

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE SAD reality is that Tourism Australia, and their state counterparts, have little commercial relevance to the operators and developers of tourism product in Australia. (Chairman defends Tourism Australia, Travel Today, June 30).

There is a distinct tendency to shy away from measurable, commercial initiatives in favour of broad promotional activity. The Tourism Queensland "Best Job" promo is consistent with this approach. Obviously it has been a great general promotion, but the only measurable result in terms of extra visitors is the freebie for the winning entrant.

You can't bank awareness and you sure can't borrow against it. Tourism Australia needs to cause more tourists to visit, so our product can perform better and the viability of new internationally competitive developments is restored.

• *David Cattell, director, best management group*

I FIND it extremely interesting that Tourism Australia feel the 'Come Walkabout' campaign has been so successful. I wonder how much research has actually been done in the international markets as to the understanding of the phrase. The first couple of ads issued on this didn't even mention the word Australia and left many wondering at the end of the ad who and what it was for.

A superbly made ad based solely on two assumptions. The first that everyone in the world understands the connotations of the word 'walkabout' and the second was that they had seen the film with Nicole Kidman.

Being based in France, I can advise that none of the French people I know had any idea

what 'walkabout' meant and interestingly enough neither do many English people unless they have already been to Australia, thereby alienating a large proportion of potential market.

It's a classic case of assumption that the rest of the world understands an Australian colloquialism. Perhaps one of the most powerful campaigns ever was in fact the outstandingly successful Qantas ad with the music 'I still call Australia home'. It never left anyone in any doubt about which country was home or could be called home even by those who didn't reside there. It encompassed the entire world in its ad and attracted a huge following. Just look at the power the words have to this day. A very clever and effective form of marketing.

Perhaps Tourism Australia needs to ensure for future campaigns that it stops assuming that words like 'bloody' and 'walkabout' are understood globally in the same vein that they are in Australia. It's a great country but ensure that everyone gets the same 'great' message.

• *Frances Beasley, www.piptravelnews.co.za*

TOURISM AUSTRALIA doesn't get it at all. Success in tourism is not measured by inbound numbers alone. And besides, inbound tourism has been proven unreliable due to its sensitivity to international diversities such as terrorist attacks, diseases, weak currency exchange, economic downturns and fuel price upsurge.

Domestic tourism was a huge failure due to TA's lack of vision and imagination. No Leave No Life (NLNL) will not take off unless drastic measures and working programs are installed.

NLNL backed up by the stimulus package was actually hi-jacked by outbound agents and travellers due to TA's poor planning.

Despite TA's access to information and influence, it failed to create programs that will make domestic travel more affordable to Australians. Recent surveys show Australians will travel domestically so long as it is cheap, a widely known fact which TA constantly ignores. Or its beyond their malfunctioning brain cells due to an overdose of cocktail functions.

No amount of multi-million dollar advertisements can persuade Australians to travel domestically unless it is complemented by programs making domestic travel affordable. So, what programs are needed to make domestic travel affordable? Let's leave it up to TA so they can prove they are worth the wages they are paid.

• *Sting Pipil, Devere Hotel, Sydney*

MANY YEARS ago you may recall SIA saying they were going to issue, in Singapore, their tickets showing the nett level and telling travel agents they then had to tell their clients the margin the agent is adding to the tickets!

At the time in the travel press in South East Asia I pointed out that this was crazy marketing and unworkable.

Can you imagine going into a major retail outlet to buy a fridge or TV and being told the price of the item and then being told the store adds its margin of \$X? You would think they were mad!

I cannot think of any other industry that sells retail to the consumer at nett and then has a retailer margin added to the price.

Airlines have to realise that