Introduction
The Australian Tourism Commission's (ATC's) international marketing campaigns are powerful assertions of the Australian identity and provide insight into the way contemporary nations imagine themselves. Even though Australia represents only one percent of international travel arrivals, the ATC produced Paul Hogan campaign holds special place in the Smithsonian Advertising Hall of Fame; and the ATC's budget was the largest of 170 national tourism offices globally in 1995. All this means Australia's foremost image-making institution has considerable power to define and the means to produce, elaborate marketing "productions" to both seduce tourists to Australia and project the Australian identity to the world.

In a globalising world, the issue of national identity is a matter of considerable debate, and within Australia, it has long been a 'national obsession'. There are three major streams of thought about the process of national identity formation. One is based on racial assumptions and asserts an immutable Anglo–Australian essence underlies the national character. Another is grounded in evolutionary thought and contends that national identity develops organically, as a people adapts to its environment. Both these views suggest national identity is palpable, is discoverable and awaits being given cultural expression. The third view introduces postmodern critique to the debate and advances that national identity is an ideological invention imposed upon a diverse population to serve the interests of dominant groups. Whilst ATC marketing campaigns are only one aspect of Australia's national identity, this enquiry asks of them: what was the dominant image projected during the 1980s, and how did this relate to previous images. By historicising campaigns, it also identifies the meaning of these shifts, provides insight into the

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1 This research was supported by an Australasian Pioneers Club Scholarship. My thanks are extended to Richard White for his rigorous supervision; the National Archives of Australia (NAA), Sydney (particularly Kerry and Simon for facilitating the taking of over one thousand photographs in the reading room, and Gerry in Preservation for tracking down films yet to be catalogued); and to the Australian Tourist Commission, Sydney (particularly Librarian, Alison for assembling recent travel guides, Richard Llewellyn for authorising the viewing and reproduction of important films not yet publicly available at the NAA, and John Morse for his enthusiastic support of the final publication.


3 For the purpose of this project, the term ATC 'productions' is limited to marketing material produced for mass market campaigns conducted in the ATC's three major markets, namely the USA, UK and Japan. Primary sources were drawn from print, film and electronic media; and included travel guides (which the ATC nominate as their 'flagship' publication), posters, annual reports, selected print advertisements, films produced for public screenings before television advertising was within the ATC's financial means, and television campaigns from 1983. For USA Travel Guides (TGs), see NAA C3125; for UK TGs, see NAA C3123; for Japanese TGs see NAA C3114; for posters, see NAA B4945; and for Annual Reports, see NAA C3119.


5 W. Keith Hancock, Australia (London: Ernest Benn, 1930).


process of national identity development through the powerful medium of tourism marketing, and speculates as to whose interests are best served by these changing images.

This paper forms part of an extended study of ATC image-making during its thirty-three year history. It identified four distinct expressions of national identity. Late 1960s images were characterised by developmentalism. Australia was projected as a second American frontier where vast, worthless spaces were conquered and converted into big, new, manmade utopias. 1970s images during the Whitlam era were characterised by cultural nationalism. They emphasised the artistic genius of nature; and the stately heritage, and cultural monuments of a refined, innovative nation. 1980s images during the Hawke era centred on Paul Hogan, a layback friendly mate welcoming visitors to a physical adventure paradise. And finally, the 1990s images of the Keating era emphasised the spiritual qualities and Aboriginal custodianship of nature, plus the diverse rituals of a multi-cultural society when the emphasis changed to cultural tourism.

Paul Hogan's 'Put Another Shrimp on the Barbie' campaign of 1984 has been called the 'big bang' of Australian tourism history. Certainly, it did coincide with sharp increases in tourist arrivals. Other big events and tourism trends — including the America's Cup Challenge, Expo, Bicentennial, European terrorism, Gulf War, growth in Asia-Pacific travel, and the Japanese government's attempt to internationalise the Japanese people by encouraging travel — provided the ATC with incredible marketing opportunities. These were fully exploited by ATC campaigns of the period, which astutely imaged Australia as a safe, friendly destination far away from the northern conflict zones, and part of the Asia-Pacific when Europeans first began to flock to the region.

A well-orchestrated appeal to Cabinet in 1983 by the Tourism Minister and Paul Hogan, achieved an extraordinary appropriation of $22 million. This appeal argued global markets knew 'more about the moon than [they did] about Australia', and there was no point waiting around the 'woolshed for cardigans to come back into fashion'. The implication was that the Australian wool industry was in serious decline and tourism could act as a panacea. This funding windfall enabled the ATC to launch its first international television advertising campaign. One of the major aims was to counter the reduction in primary industry generated foreign exchange with contributions from the fledgling tourism industry.

International Relations and Cultural Debates

Within the context of an emerging global economic order, the Hawke government transformed Australia's closed, protected economy to an open and internationally viable one. Restrictions on international capital flows, investment, and rural land ownership were removed. Interestingly, as the practical borders of the nation were stripped away, symbolic differences were asserted. Throughout the 1980s, there was considerable disquiet, both domestically and internationally, about the impacts of multinational corporations and their domination of the tourism industry. This was couched in terms of local social structures being disrupted, environments despoiled, cultural production determined by marketability rather than local meaningfulness, and new relations of subservience forged. In an attempt to reap the benefits of globalisation and minimise these negative impacts, the Hawke government posited tourism as the 'cure' for Australia's economic problems, and lent support to a cliqued national type to both assert a national distinctiveness and act as a bulwark against cultural imperialism.

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9 Wayne Tregaskis, 'Tourism’s Big Bang!', Tourism and Hospitality Update, 60 (March 1998), 13.
10 Peter Grey, Klaus Edelmann and Larry Dwyer, Tourism in Australia: Challenges and Opportunities, A Study Commissioned by the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1991), 55.
11 Twenty-two million dollars to be distributed over the following three years.
This larger cultural concern coincided with heated domestic cultural debates led by various indigenous, ethnic and other social groups. ATC images largely support Stokes’ claim that the Hawke government privileged a nostalgic, regressive rendering of nationalism for the Bicentennial, which revived the ‘Australian Legend’. These tensions were reflected in ATC images throughout this period.

Men At Work
ATC campaigns of the Hogan era inverted the stereotype of an Australian ‘workingman’s paradise’ and reinscribed it as a holidaymakers’ playground, serviced by ‘Aussie Mates’ universally performing the role of welcoming host. The diverse peoples of Australia were essentialised as service workers dedicated to making tourists feel at home and well looked after. Paul Hogan simultaneously embodied this ‘uniquely Australian spirit’ and projected himself as a natural, Anglo–Celtic frontiersman, with whom it was known Americans would nostalgically identify.

Dominant images featured stereotypical beach lifesavers, and bush and outback workers. Each of these types was assigned a tourist–hosting responsibility. Lifesavers were celebrated as ‘heroic Aussie’ ‘wonders from downunder’ for their watchful beach patrols, and farmstay hosts were similarly venerated as ‘friendly True Blue folk’ for their ‘Helpful Hints’ and courteous hospitality. Images of smiling farmers, captioned ‘the drover’ and ‘the man from the bush’, urged tourists to ‘stay at a farm for a “fair dinkum” look at the real countryside’, of ‘jackaroos, jillaroos, billabongs, drovers and merinos’ in order to ‘get a sense of pioneering life...[in the] heart of Australia’. Notably, the mantle of a national heartland was relocated from the unfamiliar ‘red centre’ during the period and bestowed upon the safe, recognisable, pioneering countryside.

Despite some references to Australia’s rich ethnicity, only token gestures were made to include images of Aboriginal people, and minority communities. Aborigines were essentialised as boomerang throwing experts teaching tourists their skills, a ‘rich source of art and folklore’, and welcoming Aussie hosts. This included an image of a baby Aboriginal boy sitting alone in the outback, captioned with the universal Australian greeting, ‘G’day’. Women were likewise captioned ‘G’day’ and predominantly imaged performing hospitality roles including waitressing, hotel meeting–and–greeting, and airline hostessing. The Hahndorf German community functioned as the representative immigrant ‘folk’ group and images emphasised colourful traditional costumes and community festivals. This was commercially astute; given Germany was the ATC’s chief European target market. Notably, these token gestures of narrowly defined Aboriginal and ethnic groups were absent in the Hogan television commercials, which applied a tourism aesthetic of the punchy, fast, and simple.

But, all these images were peripheral to those of Paul Hogan ‘firing up the barbie’ on the foreshore of Australia’s premier international gateway, or standing upon the apex of the Sydney
Harbour Bridge dressed as the Statue of Liberty.\(^{32}\) His functions included welcoming Americans to a land gloriously free of the normal stresses and dangers associated with metropolitan life, and offering them shrimp to help them feel at home. Hogan proudly asserted a brash and satirical form of populist nationalism, and Mojo has since stated they were playing with stereotypes known to be held by Americans of Australia, in order to attract them to Australia.\(^{33}\)

Australian wildlife was likewise typecast as ‘smiling’ (or really, open–mouthed) tourism ambassadors, and captioned with the ubiquitous ‘G’day!’ Tourists were both reassured that whilst the [Tasmanian Devil] appeared to have ‘an image problem…[they’d] find it really friendly’,\(^{34}\) and encouraged to view cute and cuddly koalas as uniquely Australian ‘friendly treasures’.\(^{35}\) Travel guides generally were saturated with images of joyful cartoon marsupials.\(^{36}\)

But, this was a confidence trick. Because the ATC was concerned about potential hostility towards outsiders, it launched an extensive domestic campaign to ensure Australians lived up to this image they had created of a welcoming and warm host society. Hogan told Australians ‘not to make a liar out of him’, to ‘flash their pearly whites and to say hello to a visitor’ because tourism meant jobs.\(^{37}\)

Shortly after a government enquiry into tourism,\(^{38}\) Australia was progressively imaged as both more cosmopolitan and exotic. Images of an urbane Greg Norman produced by the D’Arcy Masius advertising agency, gradually supplanted those of Hogan’s working class ockerism featured in Mojo campaigns. Whilst both presenters basically projected the same image of a relaxed Aussie mate, Norman asserted a little more sophistication; and an enthusiastic interest amongst Japanese audiences for Norman’s golfing prowess, paved the way for the imaging of Australia as a more culturally complex nation. Again with an eye to the market, larger percentages of people with Asian and particularly Japanese backgrounds appeared when the ATC’s chief target market changed from the USA to Asia in the second half of the decade.\(^{39}\) The technique of photomontage was increasingly used to group diverse peoples together under the heading ‘The Aussies’.\(^{40}\) These images likewise revolved around tourist–hosting responsibilities. They primarily featured Asian restaurateurs offering exotic cuisine to visitors and emphasised a willingness to both serve and please.

As the novelty of earthy ‘Aussies’ paled, the appreciation of Aboriginal exoticism increased. This can be attributed to the targeting of better–educated, older and wealthier tourists; and the broadening of travel trends from primarily physical adventure to the more intellectual aspects of cultural tourism. Images of Aborigines interacting with tourists and teaching boomerang–throwing techniques were increasingly replaced by a primitivism aesthetic, which positioned Aborigines outside contemporary time. ATC images of Aboriginal corroborees and didgeridoo playing in isolated deserts\(^{41}\) framed out any evidence of modern life and fixed their meaning with captions such as ‘Timeless People, Timeless Land’\(^{42}\). These contradictory narratives simultaneously identified Aborigines as a dying race,\(^{43}\) and a vital ongoing part of contemporary Australian culture.\(^{44}\) Following another government enquiry’s criticism of cultural

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\(^{32}\) ATC, ‘Slip Another Shrimp on the Barbie’, international television advertisement (Sydney: ATC, 1984), Order No. 30992 (not in archives); ATC, ‘Us Aussies Like you to Feel Right at Home’, international television advertisement (Sydney: ATC, n.d. c. 1985).


\(^{34}\) ATC, USA TGs 1983, 1988 and 1990.


\(^{36}\) ATC, Japanese TGs 1983, 1987, and 1992 (Ken Done designed cover).

\(^{37}\) ATC, ‘Don’t make a liar of Me’, domestic television advertisement (Sydney: ATC, n.d.).


\(^{40}\) ATC, USA TG, 1987.

\(^{41}\) ATC, USA TG, 1991.

\(^{42}\) ATC, UK TG, 1988.

\(^{43}\) Advertisements included excerpts from Oodgeroo Noonacal’s poem ‘We are Going’, see ATC, USA TG, 1991; and advertisement voice–overs asked if traditional Aboriginal elders will ‘go...from these desolate lands, like...chief[s] to the rest of [their] race’, see ATC, ‘Down Under No Longer’, film (Sydney: ATC, n.d. c. 1989), NAA C4547, 27.

World’s Largest Island Playground
The diverse Australian landscape was uniformly imaged as one big, clean, safe and wondrous ‘pleasure island’; where tourists could ‘get away from it all’ and experience ‘all the good things nature and [the Australian people] had ready’. Cities were personified as cheeky, vibrant and friendly. Tourists were assured the surprisingly fresh informality and vitality of Aussie city life would simultaneously make them feel ‘positively relaxed’ and mentally revitalised. Standard urban templates included every imaginable pleasure craft on brilliantly blue waterways, glamorous casino nightlife located within glittering cityscapes, and relaxed outdoor waterfront restaurants. Whilst images emphasised urban grandeur and beauty, they foregrounded the human presence, party atmospheres, and an endless menu of indulgences, to satisfy tourists from daybreak to sunset. This city experience was encapsulated in a recurring image of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, which bore the caption ‘a friendly…laughing candle’.

The ATC claimed Canberra’s ‘shared island way’ of joyous laughter and co-operative teamwork epitomised all Australian cities. Visitors were urged to discover the ‘capital city that forgets to be serious’ by ballooning over new parliament house, and then to watch Australian politicians serve their people by ‘haranguing each other in glorious full colour democracy’. Whilst Canberra images projected a dual identity of frivolity and substance, ATC images generally played with the ‘Land–Down–Under’ stereotype to distinguish Australia from hectic, impersonal ‘big smokes’ and ‘smog jungles’ elsewhere. Texts boasted Australia provided all the benefits of urban living in ‘Paris, London or Rome’, without the disadvantages.

Two significant events provided the ATC with an enhanced range of symbols with which to image the natural landscape. Both the declaration of the first ten Australian World Heritage sites between 1981 and 1992, and the handback of the Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park to the indigenous owners in 1985, gave international legitimacy and some human rights integrity to the ATC’s campaign theme ‘Land of Wonders’, and its promotion of Uluru as an Aboriginal homeland. Advertising banners included ‘Land of Wonder — The Bush Down...\n
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44 Jon Altman, Aborigines, Tourism, and Development: The Northern Territory Experience (Canberra: ANU, North Australia Research Unit, 1988), 38.
47 ATC, UK TG, 1986.
50 Sydney ‘loves’ to party. See ATC, USA TG, 1988.
51 ATC, UK TG, 1990.
52 ATC, USA TG, 1988.
54 Ibid., 1986/7.
56 Ibid., 1985.
Under’ and ‘Adventures in Wonderland’.60

Numerous Australian pleasure zones were classified according to the tourist experiences they afforded.61 Of these, the Outback and north–eastern coastline received special attention. Images of ‘adventurers’ camel caravanning,62 four–wheel driving,63 ballooning,64 helicoptering65 and retiring to luxury resorts in deserts66 were captioned ‘untamed’67 ‘Last Frontier’,68 ‘Drive into Freedom’69 in the ‘Virgin Territory’,70 and scale the skyline of Uluru.71 But by appealing to tourists’ desires for heroic travel in pristine wilderness and representing the natural landscape as virginal, the ATC rendered centuries of Aboriginal stewardship invisible. This form of representation has since been criticised by Griffiths as a malign reassertion of *terra nullius*.72

Coastal images of deserted beaches, sapphire water, swaying palm trees, brilliant white sand and prestigious resorts were captioned: ‘Life in the Fun Lane’,73 ‘Relaxing in the Land of Dreamtime’74 and ‘thousands of miles of the world’s greatest beaches’.75 By inviting tourists to escape to the world’s largest island, rather than the world’s smallest continent, and to discover the ‘iridescent wonderland of the Great Barrier Reef’, where — wait for it — YES, even the ‘fish were friendly’,76 the ATC sought to capitalise on international preferences for island getaway holidays.

**Conclusion**

The history of the ATC’s marketing of Australia is one of power, seduction and social engineering. By that I mean the power to define an official version of the Australian identity, the mandate to define in order to woo tourists to Australia and away from other destinations; and the opportunities to influence Australian attitudes, behaviour, cultural production and self–perception. This production of identity was a dynamic process, influenced to varying degrees over time by government policies, ideas of nature and community, the interests of powerful groups and market imperatives. As a consequence, ATC images were the product of a complex interplay and intersection of description, nostalgic reflection, prescription and whimsical marketing concoction.

In order to lure tourists to a largely unknown land, the ATC had to capture the international travel market’s imagination. This meant images were tied to niche market desires and tourism trends. As a consequence, Australia was imaged in terms of both internally driven self–perceptions and ambitions; and what international travellers both wanted and expected to see. This process of national identity formation has emerged out of the recent phenomena of mass tourism. Whereas previous theories of national identity development rested upon racial or evolutionary assumptions, in a globalising, economically fixated world, national identity is increasingly commodified for tourism purposes and driven by political–economy imperatives. This process is circular and its phases are fourfold. *Firstly*, tourism authorities select a strategic national identity and supervise its ‘branding’ or ‘packaging’ to attract international tourists. This is often done in conjunction with advertising agencies, and sometimes with the help of expert

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60 ATC, UK TG, 1985.
61 ATC, USA TG, 1984.
64 ATC, USA TG, 1991.
65 ATC, ‘Down Under No Longer’.
67 ATC, ‘Come and Say “G’day”’.
69 ATC, UK TG, 1990.
70 Ibid.
71 ATC, UK TG, 1990/1.
73 ATC, USA TG, 1988.
74 ATC, UK TG, 1985.
75 ATC, USA TG, 1984.
76 ATC, UK TG, 1990.
cultural advisors. **Secondly**, tourists’ measure their actual travel experiences against their predominantly travel literature informed expectations. **Thirdly**, tourists feed back their evaluations, both formally and informally, to the host society. **And finally**, tourism authorities develop the next generation of marketing images, which are informed by varying degrees of both tourist feedback and tourism trends; and contemporary domestic socio-cultural and political–economy realities and imaginings. This complex dialectical process between diverse groups of international tourists and a tourism authority representing the interests of a richly cosmopolitan host society, is one of constant re-negotiation and re-adjustment.

On occasions when there was an unacceptable gap between the national imagery produced and Australian reality, domestic campaigns were mounted to engineer socio-cultural change. To prevent the re-emergence of xenophobia in response to increased ‘foreigner’ visitation levels, the Hogan campaign used the potent inducements of jobs and national economic salvation to marshall acceptable attitudes and bring behaviour into line with official requirements.

As can be seen, tourism marketing campaigns serve a complex range of functions and the national identity projected during this era served the interests of numerous groups. The exploitation of outdated stereotypes (including the bush legend, larrikinism, a workingman’s paradise, a second America, and a Topsy-Turvy Land) was designed to appeal to the preconceptions held of Australia by firstly American and then Japanese people, when the Hawke government was seeking American and later Asian investment to salvage Australia’s ailing rural economies. As such, Australia’s chief target markets and political–economy imperatives were major determinants of the way in which Australia was imaged by the ATC during the period. Concurrent to the introduction of numerous major domestic reforms, the government lent cultural support to a nostalgic image to provide Australians with a sense of continuity with their past, and enlist their acceptance for structural and economic change. Tourism images therefore served to reinforce the political status quo, assure international investors Australians were devoted workers, naturalise the ideology of globalisation and transnational business activity, reassure rural constituents, and seduce tourists. Multinational corporations, big tourism operators, wealthy international tourists and concerned pastoralists were the groups that stood to gain the most from the 1980s image of Australia populated by layback, hospitable Aussies.

How effective this image was, in terms of tourist drawing power, is another story. Certainly the Hogan era coincided with a dramatic increase in tourist arrivals. But this does not mean the image of Aussie mateship was totally responsible for the upsurge, because motivations to travel are complex and destination choice is influenced by many variables including safety, affordability and landmark events. One certainty however, is that the ATC — like its 170 national tourism counterparts — will need to be perpetually creative and commercially responsive in its image-making, in order to continue to seduce the golden hordes to Australian shores.

**University of Sydney**

**Appendix 1: Visitor Arrivals by Target Market 1983 and 1991**

Source: Compiled from ATC Annual Reports.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>VISITORS</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Nos.</td>
<td>Market change</td>
<td>%</td>
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<td>(000s)</td>
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<td>161</td>
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77 The 1983/84 Annual Report identified the USA market as presenting ‘enormous potential’ due to the unprecedented popularity of Australian film, vocalists, musicians, authors and sportspeople; the Asia Pacific region as ‘the major growth market of international tourism’; and UK visitors as ‘genuine’ tourists rather than visiting friends and relatives (VFRs) because they were spending more and staying longer. Two years later, ATC Managing Director, John Rowe announced in the 1985/6 Annual Report that the ATC had given priority to the American market for the previous two years because they had judged the time to be ripe to do so. He added aggressive marketing efforts had also been directed towards Japan.

78 Markets arranged by arrival numbers (largest to smallest) were: 1 –New Zealand, 2–UK, 3–USA, 4–Total Asia excl Japan, 5–Total Europe excl UK, 6–Japan.

79 Budgeted arrivals for 1988 were: USA 390,000, Japan 230,000, and UK 225,000. Despite the USA marketing focus, its results were very disappointing. On the other hand, Japan surpassed all expectations and the UK was deemed a ‘solid performer’.

80 Total tourist arrivals internationally, rather than nationally, for calendar year 1991 (versus 1968) were: USA 36.5 million (versus 7.3 million), Australia 2.4 million (versus 247,878), Japan 3.5 million (versus 352,832).

81 For the first time, Japanese arrivals surpassed all other markets. New Zealand followed with 460,000. Other actual market arrival rankings were: 3–Total Asia excl Japan, 4–UK, 5–USA, 6–Total Europe excl UK. Following this unprecedented growth in Asian arrivals (excluding those from Japan), the ATC henceforth identified the region as its primary target market.