

# Austrade National Brand Project

## Better positioning Australia as a trade and investment partner

### Background

In August 2008 the Ministerial Council on International Trade (MCIT) endorsed the need to develop branding options to better project Australia as a trade and investment destination. The need for a national business brand and a national approach to promoting that brand was also endorsed by the Review of Export Policies and Programs (the Mortimer Review) and the issue was also raised in the Servicing our Future report released in July 2008 by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration.

In addition, business groups have consistently identified the need to exploit Australia's reputation by significantly improving and broadening recognition of Australian expertise in target markets, particularly in Asia. This was highlighted at the Prime Minister's 2020 Summit and has been raised by industry associations among others.

### How is Australia currently perceived?

Australia's 'brand' is a strong one. Overall, the nation performs well in global studies such as FutureBrand's Country Brand Index (number 1 for two years running) and the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index (top 10 since 1995). Impressively, Australia also ranked first out of 104 countries in the 2008 Legatum Prosperity Index that found that the conditions that drive both economic prosperity and personal well being are currently stronger in Australia than any other nation.

The available research shows that Australia is seen by the rest of the world as the 'lucky country'. Australia is one of the most desirable places in the world to live, work and visit and our people are considered to be friendly, hardworking, well paid and educated. On the whole, we enjoy a spectacular natural environment and high quality of life. Factors such as participation in community based activity and high levels of charitable giving have also contributed to a strong social fabric.

With respect to trade and investment and following his 2008 Nation Brands Index, nation branding expert Simon Anholt described Australia as a 'top tier nation brand with a relative weakness in exports'. This finding was supported by FutureBrand's 2008 Country Brand Index which ranked Australia first overall, but not among the top performers for quality products / services, advanced technology, or as an ideal place to do business. Equally, various studies have recognised the entrepreneurial spirit of Australian businesses, and the reputational benefits of good governance, effective regulation and economic stability. These factors are important to Australia's international reputation, particularly in the context of our region and the global economic downturn. They should be leveraged to greater effect.

### The benefits of improving Australia's business reputation

The more highly regarded a nation is, the easier it is to succeed in business, tourism and diplomatic relations. According to Simon Anholt, each country is competing against every other country, not just for visitors but for business, talented people, investment, attention and respect. A strong brand makes it easier for a nation's citizens, governments and businesses to interact with other countries and to take advantage of commercial opportunities as they arise. With this in mind, the Austrade National Brand project is designed to improve the depth and profitability of Australia's participation in the global economy through trade and investment. In the context of the current economic downturn, leveraging the inherent strengths of Australia's international image will support Australian jobs and help our businesses compete more effectively as markets begin to recover and new opportunities arise.

The benefits of a strategic approach to nation branding have been recognised by Governments seeking to advance their commercial and diplomatic priorities. Finland's Jorma Olilla describes a nation brand as being of 'economic importance, but also mental importance as it affects people's identity'. Over recent years, New Zealand, India, South Africa, Abu Dhabi, the United Kingdom, Japan, Korea and Switzerland (to name a few) have focused on defining and promoting their unique qualities to the rest of the world. Each has approached the task differently, but coordination, consistency, simplicity and industry involvement are common themes.

The Austrade National Brand project will focus on understanding how Australia is perceived offshore, defining our most compelling qualities as a trade and investment partner, showcasing them to the countries that are most economically important to Australia and understanding how they add up to a whole that is unique, honest and compelling. Over time, this work will support Australian enterprises engaged in international business by raising awareness of Australia's diverse commercial capabilities and quality as a trade and investment partner.

### Your contribution

In addition to the online survey, if you would like to comment in more detail, we would welcome a written submission covering the following issues, or any others you believe are relevant to the discussion:

- How governments and industry can work together to improve the way Australia is perceived internationally as a trade and investment partner;
  - The types of activities likely to make a meaningful difference to recognition of Australia's commercial capabilities offshore;
  - Unique Australian values that matter most when doing business internationally;
  - Discovering and showcasing the best of Australian capability;
  - Australia's current reputation and branding;
  - The importance of brand consistency;
  - Priority markets for enhanced promotion of Australian goods and services; and
  - Countries that are most effectively 'branding' their business capability.
- Written submissions should be received by no later than Friday 19 June and addressed as follows  
Austrade National Brand Submission, Austrade, GPO Box 5301, Sydney NSW 2001.

