

We acknowledge the tradition of custodianship and law  
of the Country on which the University of Sydney  
campuses stand. We pay our respects to those who have  
cared and continue to care for Country.



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

# ***TAPS in the digital age: State of Play***

## **Presented by**

A/Prof Becky Freeman

Prevention Research Collaboration

School of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine  
and Health



# Snapshot of TAPS

- Tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship [TAPS] bans are a cornerstone of comprehensive tobacco control laws
- Global progress in implementing TAPS bans has been enabled by the adoption of the WHO FCTC
- Over reliance on entertainment and digital content producers and platforms to self-regulate TAPS
- Ensuring TAPS laws are regularly examined to limit loopholes and remove exemptions is crucial to continued success

# Social media platforms – what are they doing?

Goal: To get you on the site for as long as possible, as often as possible

How do they do this?

You need to enjoy it (need it?) or fear you are missing out

Why as long as possible as often as possible?

So you are exposed to as much advertising as possible.

Then the sites make money \$\$\$

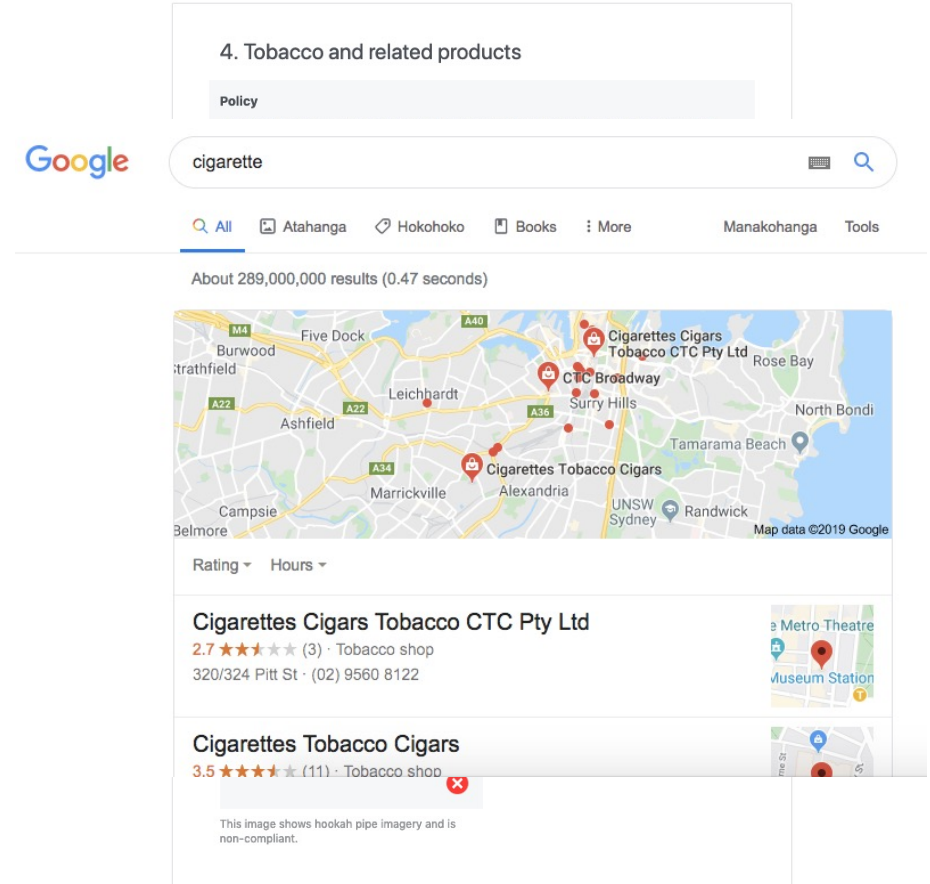
**Influencers,  
sponsorships,  
donations and PR...**

**Examples of tobacco  
industry social media  
exploitation**



# Paid Ads

- Popular social media channels and search engines have adopted policies that do not allow overt or direct promotion of tobacco and vaping products through paid advertisements



# A giant loophole: social media influencers



Social media influencers often are trained on what brands to promote, when to post for maximum exposure and how avoid posting content that look like staged advertisements.



Influencers and individuals are often instructed to include specific hashtags when promoting products on social media posts.

# British American Tobacco: Glo and Vype (now Vuse)



# Philip Morris International: IQOS



<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philipmorris-ecigs-instagram-exclusiv/exclusive-philip-morris-suspends-social-media-campaign-after-reuters-exposes-young-influencers-idUSKCN1SH02K>

## About the Page



Philip Morris International



@InsidePMI

1,386,314 likes • Organization



@pmicareers

685 followers



Philip Morris International

March 15 ·

Smoke-free alternatives are effectively banned in Australia. It's time to change the law.

<https://unsmokeyourworld.com.au/community-safety-for-the-.../>



The University of Sydney

Freeman, B., et al. "Philip Morris International's use of Facebook to undermine Australian tobacco control laws." Public Health Research & Practice

## Brief Report

# Philip Morris International's use of Facebook to undermine Australian tobacco control laws

Becky Freeman<sup>a,e</sup>, Marita Hefler<sup>b</sup>, Daniel Hunt<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of Public Health, Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney, NSW, Australia

<sup>b</sup> Wellbeing and Preventable Chronic Disease, Menzies School of Health Research, Darwin, NT, Australia

<sup>c</sup> Independent Health Policy Consultant, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

<sup>e</sup> Corresponding author: [becky.freeman@sydney.edu.au](mailto:becky.freeman@sydney.edu.au)

## Article history

Publication date: September 2019

Citation: Freeman B, Hefler M, Hunt D. Philip Morris International's use of Facebook to undermine Australian Tobacco control laws. *Public Health Res Pract.* 2019;29(3):e2931924.

<https://doi.org/10.17061/phrp2931924>

## Background

The World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)<sup>1</sup> requires all ratifying parties to implement comprehensive bans on all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, including online media, and to protect public health policies from tobacco industry interference. However, the borderless nature of the internet, coupled with narrow definitions of advertising and interference, means the tobacco industry still uses online and social media to sell and promote its products, highlight supposed corporate social responsibility practices, and challenge public health views and policies.<sup>2</sup>

# Political Ads

**About the ad**

**Unsmoke Australia**  
Sponsored · Paid for by Unsmoke Australia  
ID: 709807826615509

Smoke-free alternatives are effectively banned in Australia. It's time to change the law.



UNSMOKEYOURWORLD.COM.AU  
Smoke-free laws need to change  
Find out more

Learn More

This ad has multiple versions. 3 of 7



**About the disclaimer**  
When an advertiser categorises their ad as being about social issues, elections or politics, they are required to disclose who paid for the ad. [Learn more](#)

**Information from the advertiser**

Inactive  
8 Dec 2020 - 3 Jan 2021  
ID: 1282729852103790

This ad has multiple versions. 1

**Unsmoke Australia**  
Sponsored · Paid for by Unsmoke Australia

Science and technology matter. Around the world they are playing an important role in helping smokers move away from cigarettes.



UNSMOKEYOURWORLD.COM.AU  
It's time to legalise smoke-free products  
Find out more

Learn More

Amount spent (AUD): **AU\$300-AU\$399**  
Potential reach: **>1M people**

See ad details

**About the ad**

**Unsmoke Australia**  
Sponsored · Paid for by Unsmoke Australia  
ID: 709807826615509

Many experts agree that smoke-free products are a better alternative than continuing to smoke cigarettes.



UNSMOKEYOURWORLD.COM.AU  
Smoke-free laws need to change  
Find out more

Learn More

This ad has multiple versions. 6 of 7



**About the disclaimer**  
When an advertiser categorises their ad as being about social issues, elections or politics, they are required to disclose who paid for the ad. [Learn more](#)

**Information from the advertiser**

# “Reinventing” sponsorship



## BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO

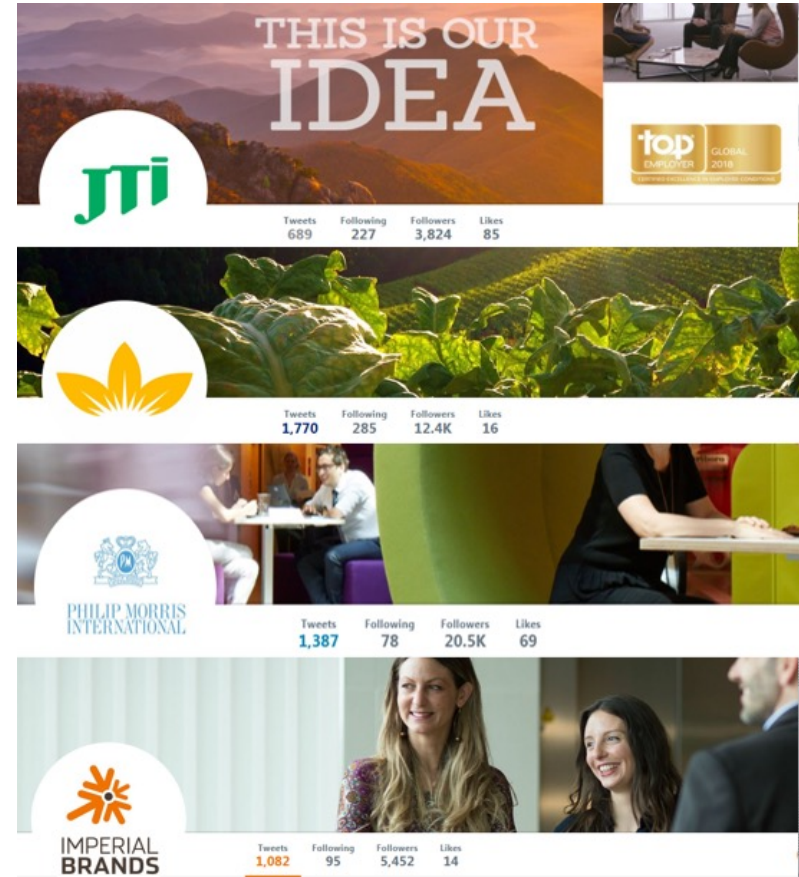
A BETTER  
TOMORROW™

# Promoting Corporate Social Responsibility

- promote an image of being socially and environmentally responsible
- portray themselves as highly favourable employers
- oppose tobacco control policy
- position as partners in public health

Watts C, Hefler M, Freeman B. 'We have a rich heritage and, we believe, a bright future': how transnational tobacco companies are using Twitter to oppose policy and shape their public identity. Tobacco Control 2019 Dec;28(2):227-232.

The University of Sydney



# Vuse Worldwide – Instagram



vuse.worldwide We pledged. Now we are. The first



... ..

# Wellness products and new brands



# What is needed

- Responses require strong regulation of corporate behaviour
- Self-regulation, public health education, and policy-making partnerships have minimal impact
- Voluntary regulations lack meaningful enforcement, education is drowned out by omnipresent product marketing and policy-making partnerships result in regulations that heavily favour industry rather than health

# Policy recommendations and implications

- Ensure that TAPS laws are comprehensive, cover online digital media platforms, including social media, and are sufficiently flexible to encompass new media and platforms.
- The cross-border nature of online digital TAPS requires international cooperation for effective monitoring and enforcement
- Require the tobacco industry to disclose all TAPS activities, including any activities on online digital media platforms
- Include novel and emerging nicotine and tobacco products in comprehensive laws to ban non-therapeutic nicotine and tobacco advertising promotion and sponsorship
- Conduct ongoing surveillance of the evolution of both online digital media platforms and novel and emerging nicotine and tobacco products to ensure that TAPS laws remain comprehensive

## Three core messages

- TAPS laws must maintain pace with the changing media landscape
- TAPS laws must also keep pace with the rapid changes in commercial tobacco/nicotine product offerings
- Policies that anticipate both commercial tobacco, nicotine and related product and marketing changes and the changing online/digital media landscape are needed