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## MEDIA RELEASE

18<sup>th</sup> November 2022

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### **Destination Marketing Store, Fred&Co and Leonards Advertising collaborate to win Double Gold for Barrington Coast at NSW Tourism Awards**

Barrington Coast, the tourism brand for MidCoast Council, won Gold...and then Gold at the NSW Tourism Awards on Thursday, 17 November at Luna Park, Sydney. The first Gold for best Local Government for Tourism was followed up by the hotly contested second Gold for Best Tourism Marketing and Campaigns for the "Whatever it takes" campaign.

Behind this outstanding success is a truly great client/agency partnership that strives to be strategically and creatively different. Beginning with the DMS' destination management plan and brand positioning for Barrington Coast, a foundation was set for both the tourism brand and later campaign. The brand was positioned on the 'Blaze your own trail' platform - and had the brand personality traits of being free spirited, courageous, grounded and not taking life too seriously.

"The "Whatever it takes" campaign captured the brand essence of 'Blaze your own trail' and suggested the audience give themselves permission to break their routine by doing whatever it takes to enjoy yourself," said Charlotte Prouse, Director at DMS.

David Lucas, Creative Director and Founder of Fred&Co, said: "When most destinations are leading their hero messages with 'Explore', 'Discover' and 'Experience', we created the campaign to be honest and unapologetic in its realness, so the destination stood out.

"We were saying, 'Just do whatever it takes to feel recharged and just be you - Who cares what anyone thinks about what you like to do on a holiday? If that's eating three dozen oysters for lunch - do it.' It was this honesty that resonated with the audience to give us outstanding online engagement," David added.

Sharon Bultitude, Destination Management Coordinator for Barrington Coast Mid Coast Council said on the award-winning campaign: "We wanted the audience to visit, be themselves, let loose and have no regrets of leaving stuff and people back home. And this campaign delivered on that and put us on their travel bucket list post lockdown."



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The campaign solely focussed on a female audience, without the fear of alienating men in its advertising communications – a first for a NSW region.

The campaign launched with OOH roadside billboards for awareness, supported by an integrated digital mix of display, search, social and native ads which put the campaign in front of women in the Hunter, Central Coast and Sydney regions.

“Even with the lockdowns coming into effect during part of the campaign, there was a significant jump in engagement levels. Considering we were starting from zero awareness of the Barrington Coast destination brand, the campaign’s social engagement, website traffic and enquiries beat all our expectations,” said Kate Faithorn, CEO of Leonards Advertising.

The Barrington Coast’s first-ever campaign achieved strong results:

- A 12.5% increase on the website traffic objective of 20,000 unique visits per month.
- Delivering over 21,000 website goal conversions for operator link clicks, calls, emails, discount link clicks and blog article clicks.
- Smashing the Google Paid search objective by 44%.
- Slashing the Google Paid Search and Display ads cost by up to 64% compared to travel industry averages.
- Smashing the Facebook/Instagram ads CTR by 179% compared to travel industry averages.
- Reducing the Facebook/Instagram ads CPC by 20% compared to travel industry averages.
- Growing the visitor e-news database by 208% to promote the pre-travel experience and boost destination bookings.

On top of winning Gold for Best Tourism Marketing and Campaigns, ‘Whatever it takes’ was a finalist at the recent Mumbrella Travel Marketing Awards, only pipped by the juggernaut destination Fiji.

The indie agency consortium of Destination Marketing Store (DMS), Fred&Co Digital Advertising and Leonards Advertising were also the collaborative team behind the multi award-winning ‘Let’s Skip Town Together’ Mudgee Region visitation campaign.

The success of this consortium demonstrates how effective and powerful boutique agencies can be when they bring their specialised expertise together to market destination brands.



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## Campaign Credits

Client : MidCoast Council  
Brand Strategy : Destination Marketing Store  
Creative : Fred&Co Digital Advertising  
Media : Leonards Advertising

### View the campaign video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jf87VCCFURs>

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