

Creative minds think alike

While much has been made of the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and the economy, some have seen a silver lining in an opportunity for introspection, the building of state pride and a reset of attitudes towards Western Australia's place nationally.

by Ben Ashley

Hard hit by the fallout of government-imposed restrictions themselves, Dav Tabeshfar and Bryan Dennis, the founders of creative agency &Partners, sought to put their time and talent to good use.

"The advertising and the production industry is suffering because of COVID-19," Mr Tabeshfar said. "Everyone has hit pause on their projects, so a lot of us have got some time on our hands.

"We just had one of those days where you realise, this is the perfect opportunity to turn a crisis into something useful."

That something useful turned out to be a 70-second film coordinated and put together by a crack team of Western Australia-based creatives, assembled by Beautiful Pictures Producer Kate Downie and Open Spaces Productions Producer Beatrice Masia, with creative strategy by Perth Advertising and Design Club President Josh Edge.

The campaign's mission? To Revive WA.

The Revive WA commercial, a pledge to 'being the best damn WA tourist you can be', was the answer to the question 'what happens when you enlist 40 of the state's best production professionals to work together, entirely pro bono?'

"That's music composers, editors, voiceover artists, actors, scriptwriters – you've got this incredible piece of creative pulled together by the goodwill of the advertising and production industry in WA," Mr Tabeshfar said, the actual cost of the commercial estimated to be north of \$450,000.

The purpose of the campaign is two-fold – revive the fortunes of the WA regional tourism industry by giving some much-needed love to towns across the state, and highlight the quality of work WA can produce because, as it happens, much of the creative work commissioned by the heavyweights is not actually made here.

"It absolutely cripples our film and advertising industries," Mr Tabeshfar said. "It's always been a sticking point for us, the amount of work WA businesses and the government have been sending to eastern states agencies."

The result is young talent will migrate over east to seemingly greener pastures and thus the cycle begins again. But one thing Mr Tabeshfar is certain of is the standard of WA creative work has never been in question.

"The sad thing is some of the work that's done here is just better," he said. "It's a really good breeding ground for great talent. But if we don't support the industry here, they'll be nothing and we'll forever be dependent on eastern states agencies or overseas resources."



Dav Tabeshfar

Roles Creative Director and Senior Writer at &Partners.

Studied Bournemouth University.

Worked Sessional Lecturer at Curtin University; Tutor at AWARD School; Creative Director at JWT; Senior Writer at 303 MullenLowe.



Mr Tabeshfar and the Revive WA team have even opened a dialogue with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to bring creativity home.

"We are in the process of discussing with them how we can make sure more WA business stays in WA," he said.

The Revive WA commercial has so far amassed a staggering 2000 shares and more than 250,000 views. Branded by local agency Block Branding, the campaign has since expanded, with a host of tools created for local businesses so they can promote their local credentials. Free downloadable kits include posters, digital badges and pre-made social media posts, while a line of Revive WA merchandise allows consumers to do their bit.

To date, the campaign has been a resounding success, with glowing feedback from the public, tourism operators and town councils alike. The seed of that short commercial has grown into something beyond tourism, advertising and film production, becoming instead a call to arms which touches every aspect of WA life, according to Mr Tabeshfar.

There are lofty plans for where to take Revive WA, however, the next step is to secure sorely needed funding.

"So far, we've donated everything, including our time," Mr Tabeshfar said. "We've all put in hundreds of hours – me and Bryan, Kate's company Beautiful Pictures and Beatrice's Open Spaces Productions. And obviously we have to refocus on our own businesses at some point.

"Once we get our hands on some funding, we can actually devote proper time to helping this recovery."

For local businesses who want to get involved, Mr Tabeshfar said to check out the Revive WA website at revivewa.com.au.

"Download the kits and put your posters up, buy the merch and lobby your state member of Parliament to change procurement laws to support WA businesses." ●