

13 May 2013, **Tonga launches a new tourism marketing campaign in New Zealand and Australia on 12 May, featuring advertising on television and outdoor billboards in New Zealand, and online advertising for both countries.** Using the tagline "the True South Pacific", the campaign has been designed to show the unique aspects of Tonga and the wide range of holiday options available

across the 176 islands that make up Tonga. Running through May and June, the campaign will raise awareness and offer holiday options just as Kiwis and Aussies make decisions about their winter South Pacific holidays.

Tonga's Minister for Commerce and Tourism and Labour, Hon Dr Viliami Latu said it was an exciting time for Tonga's tourism sector, and this new campaign demonstrated the Tongan government's commitment to boosting tourism development. "Tourism is our government's top priority for economic development and the potential here is vast. But recent market research shows awareness of Tonga as a holiday destination is relatively low, so investing in this profile-building campaign is an essential part of our plans to boost tourism growth", he said.

Dr Latu said over the past two years Tonga had been working hard on tourism development, with the support of the New Zealand Aid Programme and the campaign was a further step-up in activity. "We have focused on improving the quality of the visitor experience, and now have an accommodation grading scheme, Tonga Mark, to give assurance to visitors and to travel agents who sell Tonga holidays he said. This year we will extend the grading scheme into transport, taxis and attractions. A new domestic airline, Real Tonga, has commenced operations and is slowly expanding services to the Outer Islands.

Tonga Launches New Tourism Marketing Campaign

Monday, 13 May 2013 16:40 - Last Updated Wednesday, 15 May 2013 22:19

"A variety of changes are being put in place to improve Tonga's efficiency in managing tourism and to make Tonga a more attractive destination. We are in the middle of developing a Tourism Road-map, to direct the development of tourism over the next 10 years, and this project is due for completion by June. We are about to pass new regulations to better manage the whale watch sector. Tonga is one of only three countries in the world where visitors can swim with whales so it is vital we manage the visitor experience well and protect the whales themselves. Legislation controlling marriage was also being investigated to see if we can make things easier for visitors and open up the weddings market for Tonga.

Dr Latu said that access to Tonga was easy and inexpensive. "With a flight time of 2 hours 45 minutes Tonga is the closest Pacific destination to New Zealand, and is only a 4 hour direct flight from Australia. Tonga is not as developed as some other South Pacific countries, so we offer visitors a truly authentic South Pacific experience he said. The campaign will show those unique sides of Tonga and will also offer holiday packages at a great price he said.

Tonga Tourism Campaign Facts

Market Focus: New Zealand (primary), Australia (secondary). Over 70% of Tonga's air arrivals come from New Zealand and Australia - 48% from New Zealand, 22% from Australia

Timing: Launches 12 May and runs until 29 June. Promotes travel to Tonga in the pre-peak season holiday purchase period

Creative: Destination Campaign with creative based around Tonga's branding as the 'True South Pacific'.

Channels: TV, Outdoor, Online

Television commercial schedule on TV1, TV2 and TV3 (initially a 30-second brand ad for Tonga, and 15-second ads including call to action commercial with package is added in Week

2.

Online advertising NZ and Australia, Yahoo and MSN

Outdoor billboards. 25 billboards at key Auckland city locations and main arterial routes

Bus back ads on Auckland Airport bus route. 4 buses

Youtube channel and Tonga's tourism website feature a 60- second version of the television commercials.

EDM destination awareness competition targeting to New Zealand travel agents

Support: 'Special' Air fares linking to Campaign from Air New Zealand and Virgin Australia, call to action packages from Go Holidays, Harvey World Travel

ENDS

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