

Andrew Thompson: "I think these things are getting a bit out of control ... it's getting a bit too far ... this notion of the government getting more and more into these campaigns, expensive and very graphic, when we citizens ... we understand smoking's bad for us and if we persist in doing it, well, maybe we're idiots but we don't need this sort of involvement in our lives with the government and everything. The next thing, they'll be after our diets and our weekends and sort of everything.

Valentine: Well, they are to a certain extent. I mean there are campaigns to encourage well-balanced diets or particular diets to prevent heart disease and there are campaigns to encourage us to exercise more.

Thompson: Yeah, it's getting a bit out of control. I mean common sense lies with the average citizen, with families, with friends who know what's good for you and what's bad for you and the question arises "well, where does all this end?"

Valentine: Well what would you do with the 20 or 30 percent who are still smoking and who seem to be fairly hard core smokers. Are you just saying well, they're being a bit stupid and leave them alone.

Thompson: Yeah. Let 'em get sick and die. So what?

Valentine: (incredulous) "Let 'em get sick and die!"

Thompson: Or reduce their Medicare benefits. That would make a difference. Not this bloody advertising stuff. Reduce their Medicare benefits and stop more of our taxpayer's money – we non-smokers –paying for them. That would stop them smoking.

Valentine: So you'd put them down the queue in public health facilities?

Thompson: Well, you could find some formula for discounting the Medicare rebate they get if they get sick because they're smoking and make the doctors certify it. Please don't let us have to spend money in employing a whole heap of bureaucrats and all these other NGO people pissing our money away in these big campaigns. Because they don't work." (To put "pissing our money away" in perspective, the Australian Federal Government currently spends about \$A2m a year on tobacco control, while receiving \$A4.6 billion in tobacco tax).