

# “Men, Money, and Markets”: An Overview of Marketing in Australia in the Interwar Period

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At the launch of his party's campaign in the 1925 election, Stanley Melbourne Bruce, Australia's Prime Minister, declared that 'Australia's problem of development is bound up in the three great essentials ... Men, Money and Markets'. Calling for greater immigration and investment from Britain as well as greater access to British markets, Bruce sought to tighten Australia's connection with the centre of the British Empire. Bruce would go on to explain that the 'greatest of these is ... markets', adding that his government would work to 'secure for Australia those markets which are necessary for her today and which her expanding production will increasingly demand'. To underscore his achievements in this field, the Prime Minister highlighted his Government's creation of Export Control Boards which 'ensured the more orderly marketing of our produce, continuity of supply, and retention of the identity of Australian production'. While Bruce's words and actions revealed a growing understanding of the importance of marketing, overviews of marketing's history in Australia have tended to commence their overviews in the long consumer boom of the 1950s and 1960s. As such, they have failed to recognise marketing's broader historical roots in Australia.

In order to present an insight into Australian marketing practices prior to the post-war boom, this paper will focus on two aspects of Bruce's maxim – men and markets. The call for greater immigration was hardly new. Australia's distance from Britain, the competition posed by other destinations, and the 'convict stain' of its penal colony origins had all served to hinder the flow of 'suitable' migrants to Australia. As wartime experiences had highlighted Australia's vulnerability, the need to attract migrants to help develop primary and secondary industries led the Commonwealth government to invest greater amounts in marketing Australia. Such initiatives not only sought to generate greater awareness of Australia, but also facilitating the migration process. They also sought to reach tourists and investors.

Increased immigration would facilitate the realisation of Bruce's vision of the expansion of export and domestic markets. While Britain had long been the primary destination for Australian exports such as wool and dried fruit, Australia nevertheless faced intense competition in the British market. By investing in a range of marketing strategies, Australian wool and dried fruits traders sought to establish a greater presence in a crowded marketplace. Domestically, Bruce envisaged that the increased tariff on imported goods would enable local industry to compete on an equal footing. It was hoped that such competition would enhance consumption. As competition intensified, manufacturers such as Cadbury paid greater attention to marketing matters and tailored their operations accordingly.

Based on newspaper reports and contemporary documents, this paper will not only provide a unique insight into the status of marketing and its development in Australia during the interwar decades, it will demonstrate that the marketing's history in the region long precedes the consumer boom of the 1960s.

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