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Cringing over clichés

The word is out: Australians are so over clichés. There's no question that we love to hate them. Yet having said that, we use them in droves, big time. In this cutting edge national survey Social Researcher Mark McCrindle give us the big picture on clichés and sheds some light on why we just can't get over them. So how good is that?

What's the go?

Assessing Australians' attitudes towards clichés, the most prevalent response was that they are annoying and—even though most of us admit to using them from time to time ourselves—they are generally seen as something to be avoided.

Who and where to avoid

Although the workplace was identified as the most common place to hear clichés being used frequently, this was not because of employers or managers. In fact, the top three worst offenders (i.e. those who are seen as being frequent users of annoying clichés) were deemed to be those in the entertainment industry (e.g. TV show hosts, commentators, etc.), politicians and teenagers—in that order.

Australia, here are your Top Ten most annoying clichés!

General clichés

You've heard them all before... perhaps you've even used them yourself? Either way, Australia has spoken and these are the clichés we love to hate.

1. At the end of the day
2. Let's do lunch
3. It's not rocket science
4. 24/7
5. Calling to touch base
6. Bring it on
7. Don't get me started
8. As you do
9. Tell me about it
10. Your call may be recorded for training purposes

Political clichés

Politicians are rarely short of something to say, possibly because they are the 2nd biggest offender in terms of using annoying clichés. Here's a page or two out of their lexicon:

1. Working families
2. Not ruling anything in or out
3. No magic bullet
4. Can I just say
5. The jury is still out on that one
6. Going forward
7. No brainer
8. Having said that
9. Ballpark figure
10. At this point in time

Workplace clichés

Australians are even having trouble escaping clichés in the workplace. While employers and managers aren't necessarily the worst offenders, many Australians were quick to point the finger at those guilty of succumbing to superfluous "corporate speak".

1. Push the envelope
2. 110%
3. Think outside the square
4. Hit the ground running
5. Get on the same page
6. Key learnings
7. Fast-track
8. Cutting edge
9. Steep learning curve
10. Let's unpack this

Youth clichés

Many respondents held Generation Y responsible for the downfall of the English language and expressed a genuine distaste for their specific brand of cliché slang.

1. My bad
2. Random
3. So hot right now
4. Fully sick
5. So over that
6. Oh my gosh
7. Whatever
8. Totally
9. Chillout
10. Whassup

Social clichés

"Actions speak louder than words"... or so the cliché goes. Examining the more situational clichés currently in use, our respondents identified the following as the most annoying clichés they hear when out and about.

"I'm hot" (said while touching someone and making a sizzling sound)

"Touchdown" (said with enthusiastic gesturing)

"How's the weather up/down there?" (said to a tall/short person)

"No thanks, I'm sweet enough" (said at the offer of sugar with one's tea/coffee)

"Quote..." (said while holding up fingers making quotation marks)

"Enjoy your trip?" (said to someone after a stumble)

"Oh you shouldn't have!" (when someone walks past with flowers/gift)

Singing "why was he born so beautiful, why was he born at all..." (after Happy Birthday song)

"Taxi!" (when someone knocks something over)

"Touch wood" (reaching for wooden object or knocking on one's head)

Source: McCrindle Research

Research method: National survey by AustraliaSpeaks.com, the national research panel of McCrindle Research.