

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ACM's Explore wins prestigious global INMA award

Australian Community Media's national travel brand Explore has been awarded Best in Class (Asia/Pacific) at the 2026 International News Media Association (INMA) Global Media Awards, alongside winning the prestigious Best Product Iteration category.

Widely regarded as one of the news media's highest honours for innovation, the INMA Global Media Awards attracted a record 960 entries from 274 news brands across 46 countries this year.

The dual honours recognise Explore's transformation from a standalone travel website into a network-native media product distributed across more than 60 ACM mastheads. INMA judges said the project demonstrated how publishers can achieve scalable digital growth while maintaining editorial trust and print strength.

In addition to the global category win, Explore was awarded Best in Class for the Asia/Pacific region by INMA's international jury of 60 media executives.

ACM Managing Director Tony Kendall said the dual international honours reinforced ACM's position as one of the most innovative regional media companies in the world.

"To be recognised globally by INMA - and then additionally awarded Best in Class for the Asia/Pacific region - is well deserved recognition of the innovative thinking and passion that we see from teams across our business every day.

"Explore proves that regional Australia can drive digital innovation, combining trusted journalism, deep audience understanding and a powerful network strategy.

"Our team has created a world-class experience for audiences and a premium digital environment for our commercial partners."

Explore Publisher Kate Cox said the dual international honours proved that innovation was not limited to giant global publishers or metropolitan media brands.

"This wasn't a cosmetic redesign or a simple website refresh. It was a complete rethink of how travel journalism can operate inside a modern media network," Cox said.

"Audiences no longer begin their journey on homepages. They discover journalism through trusted brands, search and newsletters. Explore was rebuilt around that reality.

"To be recognised globally by INMA, and additionally awarded Best in Class for Asia/Pacific, is enormously significant for an independent Australian media company.

“Regional Australian audiences are deeply engaged, highly valuable and incredibly important to the future of travel journalism. We know our Explore readers stay longer, spend more and travel more frequently than many of their metro counterparts. The latest data from CBAiQ backs this up: regional Australians spend 16 per cent more than metro Australians on accommodation and 25 per cent more on cruises per capita.”

ACM Director of Content Growth & Technology Mahendra Singh accepted the award in Berlin and said the project united editorial, product, technology, audience and commercial teams around a shared vision.

“Explore became a blueprint for how ACM can build scalable, audience-first products across our network,” Mr Singh said.

“The success came from aligning technology, storytelling, UX and data insights into one connected strategy focused on user behaviour and long-term habit creation.

“To receive this level of recognition from INMA on the global stage is an enormous achievement for our teams.”

- ENDS -

About Explore

Explore is ACM’s national travel brand, delivering travel journalism, consumer news and destination inspiration across more than 60 Australian mastheads. Reaching millions of readers through print, digital and newsletters, Explore combines trusted editorial with network-scale distribution to connect audiences with the stories, advice and experiences shaping the way they plan, dream and book travel.

INMA Best in Class and Best Product Iteration awards

The winning entry, titled *From Destination Site to Network Product: How Explore Travel Scaled Across 60+ Mastheads*, detailed how ACM re-architected Explore to meet changing audience behaviour, shifting from a traditional destination website model to a distributed publishing strategy focused on search, newsletters and trusted local mastheads.

About Australian Community Media (ACM)

ACM is Australia’s largest independent media company, collectively reaching over 5.2* million people each month. The ACM network comprises close to 100 brands, including leading regional news mastheads The Newcastle Herald, The Canberra Times, Illawarra Mercury, The Examiner, The Border Mail and The Courier.

Media Release



The agricultural division, ACM Agri, reaches 85%^ of Australian farmers each month with a national footprint of agricultural specialist brands (The Land and Queensland Country Life), marketplaces (Farmbuy and **UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 12:01AM FRIDAY 17 OCTOBER 2025** Ag Trader), and events (AgQuip and FarmFest).

We are passionate about keeping our communities strong, informed, and connected. ConnectNow with ACM.

Source: ^QARS, (Heartbeat of Australia), May 2025. *Roy Morgan Single Source, June 2025, P14+, Roy Morgan iris, ACM Cross Platform Audience.