



**CROLL'S  
MONITORING AUSTRALIA**

**IT IS REPORTED THAT:**

**DATE:** 8/12/94 **TIME:** 1923 HRS **SOURCE:** ZWF  
**PROGRAMME:** JOHN NUTTING  
**PRESENTER:** JOHN NUTTING  
**SUBJECT:** INTERVIEW WITH NONI WALKER RE: PASSIVE  
SMOKING

E. & O.E. \*-Phonetic

Tk-ER

**JOHN NUTTING:**

Well, as you heard earlier, a report commissioned by the Tobacco Institute of Australia has raised doubts over the health risks associated with passive smoking. However, not everybody has complete faith in the report's findings. Director of the Australian Council on Smoking and Health, Noni Walker, is with us tonight. Good evening, Noni.

**NONI WALKER:**

Hello.

[ACOS&H]

**JOHN NUTTING:**

Now, this report that we've spoken about -- we spoke to the Chief Executive of the Tobacco Institute of Australia, Donna Staunton, just a short while ago. This

REGISTERED COMPANY: Croll Communications Pty. Ltd. A.C.N. 008 840 344  
Level 8, 220 Pacific Highway, Crowes Nest NSW 2065 Phone: (02) 956 8700, Fax: (02) 956 8649  
Postal Address: Box 591 Crowes Nest 2065

500832682

turn into a bun fight in the media, where there's obviously the Tobacco Institute who have a business to run. And there's yourself, of course, who are defending the health of the nation. And these people who are Australian -- I can't say the word, but doctors and statisticians and scientists, who are eminent, are saying that it's OK. So, it get very confusing for everybody. I mean, what are we to believe?

NONI WALKER:

Well, it would seem that confusion is the aim of the game for the Tobacco Institute. I mean, the proper place to have expressed any of the views, would have been to the expert committee, rather than in the media. And I think that that's quite obvious that this is where they're trying to conduct the debate.

JOHN NUTTING:

So, that hasn't gone to the expert committee, you're saying?

NONI WALKER:

Well, they are, from the reports I've see, proposing to put this review to the committee. And, you know, we and other groups were invited some time ago. There was a public call for submissions, and as far as I'm aware, that time had closed. I'm not sure why this is

8/12/94 1923 HRS 6WF

3

500832683

now being presented to the committee which I assume has been working on the review since the public submissions closed.

JOHN NUTTING:

So, when did they close?

NONI WALKER:

That was some months ago. I think it was in April this year.

JOHN NUTTING:

Well, that's quite some time ago, isn't it?

NONI WALKER:

Yeah, I could be corrected on that exact month, but I know it was some time ago.

JOHN NUTTING:

Well, do you believe the report is, you've touched on it, but is it an impartial document, do you think?

NONI WALKER:

Well, not being able to, I mean, all I have seen is the Executive summary, at this stage, so I wouldn't like to make a comment. What I would just point out is that, while amongst those in the group, there was some clinical physicians, an academic, and some statisticians, what was lacking, and what you would expect to be on the committee, is someone with the qualifications of an

8/12/94 1923 HRS 6WF

4

500832684

epidemiologist. This is the field where a lot of the research is being conducted. And I'm just surprised that this group, and perhaps there wasn't anyone around who was able or willing to join it. But statisticians are not expert in the field of epidemiology.

JOHN NUTTING:

Well, obviously not.

NONI WALKER:

And I think this group does lack some credibility. There are clinical respiratory physicians there. I mean, people like doctors who see people who come in off the street. But much of the evidence and where the debate would be, you know, results would be, would be amongst those who are population scientists, virtually epidemiologists. And where they have reviewed the data in other reports I mentioned, then there's been a strong view that there is, you know, a lot of evidence of the dangers of passive smoking.

JOHN NUTTING:

Well, you've done your research. You have your report. So passive smoking from your perspective, is harmful. And what effects does it have on us?

NONI WALKER:

Well, the reports that have been released, and these go

8/12/94 1923 HRS 6WF

5

500832685

back to reviews starting in the 1980s, where the first disease that was identified as being related to passive smoking, was lung cancer. Since then, there has been a lot more evidence on the effects on heart disease, and a number of other conditions, particularly respiratory conditions, and asthma, for, you know, there's a lot of evidence about asthma. And so, I think it's unusual that, given this range of diseases, and effects that have been identified -- and I think that everyone will remember that not only the medical and health professions, but also a court case some years ago, when the Tobacco Institute of Australia was found to have been misleading and deceptive in their portrayal of passive smoking as not dangerous, I'm surprised that this report has the conclusion which is contrary to many of the others.

JOHN NUTTING:

Well, you ... from the background which we've just discussed, I mean, you are the director of the Australian Council on Smoking and Health, I understand that, do you think the community is overly concerned about passive smoking, or not concerned about passive smoking as they should be?

8/12/94 1923 HRS 6WF

6

500832686

NONI WALKER:

Well, I think there's a lot of concern. I think what we have to remember is that by far the major threat to health in Australia, is active smoking. And you know, people who inhale the smoke directly into their own lungs are at the greatest risk of disease. I think what we find is that the concern about passive smoking is that many of that is you know, beyond the control of the people who are inhaling it. And particularly children. I think that's where our concern has been greatest. But although the risk is much smaller, the risk is there for people who are innocent victims.

JOHN NUTTING:

Noni Walker, thank you for being with us tonight, and thank you for telling us about that.

NONI WALKER:

Thank you. Bye bye.

JOHN NUTTING:

Noni Walker, from the Australian Council on Smoking and Health. And remember this one? I sort of thought we'd share this one with you: "Medical authorities warn that smoking is a health hazard." I think it is, too.

TIA06.EB

\*\*\* \*\*

8/12/94 1923 HRS 6WF

7

500832687