Editorial

Introduction: mapping Australian marketing history

"Marketing has never been a particularly well respected discipline in Australia", declare Roberts and Styles (2001, p. 106). Such indifference, they suggest, is a reflection of Australia's economic development and broader Australian cultural norms. For the greater part of its history, Australia's economy was driven by primary industries, and trade was primarily conducted with Britain. The relative lack of competition provided little impetus for innovative marketing practices. Over the twentieth century, increased tariffs for local manufacturers, depression and war-led austerity collectively resulted in the insatiable appetite of consumers during the post-war boom. However, this boom would also impede local innovation – although not completely as this collection of papers attests. The lack of serious attention being paid to marketing was also consistent with general Australian attitudes. Stating that Australians possess a "'cut the bull shit' mentality", Roberts and Styles contend that such cynicism has meant that marketing has been interpreted "as froth and bubble rather than a systematic way of ensuring alignment between productive capability and user needs" (2001, p. 107). With local consumers and industry leaders sharing a mutual scepticism of marketing's value, it is perhaps unsurprising that Australian marketers faced an uphill battle to gain respect.

Scholarly work on the history of Australian marketing industries and practices has been relatively inconsistent – a situation that reflects marketing's struggle for recognition in Australia and the broader neglect of business history in Australia (Merrett, 2001, p. 103; Fleming *et al.*, 2004, p. 7). It should therefore come as little surprise that no definitive history of marketing in Australia has been published. Of course, this is not to say that Australian marketing history has gone undocumented – far from it. Crawford's (2016) overview of marketing practices in Australia from European settlement in 1788 to the emergence of the marketing profession in the 1960s in the recently published *The Routledge Companion to Marketing History* presents an overdue starting point for scholars seeking to develop a more comprehensive account of Australia's marketing history, whereas Amanda McLeod's (2007) *Abundance* offers a more detailed study of marketing practices during the post-Second World War economic boom. Research on the history of marketing has tended to focus on more specific aspects of marketing practice, notably market research (McNair, 1978; Oakman, 1995; McLeod, 2009; Balnaves and O'Regan, 2011), the evolution of marketing education (Sheedy, 2007; Ellis and Waller, 2011, 2016; Glaser, 2012) and the evolution of the consumer in the second half of the twentieth century (Smith, 2000; McLeod, 2003, 2008, 2009).

Dividing the historical accounts of Australian marketing and marketing practices into the traditional 4Ps (price, product, place and promotion) of the marketing mix offers a clearer overview of the state of research in the field. Studies of "price" have largely been the preserve of economic historians with relatively little attention being paid to marketing issues (McLean, 1999). A more diverse field of scholars have explored the marketing issues pertaining to "product". Economic historians have explored growth and development of Australia's key industries and markets (notably, wool) (Richardson, 2001; Ville, 2005), whereas scholars with an interest in design history have focused on Australia's design heritage (Fry, 1988; Bogle, 1998; Huppatz, 2014). The history brands

and branding is emerging as an area of increasing attention (Khamis, 2009, 2012; Hawkins, 2015; Sanin Santamaria, 2015), with tourism becoming an area of particular interest (Wells, 2009; Greenwood, 2014; Frew and White, 2011; White and Frew, 2013; Harvey *et al.*, 2014). Research concerning "place" has principally focused on the practices and cultures surrounding shopping. The general overviews of shopping in Australia (Kingston, 1994; Barnard, 2015) are complemented by more detailed surveys examining specific sites of consumption, including local department stores (Wolfers, 1980; Reekie, 1993; McArthur, 2013), supermarkets (Humphery, 1998), shopping malls (Bailey, 2011, 2014) and consumer cooperatives (Balnave and Patmore, 2010, 2012). Additional insights into Australia's colonial shopping experiences have stemmed from archaeological research (Crook, 2000; Hayes, 2007). Historical work on "promotion" in the Australian context has paid close attention to advertising. Analyses of advertisements and advertising campaigns have generally been undertaken by scholars working across history (Crawford, 2005; Dickenson, 2012) and media/communication studies (Ward, 1999; McKee, 2001; Young Sally, 2007; Prideaux, 2009), whereas marketing scholars have explored the development of local advertising education (Kerr *et al.*, 2009) and ethics (Waller, 1995, 2012). However, surveys of Australia's advertising industry (Blackburn, 1996; Crawford, 2008) and agency practices (Crawford, 2003; Dickenson, 2016) have primarily been led by historians. As Dickenson (2014) notes in her overview of the historiography in the field, such research is not only revealing new insights into advertising but also broader social and cultural changes. Long overshadowed by advertising, public relations have also attracted increasing attention from historians and public relations scholars alike (Griffen-Foley, 2004; Sheehan, 2009; Gleeson, 2012; Crawford and Macnamara, 2014; Fitch, 2015). Although the scholarship across the marketing mix unearths the foundations of Australia's marketing history, it nevertheless reveals that there is ample room for further work on all aspects of Australian marketing and marketing practice – a task that this collection of papers seeks to undertake.

This special issue of *JHRM* is the latest in a series of special issues that has previously examined marketing history in Canada, Ireland and Italy. Although national in focus, these special issues, nevertheless, reveal the connections between the national and the global, illustrating the degree to which marketing ideas and practices respond to and are informed by national and international forces. The papers in this collection offer a similar perspective. They provide insights into the unique aspects of Australian marketing; yet, they also reveal the ways in which Australian marketing professionals actively connected with the world around them. For Australians, the so-called "tyranny of distance" necessitated the implementation of innovative practices at the local level. Yet, the sense that Australia was far removed from the major commercial centers also led local marketing practitioners to seek out the latest ideas and practices from overseas and, if possible, implement them. Technology would progressively enhance such access and enable Australians to engage more directly with the international colleagues, competitors and markets.

The focus of the papers in this collection conforms to the emphases (and silences) on Australian marketing history. They are therefore loosely divided into three sections: product, place and promotion. The three papers exploring product not only reflect the growing interest in brands and branding but also explore the ways in which brands are imbued with broader ideas – notably, nationhood. Emily Contois, thus, examines

Vegemite, the yeast extract spread, which she describes as "[c]hocolate-like in appearance but with a flavor like nothing else on earth". Her account of the ill-fated attempts to market this iconic Australian product to American audiences unpacks the different ways that brands seek to interact with and reflect discourses of nation. In demonstrating some of the limitations of marketing in promoting brands, Contois' study also provides a timely reminder to marketing historians of the importance of understanding the broader social and cultural context in which brands circulate.

Similar to Contois, Susie Khamis is interested in the way iconic brands are created and recreated. In her contribution to this collection, Khamis considers the Bushells brand and its marketing strategy in the 1980s. As Bushells was being bought out by foreign interests, it increasingly turned to the past as way of reinvigorating its brand. However, as Khamis reveals, Bushells was not interested in documenting its history; its interest in the past lay in its capacity to rewrite it. Arguing that "a heritage identity need not be a faithful reflection of 'history' as such", Khamis charts Bushells' efforts to cast itself as a heritage brand and demonstrates how heritage brands effectively narrate "the past in ways that speak to the present".

Leanne White's study of two Australian political campaigns – the "It's Time" campaign for the Australian Labor Party's 1972 electoral campaign and the "It's Time" campaign that promoted the pro-republican vote in the 1999 – similarly explores the processes involved in creating and recreating brands and the narratives surrounding them. Positioning the nation as a marketable product, White explores the interrelationship between commercial, popular and official expressions of nationalism and illustrates how their interaction contributes "to the total discourse on nationalism and national identity at any given moment in history". In documenting the pioneering 1972 campaign and its lackluster remake, White also underscores the need for marketing historians and, indeed, marketing professionals to pay attention to broader context.

The next two papers in this collection focus on place by examining Australian retail practices in two different periods. Dale Miller and Bill Merrilees seek to highlight the relationship between retail innovation and retail longevity by charting the activities of the David Jones department store in Sydney in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their study focuses on two aspects of the retailer's operations: its new store which opened in 1887 and its cultivation of distinct market for new lines of products and services. Documenting the visits to major European and North American retailing centers and the development of unique innovations at the local level, Miller and Merrilees' study also illustrates the ways Australians responded to the "tyranny of distance".

Matthew Bailey's paper explores the marketing strategies implemented by the Kmart and Target discount department store chains as they entered the Australian market in the 1960s and 1970s. In contrast to the standard trajectory that sees small retailers progressively evolving from small firms into larger firms, the Australian experience outlined by Bailey saw a direct importation of retail models from the USA. Although these links reflect the quickening speed with which Australians could access and implement ideas and concepts from abroad, Bailey's study, nevertheless, underscores the importance of marketing materials devised at the local level and the degree to which they reflect and inform broader strategies.

The final papers in this collection center on promotion in the Australian context. Jackie Dickenson's account of the little-known *Woman's Budget* Bureau offers a unique perspective of promotional activities. Established as a support network for the readers of *Women's Budget*, the Bureau reached out to lonely and isolated women. By connecting the newspaper, its advertisers and fellow consumers, the Bureau also provided readers "with the information they needed to negotiate their roles as producers and consumers". Dickenson's study also illustrates how market devices beyond conventional promotional outlets have contributed to the construction and promotion of consumer culture.

Robert Crawford's paper on the arrival of the multinational agencies J. Walter Thompson and McCann Erickson in Australia brings our attention back to one of the key promotional industries. Crawford's comparison of the similarities and differences in the agencies' respective arrivals and initial operations offers insights into the creation and recreation of global agency networks. In examining the agencies' efforts to strike a balance between being a global entity on the one hand and a national entity on the other, Crawford reveals that they were somewhat less global than they imagined themselves to be.

The final contribution to this collection is Susan Smulyan's paper which appears as a commentary in the "Explorations and Insights" section. Reflecting on her experiences of studying the relationship between Australian and US advertising industries from the western side of the Pacific, Smulyan offers another perspective of Australian marketers and their international connections while outlining some of the broader challenges faced by marketing historians. Although Smulyan notes that the dissonance between Australian perceptions of the USA and US perceptions of Australia effectively "reinscribe[d] old ideas about Americanization", her observations nevertheless remind us that national histories of marketing are intrinsically connected to broader transnational histories. Smulyan notes that there are also other challenges. Observing that "[t]ransnational research means not only searching for evidence around the globe but thinking about what it means when the evidence doesn't exist", Smulyan encourages marketing historians to think as critically about their sources as they do about the information contained in them.

This special issue of *JHRM* grew out of the Australian Research Council-funded project: "Globalizing the Magic System: A History of Advertising Industry Practices in Australia 1959-1989" (DP120100777). As the project brought together scholars from Australia, Britain and the USA to explore the global flow of ideas and staff through advertising networks, it is appropriate that some of this collaborative work would find its way into *JHRM*. Of course, this special issue would not have been possible without the work and support of numerous others. I would, therefore, like to thank the reviewers for their time and insightful suggestions on each paper. I would also like to thank *JHRM*'s editor, Brian Jones, whose patient guidance has supported this special edition from its inception through to its publication.

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