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News

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*Claire Sweeney*

If you haven't heard by now what the new Tourism Australia campaign is all about then where the bloody hell have you been?

The campaign takes Australia's international image back to its ocker roots, playing on a cheeky larrikin image with the controversial tagline 'So where the bloody hell are you?'

Tourism Australia director Scott Morrison defended the language used in the campaign, saying it needed to be "bold, aggressive and distinctive".

He said that by marrying the tagline with images of beautiful scenery and well-known Australian icons, the campaign conveyed the message that Australia was a place to come and experience now.

Darren Woolley, managing director of P3, an advertising industry auditing and cost consultancy, said the hype surrounding the campaign was a positive sign.

"It's had a lot of discussion and anything that gets people talking in this day and age is good," Woolley said.

"You just have to look at the Crocodile Hunter, Steve Irwin, and how he made 'crikey' famous in other countries.

"If it has that kind of effect then that can only be positive."

Woolley said the last TA campaign, which used lesser-known celebrities such as Delta Goodrem, wasn't as well thought through as it could have been.

"Lesser-known celebrities don't register overseas and when you start using big-name celebrities it starts becoming clichéd. With this campaign they are selling the product which is a clever tactic.

"The photography in this campaign is absolutely beautiful. They've taken the Australian scenery and represented it in its best light. The only thing that breaks the mould is the theme line."

Australian Tourism Export Council managing director Matt Hingerty agreed that debate about the campaign was good.

"It would've been worse if there'd been no reaction," Hingerty said.

"It's great to see people taking our industry seriously."

The latest campaign debuted last week in New Zealand, Australia's largest inbound tourism market, and will be rolled out to the US, Britain, Germany, Japan, South Korea and China over the next couple of months.

Federal Tourism Minister Fran Bailey said within just four days of the campaign's launch, a dedicated website had received 45,000 hits.

Of the people who had logged on to the website, about 24,000 were in the US and 10,000 in Britain, while people in countries as far away as Peru and Slovenia had also paid a visit.

"Only 96 hours old, the new campaign is already cutting through as it was designed to do," Bailey said.

Tourism Australia spent an unprecedented \$6.2 million over the last 18 months researching and testing the campaign.

7 March 2006

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