

SECOND CONVENTION OF ADVERTISING MEN OF AUSTRALASIA:
A MILESTONE IN AUSTRALIA'S MARKETING HISTORY

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The second convention of Advertising Men of Australasia was held over six days between 29 August to 3 September 1920 and attended by more than ninety official delegates from Australia and New Zealand, with total attendance of members of affiliated organisations being over 300. The Convention held a number of sessions divided into: (a) Business Sessions - discussing past and future developments in the industry; (b) Departmental Sessions - "Advertising Agencies", "Advertising Service" and "Advertising Media"; and (c) General Sessions - "Advertising Influences for Moral Uplift," "Social Aspects of Advertising" and "Economic Functions of Advertising". The list of speakers was impressive with many well known practitioners, including Norman Catts, George Paton, Ralph Maynard and Hugh Paton, and respected academics, like Elton Mayo, Meredith Atkinson, and Tasman Lovell. The Convention's motto was "Truth in Advertising" and its objective was to "raise the status of advertising, to declare its principles, and to improve its practice."

A number of important bodies were formed as a direct or indirect result of the Sydney Convention. The most important of these was the establishment of the Advertising Association of Australia and New Zealand, the first national body of the advertising industry in Australia. Conflicts between different parties and the depression resulted in the Association losing a lot of support but it was the predecessor to the Australian Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA). Other bodies included the Vigilance Committee and the Better Business Bureau, marking the beginning of official self-regulation, and the Federal Education Board which established a Certificate and a Diploma in Advertising to create a standard of qualification within the industry.

The Second Convention of Advertising Men of Australasia was recognised at the time as a significant event and was successful in trying to raise the status and standing of advertising in the community. The marketplace had been in a state of change and Australian business was at last ready to listen to discussion on the importance of advertising. This was the first real gathering of advertising practitioners, advertisers, media and academics to discuss issues relating to the marketing of goods and specifically the advertising profession. The main issues were recognising the professional status of advertising, setting acceptable standards of practice and establishing a standard of education. The formation of a number of state and national bodies and their relative success in the business community have marked the 1920 Sydney Convention as a milestone in Australia's Marketing History.