

Our furry friends put us on map

By **JESSICA WHITING**

whitingj@mng.newsltd.com.au

PANDAS: From Malta to Montreal, giant pandas Wang Wang and Funi have been making headlines around the world, helping generate priceless publicity for Adelaide Zoo and boosting tourism in South Australia.

A google news search of “giant pandas and Adelaide” returns more than 600 articles, some from international publications such as *La Presse Canadienne* and the *Times of Malta*. However, the number of articles could run into the thousands, with foreign language stories not included in the search.

John Baker, joint managing part-

ner of advertising and marketing firm kwp!, said the international articles would cost millions if they were ads, but the exposure they generated was “almost priceless”.

“If you would try and orchestrate that in a paid campaign you would be looking at millions of dollars,” Mr Baker said. Mr Baker, whose firm counts SA Tourism Commission as one of its clients, said the pandas’ 10 year stay would give Adelaide Zoo “a new lease on life”.

Dr **Karen Nelson-Field**, from UniSA’s School of Marketing, said the international panda coverage would act as a memory trigger when people came to book a holiday.

“Advertising essentially works by establishing memory cues, so when

you have something like the giant panda it helps the consumer to think of you,” she said. “When there is international press about pandas and Adelaide it creates this direct link to the brand.”

Wang Wang and Funi, the only two giant pandas in the southern hemisphere, are in quarantine in their \$8 million enclosure, and will go on public display next Monday, December 14.

Zoos SA media adviser **Chris Rann** said Adelaide Zoo stories had attracted more international press coverage than any other SA story in the past 12 months.

“There was the flamingo bashing, the rhino and orangutan escapes and, of course, the pandas all making news around the world,” he said.