

COVID-19 hit every industry hard, right?

We get it. COVID-19 hit everyone and every industry hard. It was a collective trauma and no one sector (except healthcare, of course) should claim to have been hit hardest. But it's also right for us to acknowledge the impact COVID-19 had on Australia's tourism industry (see criteria points), for no other reason than to show how far we, Business Events Australia (BEA), have come to be in the position we're in today. To give you a clearer picture of where we were back in 2021:

- **International border closures:** Australia's international borders remain closed for nearly two years, with Perth eventually having one of the longest border closures in the world (697 days) and Melbourne having the world's longest continuous lockdown (262 days). The BEA team is restricted to a 'dreaming' content program and works to secure long term bids for when borders reopened, effectively putting all major activities on pause until normality has resumed. While Australia's approach to COVID-19 gives international audiences a perception that Australia dealt with the pandemic effectively, it also leaves a lasting impression that Australia is closed for business.
- **Outdated assets:** BEA's brand assets were last refreshed in 2011 – since then, our creative approach has been adopted by competitors, resulting in BEA's assets no longer being differentiated.
- **Hypercompetitive landscape:** Even before COVID-19, our competitors had begun to rival us in terms of their creative and their spending, delivering bigger campaigns than ever before. The result? More tourism agencies fighting harder (and spending more) to win the dollars for business events across our key markets (UK, Europe, North America, South/Southeast Asia, NZ, and China).

This written proposal details how, through inventive and unconventional storytelling, we've been able to achieve our objective of supporting the recovery of business events (BE) visitation and its significant contribution to Australia's economy.

All business events campaigns are the same, right?

When it comes to campaigns, BE destinations promote similar attributes and capabilities creating a sea of marketing sameness. But with our mission to heal the economic damage wrought by COVID-19, and with most of our competitors opening their borders ahead of us, we couldn't afford to be 'business-as-usual'.

As a result, BEA worked with M&C Saatchi to develop, test, and execute a new creative strategy that would sell Australia as a business events destination to both incentive and association decision-makers in key international markets.

The core purpose of the new assets were to a) make audiences feel inspired by Australia at an emotional level and b) help decision-makers rationally understand the depth of product and experiences on offer in Australia.

All business events campaigns are creative, right?

Fast-forward from conception to launch, and 'There's Nothing Like Australia for Business Events' (TNLABE) stands as our most creative campaign ever, a campaign that does things differently in the business events space. Creative highlights include:

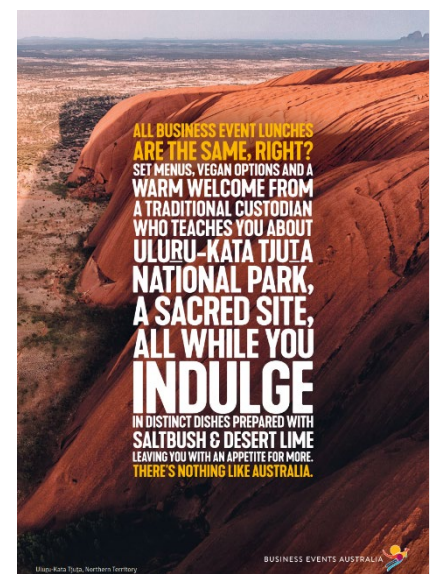
1. Changing the game: Standard, straight-faced BE campaigns promote the various attributes that a BE destination has to offer (e.g., accommodation, venues, facilities, experiences, and unique landscapes, etc.). But when every competitor does the same thing, the space becomes cluttered, and assets simply don't cut through. Rather than continue with this approach, we decided to change the game – bravely, we took the decision to shift the campaign focus away from BE attributes (the kinds of things that all major destinations have and, therefore, an area where no one competitor can have a USP) and onto what makes Australia truly unique.

2. A powerful new narrative: Our new narrative is simple: "Australia has everything you'd expect from a world-class business event destination, plus so much more." Along with iconic architecture and natural wonders, Australia has something utterly unique: Australians – a population infused with the world's oldest culture that has developed a unique, world-renowned character and humour.

3. Introducing ironic humour: The TNLABE campaign assets integrate humour into their messaging style; specifically, a dry and confident wit. This is clearly articulated in our [60s film](#), which sees a selection of industry representatives (waitress, hotelier, chef) deploy irony and understatement to deliberately downplay aspects of Australia's BE offering, only to highlight just how unique those same aspects are. This rhetorical technique captures the laidback, chilled nature of Australians themselves, while conveying their idiosyncratic sense of humour.

Voiceover	Visual
<i>“Business events in Australia are a lot like other places, right? You know, the usual events spaces that overlook the world’s most famous harbour.”</i>	
<i>“Run-of-the-mill accommodation...with kangaroos scooting past.”</i>	
<i>“And of course you already know about the islands; the largest reef, the whitest beaches...The typical things that make up every business event, right?”</i>	

4. ‘Bait and switch’: Ironical humour is also deployed in our print/digital advertisements, which utilise an innovative ‘bait and switch’ technique to imply that Australia is ostensibly like everywhere else, while ultimately illustrating that Australia is, in fact, like nowhere else.



6 ‘bait and switch’ full page ads were created for use in digital and print media

All business events campaigns matter equally, right?

TNLABE not only stands as the most important campaign in BEA’s history, but it is also the most meaningful. Ultimately, the BEA team had to find a better way to tell our story, one which goes straight to the heart of what makes Australia such a unique, inspiring and (dare we say) magical place for business travellers. In doing so, we’ve played a decisive role in restoring BE tourism’s contribution to the Australian economy (see criteria points). But we’ve also delivered other results:

- Driving positive action: After two months, 87% of the target audience reported taking a positive step after seeing the campaign (2022 CDP).

- Driving video engagement: We've seen an impressive average completed video view rate of 25% (vs. industry benchmark of 2.3%) over the two years that the campaign has been running.
- Driving event wins: We've seen increased momentum for event wins, securing 41 wins through our subvention program alone in FY24, valued at \$236m (Source: FY24 BEA's Business Events Bid Fund program).



Thank you for your consideration.