! As if this is a fate worse than death! Those people in fact, who do put on weight when they quit, they usually lose it anyway but that's not the point is it?

Any excuse is better than none, because when you give up the excuses – there's nothing between you and having to give up the cigarettes. And to heck with cancer or heart attacks – it's the idea of giving up that's terrifying.

So even if you're just thinking about it, don't go it alone. Call on Quit-131848. See how they could help you through.

131848. Call on Quit for help – that's what they're there for.

##### **I enjoy it**

If you've never been a smoker, you can't hope to really comprehend the predicament.

First you get used to holding a little roll of tobacco with a fire at one end, and then you feel completely empty handed without it. Off balance. Next you find yourself forced to defend it and hear yourself say really deep stuff like – 'Why? because I enjoy it! I really like smoking.'

Like it? Well – anyway – you keep on because you're hooked, and the relief of getting a hit is a kind of pleasure. But that's not the issue is it?

Any excuse is better than none because when you give up the excuses – the next step is having to give up the cigarettes.

And that's serious.

Who knows about lung cancer or heart attack – the thing you do know is – the thought of giving up is really awful.

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**It relaxes me**

People who don't smoke don't realise what it's like – when you are a smoker, you get into a real catch.

For instance – when everything's chaos – you stop – light a cigarette and you get a bit of perspective.

So, of course you're thinking to yourself, 'Smoking's really relaxing. I'd be stressed if I didn't smoke'.

The fact that every cigarette totally stresses out your body – as it tries to deal with the poisons – well, that's not the catch. The real catch is that you can want to give up, but you drag up any excuse not to – because giving up is a serious worry.

To hell with cancer – it's the thought of giving up that's scary!

So, if you're just thinking about it – don't go it alone. Call on Quit – 131848. See how they can help you through.

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