

ACM EXPANDS *EXPLORE* TRAVEL BRAND AND UNVEILS EXCLUSIVE CONSUMER STUDY, DELIVERING UNRIVALLED INSIGHTS AND SOLUTIONS FOR TRAVEL ADVERTISERS

MONDAY, 12 MAY, 2025 - ACM today announced a major expansion of its popular *Explore* travel brand, alongside the release of an exclusive study into regional travellers' habits.

Digitally, the new *Explore* website is now seamlessly integrated into 85 premium regional news websites, enhancing SEO, engagement, and editorial offerings.

With a mobile-first approach, *Explore* offers faster loading times and intuitive navigation, ensuring a premium user experience. Its growing social media presence features compelling video content and premium stories across Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.

To maximise visibility, *Explore* travel content is now prominently featured on the main navigation of all ACM news websites, providing easy access for passionate travellers and delivering a high-value audience for advertisers. A refreshed, magazine-style web experience encourages users to dream, plan, and book their next adventure, with interactive features including travel surveys, quizzes, and direct engagement with top travel writers.

The Saturday *Explore* magazine has also expanded its print footprint to 28 markets, delivering travel deals, inspiration, and expert advice to an even larger regional audience. Advertisers now have access to an unmatched cross-platform regional reach.

The *Explore* travel liftout launched in 2020 across 14 newspapers and is now part of ACM's newly launched Weekend Collection of 28 mastheads, offering diverse content alongside travel, including an expanded lifestyle section (*Relax*), with features, food, wine, and finance; a TV and entertainment guide, local 'what's on' guides, quizzes, crosswords, and regional property news from View.com.au. In line with the digital expansion, the *Explore* liftout will receive a facelift, with new sections and must-read columns.

Advertisers can also leverage the scale of ACM's digital network, which reaches over 3.5 million* Australians each month, including a highly engaged and active travel audience.

The *Explore* expansion follows ACM's exclusive consumer study[^] into regional travellers, revealing a highly engaged and active travel audience. *Explore* readers are constantly travelling here and abroad: almost three quarters (74%) have holidayed in the last 12 months, with 36% of these travellers already booking and paying for their next trip.

Many readers are focused on international travel, 68% of those who have booked a trip recently are heading overseas. More than a quarter are looking to travel domestically, but it is a much more spontaneous decision.

A trend from *Explore* readers are holidays where the 'journey' is core to the experience, such as cruising, group tours, rail journeys and history adventures. These trips attract higher budgets with over 12% spending more than \$25,000 on these types of holidays.

The *Explore* study challenged misconceptions about regional travel to reveal that:

- Living regionally is no barrier to air travel:
 - 68% of *Explore* readers live within two hours of an international airport, and 92% within reach of a domestic airport. Even those living further away book longer trips.
 - Among those who live 2+ hours from an airport, it's no barrier to them going on holiday (63% agree), in fact, those who live further from an airport book longer holidays.
- Extended getaways
 - *Explore* readers have more time to take longer holidays, with 23% of those planning a trip looking to stay for more than 22 nights.
 - For those who have booked a 22+ night holiday, 29% have budgeted over \$25,000 before they have even left home.
- Looking for inspiration: Activities, sightseeing and unique and different experiences are top priorities for *Explore* readers.
- Informed choices:
 - While value is key, our readers seek choice when it comes to accommodation and dining options.
 - Personal safety and hygiene practices are also important, so both should be considered when communicating travel experiences.
- Loyalty matters: 86% of readers are members of frequent flyer programs, and while price and airline reputation influence their choices, they are willing to pay more for direct flights.
- Cruising interest: 21% of *Explore* readers engage with cruising – 79% prefer ocean cruises, 28% river cruises, and 12% expedition-style experiences. This also represents a good opportunity for those who are new to cruising.

ACM Head of Content, **Kate Cox**, said: "Our expanded *Explore* travel offering reflects ACM's ongoing investment in content and advertising solutions, as well as our commitment to our readers. We know Australians love to travel, and our engaged regional audience relies heavily on *Explore* for inspiration and planning, with 71% of our readers exclusively engaging with *Explore*, rather than major metro travel sections. We are focused on delivering a premium experience tailored to regional Australians.

"*Explore* is designed to connect and engage those regional Australians who are constantly travelling, particularly the majority of our readers who love to indulge in travel planning; 82% find *Explore*'s content inspiring. The enhanced digital and print offering is part of our vision to publish regional Australia's best travel content, delivering a better experience for our audience."

ACM National Head of Travel - Commercial, **Sarah Dasey**, said: "ACM is passionate about providing premium experiences for our readers, and market-leading advertising environments for our advertisers. *Explore* provides a dedicated environment for brands to bring their business to life and connect with engaged travellers actively seeking inspiration, deals, and expert advice. Our readers are not just dreaming about travel – 84% have taken action after engaging with *Explore* content.

"Whether planning a local escape, an overseas adventure, or a cruise, *Explore*'s print and digital product offering is an opportunity for brands to meet travellers as they're planning their next great adventure."

Karen Deveson, Managing Director of small group travel specialist, Collette, said: "ACM's *Explore* has been a game changer for connecting Collette with regional Australian travellers. *Explore* connects us to regional Australians in a premium environment inspiring travellers to new ways of travel and new destinations. We know the regional market loves Collette Explorations – our small group itineraries – and *Explore* has been our lead platform to showcase this. We love the commitment to travel and depth of content created by the *Explore* team."

The 28 mastheads publishing the *Explore* travel lift-out are Newcastle Herald, Bendigo Advertiser, The Daily Advertiser, Daily Liberal, The Border Mail, Northern Daily Leader, The Canberra Times, Illawarra Mercury, The Courier, The Standard, Western Advocate, Central Western Daily, The Examiner, The Advocate, Great Lakes Advocate, Manning River Times, Mudgee Guardian, Armidale Express, Macleay

Argus, Port Macquarie News, Southern Highland News, Goulburn Post, South Coast Register, Bay Post, Bega District News, Lithgow Mercury, The Irrigator and The Area News.

Source: ^Explore Travel Survey, Jan 2025. n=2,032. *Roy Morgan Single Source, Dec 2024. `IPSOS Iris, Mar 2025.

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About ACM

ACM is Australia's largest independent media company collectively reaching over 4 million** regional Australians each month. The ACM network comprises more than 100 brands, including leading regional news brands [The Canberra Times](#), [Newcastle Herald](#), [The Examiner](#), [The Border Mail](#), [The Courier](#) and the [Illawarra Mercury](#). The Agricultural division, ACM Agri, reaches 78% of Australian farmers each month with a national footprint of agricultural specialist brands including [The Land](#) and [Queensland Country Life](#), marketplaces [Farmbuy](#) and [Ag Trader](#) and events [Agquip](#) and [Farmfest](#). We are passionate about keeping our communities strong, informed and connected. ConnectNow with ACM. Visit [ACM.media](#)