MARKETING

The 2006 Rugby calendar provided fans with more opportunities to engage with Rugby than ever before.

The inaugural Tooheys New Super 14 kicked off the year, providing an extra two weeks of competition and more matches for fans to watch each week, either at the ground or on TV. Crowds were strong with more home games for fans to attend, including an extra two local derby matches. TV audiences were also strong with more people tuning in to watch Super Rugby throughout the season.

The extended Rugby season also saw more Test matches on offer with an extended Tri Nations series following the regular inbound series. Test matches were hosted in four capital cities ensuring that Rugby was available to fans in many markets.

The increased calendar of Rugby proved to strengthen fans' interaction with the game throughout the year, building a solid platform from which to expand in 2007.

2006 HIGHLIGHTS

- Record crowds attend Super 14 matches in Australia, with cumulative crowds of 624,000 across 26 matches.
- The extended Super 14 saw an extra 54 hours of live Super Rugby coverage.
- Audience reach on Fox Sports increased 7%, to 2.5 million viewers across the 2006 Super 14 season.
- The Western Force had a strong inaugural year with average crowds of 28,500.
- Cumulative Test match crowds were 300,600, the third highest on record.
- Channel Seven's free to air coverage of the Bundaberg Rum Rugby Series reached 6.4 million viewers, while Fox Sports saw record Rugby ratings throughout the Series.
- The Sweeney Winter Sports report showed interest levels in Rugby of 41% of Australians aged 16-54.
- Participation grew 9.5% to 196,000 players.
- A Brand Health measure, which allows us to segment our fans and provide a more in-depth understanding of their interest levels, attitudes and how this drives interaction and engagement, was developed.

TOOHEYS NEW SUPER 14

"Bigger, Brighter Rugby" TVC

The inaugural Tooheys New Super 14 and the introduction of two new teams to the competition provided a unique opportunity for the SANZAR nations to work together. For the first time, the Australian Rugby Union (ARU), New Zealand Rugby Union and South African Rugby Union worked together on a joint brand campaign. This saw the development of the "Bigger, Brighter Rugby" television commercial and media campaign.

The objective of the campaign was to successfully launch the Super 14 tournament using a bold and dynamic approach. The creative saw a player from each Super 14 franchise appear in the TVC, with a particular focus on the players from the two new Super 14 franchises – the Western Force (Australia) and Cheetahs (South Africa).

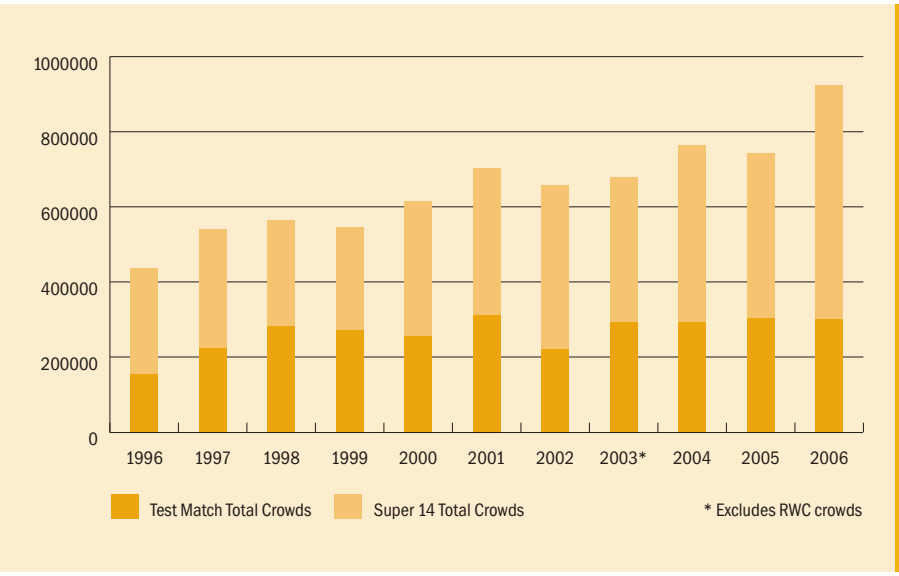
The brand positioning for Super 14 is that it is 'more than just a game of Rugby', it is a total sports entertainment package and it should be considered the premium choice in a mass entertainment market. The creative was designed to entice fans with the promise of even more exciting and entertaining Rugby.

Interestingly, the TVC was filmed in Kiev after the completion of the 2005 Spring Tour. Given the schedules of the players and production costs in the Ukraine, it was more cost effective to film in Europe, where the players were already visiting. The TVC was used in each SANZAR country and was successful in launching the inaugural Super 14.

SEASON LAUNCH

To coincide with the start of the new brand campaign, Tooheys New and the ARU held an event in Martin Place in Sydney's CBD to launch the inaugural tournament. The event was held on 3 February – a week out from the start of the tournament.

ARU Managing Director & CEO Gary Flowers officially launched the season and Fox Sports' Russell Fairfax and Luke Elvy hosted a series of interviews



To coincide with the start of the new brand campaign, Tooheys New and the ARU held an event in Martin Place in Sydney's CBD to launch the inaugural tournament.

with players from each Australian Super 14 team. Afterwards, a number of light-hearted activities gave fans the opportunity to interact with the players, including joining them on the 'try slide'.

BUNDABERG RUM RUGBY SERIES

A key focus of the marketing activities for the 2006 Bundaberg Rum Rugby Series was to build fan engagement. The Series was promoted under an umbrella theme of "6 Games, 5 Trophies – The Pride of a Nation.", as well as match specific promotional themes, including:

- England – Best of Mates... Greatest of Rivals
- Ireland – Luck of the Irish
- South Africa – Stop the Bok
- New Zealand – Top 10 Bledisloe Moments

Throughout the Series, fans were encouraged to get behind the Qantas Wallabies and show their support through activities such as the "Qantas Fan of the Match" and "Qantas Fan of the Series" promotions.

In addition, there was a move away from the event-only marketing activity at each Test match, to a series of marketing activities in the week leading up to the match. These activities helped to build excitement around the matches and gave fans the opportunity to participate in events outside the match itself.

In his first year as national coach, John Connolly provided a unique opportunity for fans to access a Wallabies training session in each host city. Fans were invited to a Wallabies' training session followed by an informal signing and photo opportunity. A junior Rugby club promotion was run in-conjunction with these sessions, providing a young fan (and their Rugby team) in each city with the opportunity to meet their favourite Wallaby and attend the following Saturday's Test match.

The open training sessions were followed by player appearances on the Wednesday prior to each Test match. These appearances provided more opportunities for fans to engage with the players. Events were hosted in high traffic areas ensuring maximum brand exposure.

Marketing activities in each market were supported by partnerships with News Limited and radio networks Nova and Austereo. News Limited newspapers provided at least two promotional activities in each market around key timings of Tickets on Sale and then again in the lead up to each Test match. Nova and Austereo ran on air promotions and street activities supporting the Test match schedule and associated fan activities.

FESTIVAL OF RUGBY – GOLDING BRISBANE

Brisbane hosted two Test matches in as many weeks during the 2006 Bundaberg Rum Rugby Series. To support this two-week festival of Rugby, the Australian Rugby Union produced and distributed 1,500 "golding kits" to retailers in and around the Brisbane CBD area. The kits included "Go Wallabies" posters, flags and bunting for retailers to use to decorate their stores.

A Bledisloe Cup Passport for tourists was developed in partnership with Brisbane Marketing to offer intra-state and inter-state tourists with special offers from the Brisbane market.

SUNCORP BLEDISLOE CUP ROADSHOW

To celebrate the Bledisloe Cup's return to Queensland after ten-years, Suncorp and the ARU took the Cup to as many Queenslanders as possible through the Suncorp 2006 Bledisloe Cup Roadshow.

The 12-day event, saw over 5,000 children participate in Rugby-themed activities, with more than 2,000 of them having their photo taken with the iconic trophy.

The Roadshow was supported by a dedicated website section, local media opportunities at each location and other online marketing campaigns.

PARTICIPATION & COMMUNITY RUGBY MARKETING

The year began with the distribution of the 2006 Welcome to Rugby pack to junior clubs throughout Australia. The packs

included promotional materials such as Wallaby posters and stickers, as well as recruitment posters and flyers to support clubs' local recruitment activities.

The Ready for Rugby Promotion, an initiative aimed at rewarding junior clubs for their time and commitment to the game, was offered again in 2006. The promotion gave clubs the opportunity to win a range of prizes for innovative recruitment marketing activities.

TryRugby and EdRugby, the ARU's leading community and school based programs, continued to bring new kids and families to the game in 2006. In conjunction with the State Unions and local clubs, both print and online marketing materials were produced to support localised marketing campaigns for 39 TryRugby centres throughout the country.

Marketing support continued for the EdRugby program to engage school children in the game through a number of on and off field initiatives. 2006 saw the launch of EdRugby's "Spirit of Rugby" program and the expansion of the EdRugby Walla Challenge.

The Test season also provided a key focus for marketing activities, with EdRugby's Promoting Values in Sport forums for school children held in each Test match city as well as the rugby-themed activities held as part of the Suncorp 2006 Bledisloe Cup Roadshow.

ONLINE MARKETING

Throughout 2006 the Australian Rugby Union's website, www.rugby.com.au, continued to develop as a key portal through which fans engage with the game.

We continued our association with online sports news provider Sportal to supplement existing ARU official news, match and ticketing information. In particular, Sportal provided match previews and reviews, updated player profiles, photo galleries and live online scoring during matches.

This content was complemented with up to five minutes of post match highlights of the four Australian Super 14 teams' matches throughout the inaugural Tooheys New Super 14 tournament and the Qantas Wallabies 2006 Test series and Spring Tour.

The 12-day event, saw over 5,000 children participate in Rugby-themed activities, with more than 2,000 of them having their photo taken with the iconic trophy.

As a result, there was a continued increase in website traffic with page impressions up by 49.1% on average and unique visitors by 30% providing a strong platform from which to expand in 2007.

UNDERSTANDING OUR CUSTOMERS

In 2006, the ARU commissioned a piece of customer focused research. The objective of the research was to develop a deeper understanding of our customers, their interest levels, attitudes, interactions and engagement levels. The research segmented our fans into unique groups and will allow us to understand how they interact with Rugby and what attitudes drive their behaviour. This will allow us to deliver a more targeted and engaging marketing and Rugby program.