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# Oprah shares the love, and the sponsors, on Aussie trip

**OPINION**  
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OPRAH loves to share the love. And like just about everything else on her Australian talkshows, the love was sponsored, too.

All 6000 punters at the first of two episodes taped in the forecourt of the Sydney Oprah House went home with a gift voucher for a commemorative pearl necklace, courtesy of Kailis jewellers.

Another 6000 at the second show will each be given a one-off white gold necklace shaped in an "O" and featuring seven diamonds, including a rare pink Argyle diamond mined from Rio Tinto's operations in Western Australia's Kimberley region.

Every student and teacher from a school featured in one segment went home to a new laptop, courtesy of a \$1 million gift to Canterbury Boys High bankrolled by Microsoft and Hewlett Packard.

One couple, Kristian and Rachel Anderson, were told to stop worrying about the bills piling up from the husband's cancer treatment because they were going home with a cheque for \$250,000, thanks to Xbox Australia, which was throwing in two Xboxes for their kids. too.

Guests taking part in Oprah Winfrey's great Australian adventure were rewarded with mentions of their own commercial ventures.

Russell Crowe's thriller *Next Three Days* opens in cinemas in the new year.

Bindi Irwin's *Wildlife Adventures* is in book stores now and

the Irwin family is thinking about expanding its Australia Zoo to Los Angeles.

Rapper Jay-Z got a big rap for his autobiography *Decoded*, which Oprah has helped to propel up the New York Times best-seller list.

Bon Jovi's greatest hits is out now.

Sponsors were ecstatic, too.

Qantas chief executive Alan Joyce, whose airline helped to fly 302 lucky audience members and 18 tons of equipment from America, had no doubt the venture was the "best marketing expenditure we could make" and "probably one of the best tourism initiatives Australia will ever make".

Other Oprah partners, including Chevrolet, Motorola, American Express, Intercontinental Hotels, Telstra, Kraft Foods and the Sydney Opera House, were thought to be similarly pleased.

Governments were also smiling.

Federal Tourism Minister Martin Ferguson said the "small" taxpayer investment of about \$5 million to bring Oprah Down Under had already produced a publicity-related benefit of \$71 million in Australia and \$14 million in the US.

Oprah was overjoyed, too.

She said she had never experienced such a welcome in 25 years of filming a talkshow now syndicated to 145 countries on all continents.

She described how the "big ego trip" of her own giant O being lit

up on Sydney's harbour bridge brought tears to her eyes.

"I sit in my hotel room and think, 'That is my O.'" she said.

"I wait for the sun to go down and my O to come up."

Her Ultimate Australian Adventure was also her ultimate Australian commercial, featuring one tourist icon after another.

She described the four hour-long shows she filmed in Australia as "four hours of love festival" which would produce an "immeasurable" benefit for the country.

She told the cameras "I love Australia" three times in succession, just in case anyone missed the first two.

She led the crowd in a chant of "Aussie Aussie Aussie".

Oprah said Australians had taught her to "work to live" rather than live to work, like many Americans.

"The show has become my life," she said.

"I forgot to have a life — no complaints — but I want to have more work-life balance like you Aussies have."

That is unlikely to happen any time soon, as she is winding up her talkshow to launch her own television network.

She must hope it proves as successful as her Australian jaunt.

Because no matter how much commercialism intruded, at the end of the day everyone went home happy.