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DEATH DIVIDES AUSTRALIA

In a Morgan Poll conducted two days before this morning's execution of Australian citizen Van Nguyen in Singapore, 47% of Australians agreed Van Nguyen's hanging should be carried out, 46% said it should not and 7% were undecided. Only 27% of Australians believed the penalty for murder should be death – the lowest ever recorded and down 26% since August 1995. Sixty-six percent of Australians said imprisonment and 7% couldn't say. Msn and SMH polls too reflect the country's division over the death penalty, but indicate it's a more complex issue with some bloggers expressing concerns about the inhumanity of the method, rather than the death penalty itself. According to Amnesty International, 122 countries have abolished the death penalty and 72 countries retain it. Last year, at least 3,797 people were executed in 25 countries and at least 7,395 people were sentenced to death in 64 countries. 97% of recorded executions were carried out in China, Iran, Vietnam and the US. Calls to boycott Singapore brands, like its airline, seem symbolic but somehow hypocritical. Should we not boycott US products when 38 states implement capital punishment? In Georgia, home of Coca-Cola, 39 people have been put to death since 1976 and there are currently 112 people on death row. Georgia favours lethal injection, deeming the electric chair "cruel and unusual".

FAME + BADJAR + BRAND = ?

Three of the country's most successful local agencies will merge to form a major new brand in the Sydney market, united by what Monty Noble, CD of Fame Advertising, calls a "no-nonsense approach". Melbourne firm Badjar and The Brand Agency, with offices in Perth, Melbourne, Sydney and Auckland, will acquire equity in Fame. The STW Group, which holds equity in the three agencies, is facilitating the joint venture. STW CEO Russell Tate says the Sydney market is ready for a dynamic new agency and he will be encouraging managers to "give the market a real shake-up". "Most of the international agencies are out of touch with our market and some of the local shops are getting very tired. With the scale this new agency will have from day one and access to the STW network of marketing services companies, there is no reason why it cannot quickly develop into a

major agency in its own right in the Sydney market, at the same time complementing Badjar's and The Brand Agency's Melbourne, Perth and Auckland offerings." The name of the new entity will be announced in the New Year. Peter McAuliffe, currently MD of Fame, will be the founding executive chairman and Monty Noble CD of Fame will take on the role of executive CD. The search is on to fill the MD position.

WIGGLING TO EXPORT WEALTH

Colourful skivvies rubbed shoulders with suits earlier this week at the 42nd Australian Export Awards. Deputy PM and trade minister Mark Vaile named Aussie icon *The Wiggles* as the 2005 DHL Australian Exporter of the Year. Worldwide sales of Wiggles DVDs and videos exceed 17 million and last year *The Wiggles* had over one million fans wiggling at concerts across the globe.

FLICKS FOR COMMENT

Universal Pictures Video has teamed up with film buff and broadcaster, 2GB's Alan Jones to launch an 'Alan Jones Recommends' range featuring some of his personal favourites and other classic movie titles, among them *Phantom of the Opera* and *Scent of a Woman*. The partnership will continue for 12 months, with new ranges launched throughout that period. The range will be supported by POS devised by Sydney creative shop, Pettaras, and a radio campaign on 2GB and other stations nationwide.

THEATRE AT THE CINEMA

Movie-goers in Melbourne may experience a 90-sec interactive cinema ad for Swinburne University of Technology in which a student planted in the audience speaks with on-screen characters. As the romantic beach scene develops, two lovers frolicking in the shallows, the Swinburne plant yells out "Get on with it!" and then discusses the ad with the director. The concept was created by Samuelson Talbot using uni students and director, Richard Franklin. There will be 700 performances during December. So far, audiences have warmed to the idea, cheering and applauding according to marketing manager, Jonathan Russell. Take a look at the ad at www.letsgetonwithit.com.au.

MASTERCARD INTO DEBIT

Using a print and TV campaign, MasterCard is launching a new debit card in WA in conjunction with BankWest. McCann-Erickson's 30-sec TVC communicates the significant advantages debit cards have over EFTPOS, featuring three everyday situations to represent the different benefits of the card. Each scenario has a unique twist portraying that MasterCard debit as anything but ordinary with the end-line: "Something Completely Different from MasterCard: 'Priceless'."

PETROL FUELS ELECTRIC INTEREST

As petrol prices reach record highs, more than 41% of Australians say they would consider buying an electric car, according to Roy Morgan Research Single Source. This figure is up 3% from the June quarter and up 8% from the 2002 September quarter. As Gary Morgan explains: "The general trend follows the fluctuations in petrol prices – as petrol prices drop, so too does the inclination of Australians to purchase an electric car."

COSMOS WINS 3

New science magazine *COSMOS* has been recognised with three Bell Magazine Awards, including the coveted editor of the year and the cover of the year prizes, at the 2005 awards. *COSMOS* was launched in July 2005, billed as a monthly magazine of "ideas, science society and the future" and is produced by Luna Media. More at www.cosmosmagazine.com.

LYNX JET STRIKES TURBULENCE

Coinciding with criticism from women's lobby groups and airline unions, Jetstar has terminated its agreement with Unilever brand Lynx, deeming its content "unsuitable" for the airline's family image. The plan was to use the Lynx-branded Jetstar Boeing 717 to fly young school leavers to schoolies' week on the Gold Coast. The TVC, created by Lowe Hunt and Draft, with the tagline: "Get on. Get off", depicted Lynx hosties pillow fighting and massaging male passengers (*Adbrief 1639*). Spokesperson for Jetstar, Simon Westaway says the themes contravened aviation standards. "We don't think it portrayed the professional aspects of our business and of our staff." The ads and supporting promotions will continue into 2006.

SENSIS CLICK TO CALL TECHNOLOGY

Sensis has become the first company in Australia to trial a new ad technology, providing people searching on sensis.com.au with the option to click on an icon and be connected by phone with that business. Advertisers pay for calls that are connected to their business, providing them with

phone leads, in addition to website hits, and a very measurable return on their investment in this new technology. Alex Parsons, group manager at sensis.com.au, says: "With predictions that the click-to-call market could grow to as much as US\$4bn in 2009 in the US market, we see tremendous growth opportunity and strategic business benefit by becoming an Australian pioneer in this space."

MARKETERS GAME FOR GAMING

New research by University of Queensland Business School student Lars-Peter Schneider and Professor Bettina Cornwell shows gaming is an ideal environment for positive product experiences. "It's a technique that has been widely used in movies," Professor Cornwell says, citing Spielberg's *Minority Report* which was subsidised with \$25m in deals with Nokia, The Gap, and Lexus. "One of the most interesting findings is the potential of interactivity to influence memory. Building in an interactive experience with the product or brand is also easy in the digital game environment and makes computer games an appealing target for marketers." More at www.uq.edu.au/uqexperts.

PEOPLE MOVES

* **Ian Law** has joined **PBL** in the position of chief executive officer of ACP Magazines. Law will report directly to John Alexander, who formerly held both positions of chief executive officer of PBL and ACP Magazines. Law will take up the role when he ceases his current role as MD and CEO of West Australian Newspapers Holdings Ltd, a position he has held since February 2002. West Australian Newspapers Holdings Ltd also holds a 50/50 joint venture with Publishing and Broadcasting Ltd in Hoyts Corporation. Law is also currently chairman of the joint venture management board, which was formed in March 2005 on acquisition of the Hoyts business.

* **Matthew Turl** is heading to **Zenith Media Malaysia** as chief operating officer, leaving his role at the recently merged WPP-owned Zenith Media/Mediacom agency, effective Dec 8. Turl, currently Mediacom business director and managing partner of its econometrics division, ROI Bureau, had been with Zenith for nine years before its merger with Mediacom. No replacement has been announced.

* **Sensis** has appointed **Alex Parsons** as the group manager of search engine, sensis.com.au. He will be responsible for increasing the number of unique visitors to sensis.com.au, commercialisation and future revenue opportunities. Before joining Sensis, Parsons worked most recently as product director at eBay, Australia & New Zealand.

GLOBAL SNIPPETS

* Online searches for “**bird flu**” have increased by more than 450% in the US, following the outbreak of the bird flu in south-east and central Asia and Europe, and fears the virus will spread to the US. Another site which has seen an increase in traffic as a direct result of the outbreak is the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website (www.cdc.gov), which hosts the latest information regarding the virus. In the two weeks before Oct 15, the site’s share of visits increased by 18%. Bill Tancer, GM of Global Research at Hitwise says: “It will be interesting to see if this concern has any impact on online travel research to Europe and Asia in the coming weeks.” (*Hitwise.com* Nov issue)

* With **video games** becoming mainstream ad vehicles and marketers expected to spend \$185.6 million on ads in games in 2005, figuring out what kind of ads gamers will accept is becoming crucial. (*AdAge.com* 28/11)

* For all the changes that have rippled across the holiday retail landscape in recent decades, statistics indicate that consumers have remained remarkably consistent in their **Christmas-shopping attitudes** and behaviour. (*AdAge.com* 28/11)

* If Sharon Stone can’t revive your brand, what hope is there? Several years of advertising campaigns designed to pump Hollywood celebrity excitement into the **Gap’s** sagging brand image have not gone well, according to industry analysts and the retailer’s own declining sales numbers. (*AdAge.com* 29/11)

* Record numbers of consumers in the US never left their homes on Black Friday, the official start of the holiday shopping season. Instead, they flocked online in greater numbers than last year, according to new research released by **Nielsen/NetRatings**. (*AdAge.com* 29/11)

* **Hewlett-Packard** is reviewing up to US\$2bn of ad business as it sweeps away the corporate-branding vision favoured by the deposed CEO Carly Fiorina. (*AdAge.com* 29/11)

* **Sony’s magical Balls** spot, by MJZ director Nicholai Fuglsig, has chalked up its first win, picking up best in show at the **YoungGuns Awards** in Sydney last Friday. Along with the two further gold Bullets, it means Fallon London pipped Crispin Porter + Bogusky to the agency of the year award, after the US agency had looked set to win for its Counterfeit Mini campaign and strong showing in the Cyberactive categories. Balls also saw Fallon creative Juan Cabral win YoungGun of the year 2005. Of the four other golds awarded, Crispin Porter + Bogusky’s Counterfeit Mini picked up one, as did its Party Poker online game in the cyberactive category. The outdoor gold went to McCann Erickson Malaysia’s Bubble for PlayStation. Saatchi

& Saatchi also picked up network of the year for the second time (it first won in 2003), following its win in the same category at AWARD three weeks ago (*Adbrief 1640*). In the student award, Menno Kluin of the Miami Ad School in Hamburg won for his Hubba Bubba print campaign. Menno works at Saatchi & Saatchi New York. A full list of winners is at www.ygaward.com (*Shots.net* 30/11)

* The pressure of gas prices and unrest in Iraq has impacted on the **luxury car** market. Luxury vehicle sales, long considered invulnerable to a sluggish economy, are showing surprising signs of weakness. (*AdAge.com* 30/11).

WALKLEYS ANNOUNCED

The 50th anniversary of the Walkley Awards were held yesterday (December 1), broadcast on SBS and featuring luminaries of the media industry. Details can be found at www.walkleys.com.

VIRGIN MONEY GOES TO BWM

Virgin Money has chosen Belgiovane Williams Mackay to handle its advertising, following a review of partner relationships, ending its 2½-year relationship with iLeo. BWM will handle both above and below the line advertising for the Virgin Credit Card, Virgin Super and any potential new product launches during the next six months. Virgin Money will continue to work with Starcom as its media agency and NetX as its online agency.

2005 FREE TV ROUND-UP

Slightly more people are watching TV in 2005, with viewing levels up 2% over the past five years. Free TV dominates share of viewing, accounting for 88% of metro nightly viewing (6pm to midnight), while pay TV’s 100+ channels make up 12%. In its latest release, Free TV says “fragmentation is a fact of life in all media [but] Free TV is still attracting huge numbers of people. An average of 10 million Australians watch Free TV on any given night. Each week, Free TV reaches 90% of Australians”. In the 12 months to 30 June 2005, advertisers spent more than \$3.2bn on Free TV, up 8% on the prior year.

GOLF FOR AUSSIE WOMEN

A national golf magazine dedicated to women has launched on the Gold Coast, with sunshine state gal and morning show host Kerri-Anne Kennerley on its cover. *Australasian Women’s GOLF* is a glossy, lifestyle title from Reflections Media, publisher of a range of boating, exhibition and travel magazines. Foundation advertisers include Ian Baker-Finch, Adidas, Revlon and golf courses around the country. More at www.reflectionsmedia.com.au.

MEDIAPORT TAKES ON THE WORLD

Former Prime TV sales executive John Bryden has big plans for his Mediaport agency. Already established in Melbourne and Sydney, he plans to open offices in Hong Kong, Singapore and Seoul. Mediaport is linked to Starcom. Starting as a media buying company, Mediaport has branched out to graphic design, PR and events. Joining as a consultant is former group sales manager of TEN Melbourne, Matt Tryell. More at www.mediaport.com.au.

VIC MASTER MEDIA UP FOR GRABS

Tender applications are invited for suitably qualified agencies to handle the Victorian state master media contract. Applicants must be able to supply media planning, purchasing, placement and related services. Closing date is early February and all the big boys of Melbourne media will no doubt be submitting. More at www.tenders.vic.gov.au.

AUTOBARN MOTORS TO BCA

Auto accessory franchise Autobarn has appointed Melbourne agency BishopCunliffe to handle its national advertising and media placement effective January 1, 2006. BishopCunliffe will work with Autobarn's marketing team to review its current market position and manage the brand as the national retailer grows.

SHORT BLACK SERVED UP AT CAFÉS

Targeting caffeine connoisseurs is a new approach to custom publishing. *The Short Black Book* was developed by Bellamyhayden in collaboration with Haymarket Bespoke to help its client Sunbeam deepen its connection with consumers in the home coffee machine market. *The Short Black Book* has been available in over 1,000 cafes nationally from Thursday Dec 1, with distribution of 100,000 copies handled by Bellaroma, Toby's Estate and Avant Cards. Led by Shane Mitchell, the team at Haymarket Bespoke has created "the quintessential café read, from the ground up". The magazine was built around the idea of "inside and expert knowledge, with sections covering the home, career, wine and dining, relationships, and of course, coffee".

CONVERGENCE WORTH A TRILLION

Deloitte forecasts that convergence will have a substantial financial impact on the technology, media and telco (TMT) sector, generating over a trillion dollars in revenues between now and the end of the decade, according to its new report *Digital Convergence: The Trillion Dollar Challenge*. The

report asserts that a wealth of convergence products and services is emerging from online music to Internet Protocol (IP) appliances. Each of these offerings satisfies a real customer need – and most are already generating real revenue and earnings. Some of the most significant converged services are expected to be from Voice over IP with some industry analysts forecasting \$1 trillion in revenue by 2010. Internet Protocol (IP) appliances which will include next-generation digital music players, home entertainment services, home video phones and enterprise collaboration services will also generate revenue." For a copy of the report, visit www.deloitte.com.au.

WOM CONFERENCE SAYS INTEGRATE

The first international conference on word-of-mouth held in Hamburg in November stressed that WOM campaigns produce better results when integrated into a company's marketing strategy and are in synch with brand values. As well as advising marketing to plan for WOM to fit into the purchasing cycle by creating awareness, getting consumers interested and convincing them to act, two recommendations emerged: "Involve employees – meaning start with the people who live your brand every day as they're the best evangelists you have; and Be open – encourage company blogs and treat all negative feedback as you would do any complaint – recognise the problem, inform blog visitors about policies and planned improvements and emphasise your commitment to use their input. This will seed trust and reduce the likelihood of bloggers attacking your brand". More information from Forrester Research by emailing dana@infinitycomms.com.au.

COMPLAINTS DON'T GET THROUGH

TMI's new national survey of complaint culture in Australia shows customer complaints are still not being dealt with effectively. In fact, most dissatisfaction goes unreported. Only 44% of customers said they complained "more than half the time" when they were unhappy with a product or service. A lack of time and doubt that anything will be done anyway remain the key reasons why discontent is not expressed. While 67% of customers who have a good experience say they are very likely or quite likely to tell other people, 79% say they are very likely to tell other people when they've had a bad experience. Feedback from frontline staff, call centres and team leaders continues to highlight the need for skills training in handling complaints, and in particular coaching to help staff respond to customer criticism. Full report from TMI www.tmiaust.com.au.

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