

# Recovery Messaging: Visit California Dream Drive

After the landslides that shut down California's iconic Highway 1 drive, Gate 7 engaged celebrity racing driver, Craig Lowndes, to generate extensive television coverage on the area's reopening.

## BRIEF

In August 2018, the Visit California team at Gate 7 designed a PR stunt – the Highway 1 Dream Drive - to celebrate the reopening of Highway 1 in California after the region sustained damage from landslides in 2016.

The goal of this stunt was to generate media and consumer awareness about the reopening and to boost tourism back to this region.

Gate 7 pitched the idea of the “Dream Drive”, a convoy of automobiles driving down the coast, from Monterey County to San Luis Obispo County, joined by journalists and influencers from all key California markets globally.

Budget: \$25,000 AUD

## SOLUTION

- Engage celebrity driver, Craig Lowndes, by targeting his passion and personal interests, and leverage him as an advocate for the destination
- Maximise coverage and awareness of the reopening through pitching; encourage media and consumers to visit the regions of California that were most affected by the road closures for two years

## ACTION

- Gate 7 pitched the story to Network Ten's Executive Sports Producer, who sent a producer and reporter to follow Craig
- Gate 7 negotiated all key deliverables in line with key messages and client objectives
- Gate 7 then seeded the story more broadly, pitching to media across Australia
- Include 84 vehicles, one from each year between 1934 to 2018 in a nod to the road's history



# Recovery Messaging: Visit California Dream Drive (cont'd)

This campaign generated coverage well above negotiated targets, and delivered a total AVE of AUD \$671,029 and an ROI of 24:1.

## NEGOTIATED DELIVERABLES

At least 2 static social media posts syndicated across Craig's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter with relevant hashtags

- At least 2 Instagram stories on Craig's Instagram account with relevant hashtags
- One story and one post to focus on secondary Californian destinations visited during the trio
- Craig to be available during to speak to a few media on the ground in California, both broadcast and print
- Gate 7 ability to pitch follow-up news and travel stories to media in Australia and New Zealand using photos of Craig from the Dream Drive
- Channel 10 required to produce one 5 minute piece of video / news content

## RESULTS

- 10-minute TV segment on Channel 10's RPM show, including an additional 5-minute segment free of charge
- Coverage generated across an additional 13 media outlets, generating a total reach of 2,850,167 and a total PR value of \$641,029 AUD

### Craig Lowdnes' social channels – total value AUD \$30,000

- 3 x Instagram posts and 3 stories - 88k followers
- 4 x Facebook posts - 292k followers
- 3 x Twitter posts - 77.8k followers

### Ten Motorsports social channels:

- 2 x Twitter posts - 10.3k followers
- 2 x Facebook posts - 20k followers

Australia was the only one of Visit California's international markets that successfully secured a celebrity for this activity in addition to being the only market to secure broadcast coverage.

As Craig Lowndes was targeted based on his passion, he waived his talent fee, further boosting ROI and maximising budget.

## ACCOLADES & TESTIMONIAL

Finalist for the 2019 Mumbrella Travel Awards

"This will bring excellent coverage and is a great get, congrats! Excellent news."

– Jennifer Jasper Montero,  
International Marketing Director,  
Visit California

