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CarsGuide Labs has partnered with Mitsubishi and Wavemaker to launch Virtual Road Trips, encouraging Australians to travel this year and support small regional Aussie businesses.

The project expands the capability of CarsGuide Labs' 3D visualisation product, creating two road trips to highlight the attributes of both the Mitsubishi Pajero Sport and Eclipse Cross.

The project was brought about following analysis from CarsGuide Labs, which showed that search volumes for 'road trips' was at an all-time high.

After analysing Google search trends, CarsGuide Labs discovered that on average road trip searches had increased by 104 per cent year on year and key searches like ‘The Ultimate Australian Road Trip’ saw an increase of 529 per cent in June 2020.

CarsGuide Labs’ journalists took a Mitsubishi vehicle on the road visiting small regional businesses and highlighting areas of interest throughout NSW.

Each story included 3D visualisations of the vehicles at landmarks visited so that audiences can immerse themselves in each location. To achieve this each road trip was supported by video content, a road trip map graphic and articles to create an immersive lifestyle experience.

A component of the project was to also shine a light on Australian small regional businesses. After a year that included bushfires, flooding and COVID-19, the majority of businesses in regional Australia have been affected with demand for goods, services and cash flow significantly reduced, CarsGuide said.

With this in mind, each road trip included a spotlight on regional businesses which included Lake Conjola Cabins, Region X Kayak Hire, Silkman Wines and Hunter Valley Bicycle Rentals.

Speaking about the initiative, Shaun Westcott, CEO of Mitsubishi Motors Australia, said: “As a business, Mitsubishi is constantly looking for new ways to engage our audience.

“It is important to us that we are able to break through the noise in the market and we spend a lot of time analysing trends to ensure we have activity which will prove genuinely valuable to our audience.

“As a company, we also wanted to continue to support small businesses by creating a campaign which provided travel inspiration while promoting the quality and desirability of regional Australia.”

Wavemaker CEO Peter Vogel said: “Mitsubishi is consistently leaning into technology to deliver an ever-more engaging customer experience, and support Australians.

“Responding to the growth in searches for Road Trips in Australia, Mitsubishi, in partnership with CarsGuide Labs have put the spotlight on local businesses and encouraged Australians to get out and explore our own backyard.

“The 3D visualisations enable people to immerse themselves in the locations while also gaining a virtual experience of the Mitsubishi vehicles.”

Tim Flattery, head of CarsGuide Labs, said: “In an age of information overload it is important to create experiences which seduce and serve an audience.

“By analysing search trends, we’re able to pinpoint topics of interest for our audience but the real engagement comes from delivering content in a manner that is useful and engaging.

“We have had huge success with our 3D visualisation technology as it enables us to deliver real world experiences to an audience, something that has proven to be particularly useful in both the automotive and travel industry where being able to visualise something is key to building people’s excitement.”