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Providing news and analysis on the Australian outdoor media industry

First international planning scholarship awarded

Mildura town planner Rachael Attwood has become the first recipient of the Planning Scholarship program launched earlier this year by the Outdoor Media Association (OMA) and Planning Institute of Australia (PIA). The scholarship is worth \$15,000 each year with an additional \$5,000 a year provided to the PIA for marketing and promotion of the award.

Rachael has chosen digital roadside advertising as her research topic, with plans to travel to New York, London and Japan around June next year. She will present her research findings to the PIA Conference in 2009, and her report will be published on the OMA and PIA websites.

The OMA has been working closely with the PIA over the past 12 months in a bid to improve the dialogue between outdoor media operators and the planning community. In particular, the industry needs to do more in demonstrating the positive changes that have occurred through increasing professionalism and better product quality.

Strong retail sector continues to boost advertising market

Access Economics' analyst, Chris Anderson, has predicted another strong year of growth in 2008, fueled by China's high demand for Australian resources.

Speaking at the annual *Commonwealth Economic Advisory Service Australia (CEASA)* media forum, Mr Anderson told media owners and marketers that the retail sector was continuing to grow above the trend, with household goods being the biggest driver.

His comments were supported by other economic forecasters, including Charlie Nelson, who said while he expected growth to "slow slightly", it would still be around 6 per cent.

One of the key changes over the past 10 to 15 years has been the increasing public benefits of outdoor advertising. These include the millions of dollars of public infrastructure that has been funded through the industry's activities, and the millions of dollars of free advertising space that is each year donated to charities and not-for-profit organisations.

Rachael's study tour is another case in point. There are now more than 700 digital billboards in the United States and many operators have developed protocols with local authorities to maximise their public benefit. One example was during the Minnesota bridge collapse earlier this year when outdoor media companies were able to change their digital advertising to emergency messages within a very short space of time.

Through these research scholarships, the OMA and PIA enable students to bring key learnings back to their own communities about how outdoor advertising can be better integrated into cities and streetscapes.

Media buyers, including Harold Mitchell, Anne Parsons and Mark Coad, told the audience outdoor media would be among the beneficiaries of the retail growth. While all agreed the consumer was now firmly in control, they believed the innovation seen in outdoor had helped keep the media fresh among consumers wanting more engagement.

Accountability – particularly around measuring the effectiveness of media spend – was a dominant theme of the day. So, too, was the need for marketers and creative agencies to invest more time in understanding the "grey vote", including the influence of younger people on the purchasing decisions of their parents and grandparents.



Helen Willoughby, CEO of OMA and Sue Holliday, Chair of the Planning Institute of Australia, presenting scholarship winner Rachael Attwood with her \$15 000 cheque to fund her research project.

Out there



A new style of accommodation has appeared in the city centre of Berlin with the entire structure being made of billboards.

The single room, 2 star hotel features a cosy interior including electricity, heat and hot water as well as electricity. It is within walking distance of nearly all of Berlin's most significant tourist attractions and will be open from November until March 2008.

For more information click on the link below.

<http://www.etienneboulanger.com/singleroomhotel/>



State round up

National Industry Convention

Plans are underway to host the first national industry convention in more than ten years in Sydney around the middle of next year.

The Outdoor Media Association has commissioned twodeforce to assist with planning and organising the event. The company has an excellent record working with the advertising and media industries in organising major awards' celebrations and other large events.

Trade exhibitions will be included as part of the convention, with a key theme to be around the new audience measurement system, MOVE.

Move to 4 week selling periods

Metropolitan outdoor media operators selling large format and posters will move to four-week selling periods from February 2008.

The move to lunar (28 days) campaigns brings the Australian industry in line with the United States and United Kingdom in the removal of monthly bookings.

It also prepares operators for the launch of the new audience measurement system in the second half of 2008, which will provide data based on weekly to four weekly cycles only.

OMA CEO Helen Willoughby said the change to selling periods was a positive step for the industry.

"Other outdoor media formats, such as street furniture and transit, already sell on weekly cycles," Ms Willoughby said.

"This decision brings consistency to the industry in preparation for the launch of MOVE, our new audience measurement system".

OMA members who will initially change to the new selling period are APN Outdoor, EyeCorp, Network Outdoor and Media Puzzle, GOA Billboards, Independent Outdoor Melbourne (IOM) and Metrospace.

National

Thanks to everyone who provided information to Access Economics to assist them in conducting a national study of the Outdoor Media Industry.

Access commented that we had one of the highest response rates they've received to this type of survey, which means the final results will offer a very comprehensive picture of the economic contribution of the outdoor advertising industry.

This month the OMA received a draft report from Access, which is currently being considered by the OMA and our Board.

The results look very promising, and will be particularly useful for quantifying our industry's employment levels, past and forecast growth, contribution to charities and provision of public infrastructure such as bus and tram shelters.

Access Economics remains on track to deliver this by the end of 2007, at which time the OMA will make a summary of the findings available on our website.

Queensland

The OMA is in the process of finalising a submission to Whitsunday Shire Council with regard to their Draft Planning Scheme. The advertising components in the new planning scheme have a number of conditions which could potentially be inconsistent with the Queensland Government's implementation note.

This month the OMA met with Warwick Shire Council with regard to the signage fee requirements in that local government area. The OMA will continue to work with council through the introduction of new model local laws, potential changes to the Local Government Act and the amalgamation of councils, all of which could impact on the current situation.

Brisbane Council is currently considering moving its advertising and signage rules from local law to the planning scheme. The OMA is currently consulting with the relevant officers, and has provided a number of specific case studies to highlight issues and concerns, which will be considered by council.

In other news, Michael Jackson, the OMA's Queensland Business Manager will be leaving us at the end of 2007

to pursue other interests. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Michael for his outstanding work over the past years.

Victoria

The OMA met with the Victorian Signs Committee and other Government and Council stakeholders on 16 November 2007 to discuss the review of signage components of the Victorian Planning Provisions. The OMA used this as an opportunity to raise a number of issues including appropriate time limits on permits, accommodating street furniture and including commentary about promotional signage in State Planning Framework. The Committee will be making its recommendations to the Victorian Government by the end of 2007.

Useful Links

Please use the following links to access details on other industry inform

The Advertising Federation of Australia
<http://www.afa.org.au/>

Media Federation of Australia
<http://www.mediafederation.org.au/mfa.aspx>

Australian Direct Marketing Association
<http://www.adma.com.au/asp/index.asp>

Australian Association of National Advertisers
<http://www.aana.com.au/>

Advertising Standards Bureau
www.adstandards.com.au

Outdoor Advertising Association of America
www.oaaa.org

Out of Home Marketing Association of Canada
www.omaccanada.ca

Outdoor Advertising Association of Great Britain
www.oaa.org.uk

Outdoor Advertising Association of South Africa
www.oaasa.com

Upcoming events

Marketing Committee Meeting:
3 December 2007

Regulatory Affairs Committee Meeting:
14 December 2007

Occupational Health and Safety Meeting:
11 February 2008

Board meeting:
19 February 2008