

2020 Global Travel Communicator Award Submission

Accor Hotels team – Wintervention PR Stunt

Name of Campaign: Wintervention

PR team involved: Gaynor Reid (ASTW member), Ginni Post (ASTW member), Bridie Commerford, Cynthia Dammerer (previous member)

Start and end date: 29 April to 30 August 2019

Objectives

Accor wanted a bold PR stunt to showcase its Wintervention winter sales campaign...so we sent an entire Tasmanian town on a surprise holiday to the Gold Coast, in conjunction with Sunrise morning show.

The campaign launched on Seven's Sunrise, when weatherman Sam Mac visited one of Australia's coldest towns, Waratah (one of the smallest towns too – with 250 population), and gave away a holiday to every member of the town who could travel that very day. People who had registered to win a trip were told to turn up at the filming of Sunrise with their bags in case they were the one lucky winner - but in fact we gave the prize to everyone from the town who turned up: 57 people in total.



We then followed those people on their Wintervention adventures on the Gold Coast to create some TV and social media posts to encourage more Australians to holiday over the winter months, which are typically slower periods for our hotels.

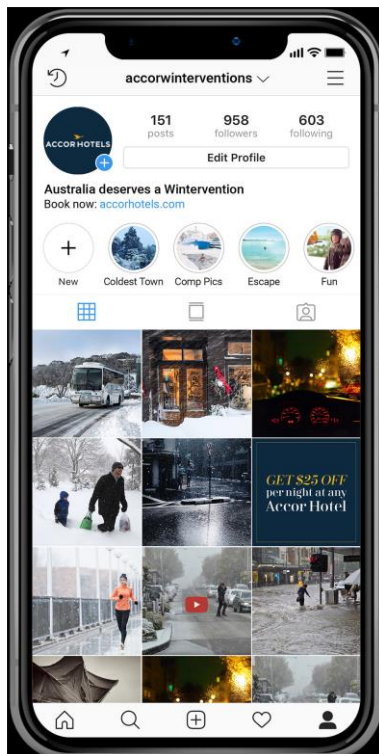
The campaign helped to promote Accor's strong presence on the Gold Coast while promoting domestic tourism and encouraging people to get away in Winter.

The overall objectives were to drive Winter Sales bookings; encourage domestic tourism during the slower winter months; to highlight Accor's strong network in the Gold Coast (the largest operator of hotels in Queensland) and to promote activities that travellers can enjoy during winter. And of course we wanted to drive awareness of our brands and our network.



Strategy

We wanted to target Australians who might be looking for inspiration for their Winter holiday but we knew that to pull off a stunt of this magnitude we would need strong partners to assist with the airfares, promotion and travel arrangements. We approached Sunrise morning show who were very excited to give such a great prize to their viewers, and worked with Qantas who provided reduced airfares to allow us to fly the winners between Tasmania and the Gold Coast. We also then worked with partners including Tourism Queensland to arrange entry to attractions for the winners so that we could build a complete program for them to enjoy their Wintervention. Our creative agency Thinkerbell, played an instrumental role in bringing the campaign to life.



We even created our own Wintervention mini-site on the web and app to drive awareness. The entire project took almost six months to bring to fruition and was promoted on air with Sunrise over four weeks before the prize was announced. To drive business performance, Wintervention was underpinned by an extensive paid tactical campaign. Designed to build awareness of Accor, while inspiring the public to book, the campaign was planned across free to air and subscription TV, digital display, video, social media and our partners.

Campaign dates were from 29 April 2019 to 30 August 2019, with stay dates until 21 Jan 2020. The tactical offer was \$25 off each night + breakfast for just \$1 – with bookings driven direct to accorhotels.com (call to action).

Results:



Not only did we have incredible exposure during Sunrise, but we even managed to get the story shown on rival network Nine News because it was so creative (no easy feat!) and it was published across numerous newspaper and online channels, with more than 535 media stories published and a total reach of 17,612,649 (measured by isentia). On social media, we had a total reach of 669,487, total impressions of 1,229,618 and total engagement of 10,346. This gave us a cost per engagement of 0.02 cents and resulted in \$1.48m revenue generated.

More importantly, the campaign was not just to drive awareness of our Winter Sale and our brands and network but to drive business performance and we certainly saw great results from this. The overall campaign generated 1,933 bookings with revenue of \$763,534. This was a 66.5% increase year on year, an absolutely stunning result.

Relevant press releases/examples of press coverage:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BCNbCwyAww>

<https://youtu.be/hNbNVrFOo1E>

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6192423/a-whole-town-gets-a-free-weekend-on-the-gold-coast/?cs=14231>

Town of Waratah is getting a real wintervention



Luke Sayer

Local News



Jetsetting: The Self family from Waratah are all set to head to the Gold Coast this weekend. Picture: Brodie Weeding.

The population of one of Australia's coldest towns is getting a free trip to the Gold Coast this weekend.

AccorHotels surprised the residents of Waratah, south of Burnie, with a free trip to the sunshine on the first day of winter.

The town was chosen as one of the coldest and wettest locations in Australia.

The wintervention was announced live on Channel 7 program Sunrise, with weather presenter Sam Mac in Waratah live for the announcement.

Accor vice president of marketing, guest experience and communications Pacific, Bridie Commerford, said they were inviting one of Australia's coldest towns to one of its sunniest cities for a weekend Wintervention.

"Exploring Australia is the best way to get out of a winter slump - from sport to shopping, bars to beaches, we have it all. We're delighted to be surprising Waratah residents with such a unique opportunity," Ms Commerford said.



Surprise: Residents of Waratah gather ready for their surprise trip to the Gold Coast this weekend. Picture: Meg Powell.

"They'll soak up the warmth and enjoy some fantastic activities on the Gold Coast, staying at Novotel Surfers Paradise. The only catch is... this is an instant holiday and residents must leave immediately with their bags packed."

The residents arrived thinking a couple who registered would receive the Wintervention trip and be whisked away.

"Little did they know they could all swap their sweaters for swimsuits and that a plane was on standby to carry as many residents as possible within hours of them being gifted the trip," Ms Commerford said.

Accor gives Waratah residents a wintervention

Residents from Waratah, Tasmania one of Australia's coldest and wettest towns are still on cloud nine after AccorHotels whisked them away on a surprise Wintervention to the Gold Coast to mark the first weekend of winter.

The group registered with Channel 7's Sunrise for their chance to escape the cold to a surprise destination, but little did they know they would ALL get to swap their beanies for board shorts. AccorHotels and Sunrise weatherman Sam Mac pulled off an 'Oprah moment' revealing their lucky moment live on air, with the only catch – residents had to leave immediately.

AccorHotels whisked residents away within an hour of the big announcement, chartering a private plane to the Gold Coast for an all-expenses paid Wintervention. On touch down in the Gold Coast, the ecstatic group were greeted by a welcoming party, with CEO of Tourism Events Queensland Leanne Coddington, Destination Gold Coast CEO, Annaliese Battista, and lifesavers bearing flags from Surf Life Saving Queensland.

The lucky 57 Waratahnians were treated to plush digs at Novotel Surfers Paradise and chose from an exciting line up of itineraries that included theme parks, adventure and relaxing options thanks to the official partners of this once-in-a-lifetime experience; SeaWorld, SeaWorld Cruises, AquaDuck, iFly, Experience Oz and Paradise Jet Boating.

Saturday night saw the group make their second TV appearance at Northcliffe Surf Club with local Channel 7 weatherman Paul Burt, and enjoyed front row views to a dazzling SeaFire fireworks display.

“Our Wintervention for the people of Waratah has shown Australia how breaking your winter routine can create a truly amazing experience with lifelong memories. From a family of nine who had never holidayed together, to first time travellers outside of Tasmania, and a family reunited after two years apart, it has been an incredible weekend with our new Waratah friends,” said Bridie Commerford, Accor Vice President, Marketing, Guest Experience and Communications Pacific.

“Exploring Australia is the best way to get out of a winter slump – from sport to shopping, bars to beaches, we have it all. We were so privileged to spend the weekend with the people of Waratah and hope their adventure encourages more Australian’s to plan their own Wintervention,” Commerford continued.

Waratah is located in Tasmania’s western hinterland on the edge of Lake Waratah, and has an average winter temperature of a mere 4.9 degrees celsius. It stands as one of the coldest and wettest locations in all of Australia.

AccorHotels is encouraging Australians across the country plan their own Wintervention by offering \$25 off each night, with breakfast for just \$1 at AccorHotels.com/Winter.

AccorHotels launches Australia’s biggest ever ‘Wintervention’

The whole town of Waratah, Tasmania invited to the Gold Coast for a surprise Wintervention



The advent of winter this year will be like no other for the residents of one of Australia's coldest towns, thanks to AccorHotels and what is billed as Australia's biggest ever 'Wintervention'.

At 8.20am this morning AccorHotels surprised the *whole* town of Waratah, Tasmania, boldly taking a private plane full of residents to the Gold Coast for the weekend – this weekend! The only catch - residents had to leave immediately!

Waratah is located in Tasmania's western hinterland on the edge of Lake Waratah, and has an average winter temperature of a mere 4.9 degrees celsius. It stands as one of the coldest and wettest locations in all of Australia.

"We're inviting one of Australia's coldest towns to one of its sunniest cities for a weekend Wintervention to break the winter routine," said Bridie Commerford, Accor Vice President, Marketing, Guest Experience and Communications Pacific.

"Exploring Australia is the best way to get out of a winter slump – from sport to shopping, bars to beaches, we have it all. We're delighted to be surprising Waratah residents with such a unique opportunity. They'll soak up the warmth and enjoy some fantastic activities on the Gold Coast, staying at Novotel Surfers Paradise. The only catch is...this is an instant holiday and residents must leave immediately with their bags packed," Commerford continued.

Residents of Waratah were expecting that only a few people who had registered would receive a Wintervention trip. Little did they know they could all swap their sweaters for swimsuits and that a plane was on standby to carry as many residents as possible within hours of them being gifted the trip.

Further surprises will await the lucky Waratah locals when they touch down in the Gold Coast, with SeaWorld, SeaWorld Cruises, AquaDuck, iFly, Experience Oz and Paradise Jet Boating experiences on offer thanks to the official partners of this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Do you feel like hibernating? Want to get out your bikini instead of your broly? AccorHotels is encouraging Australians across the country plan their own Wintervention by offering \$25 off hotel stays, with breakfast for just \$1 at [AccorHotels.com/Winter](https://www.AccorHotels.com/Winter).

Ends

