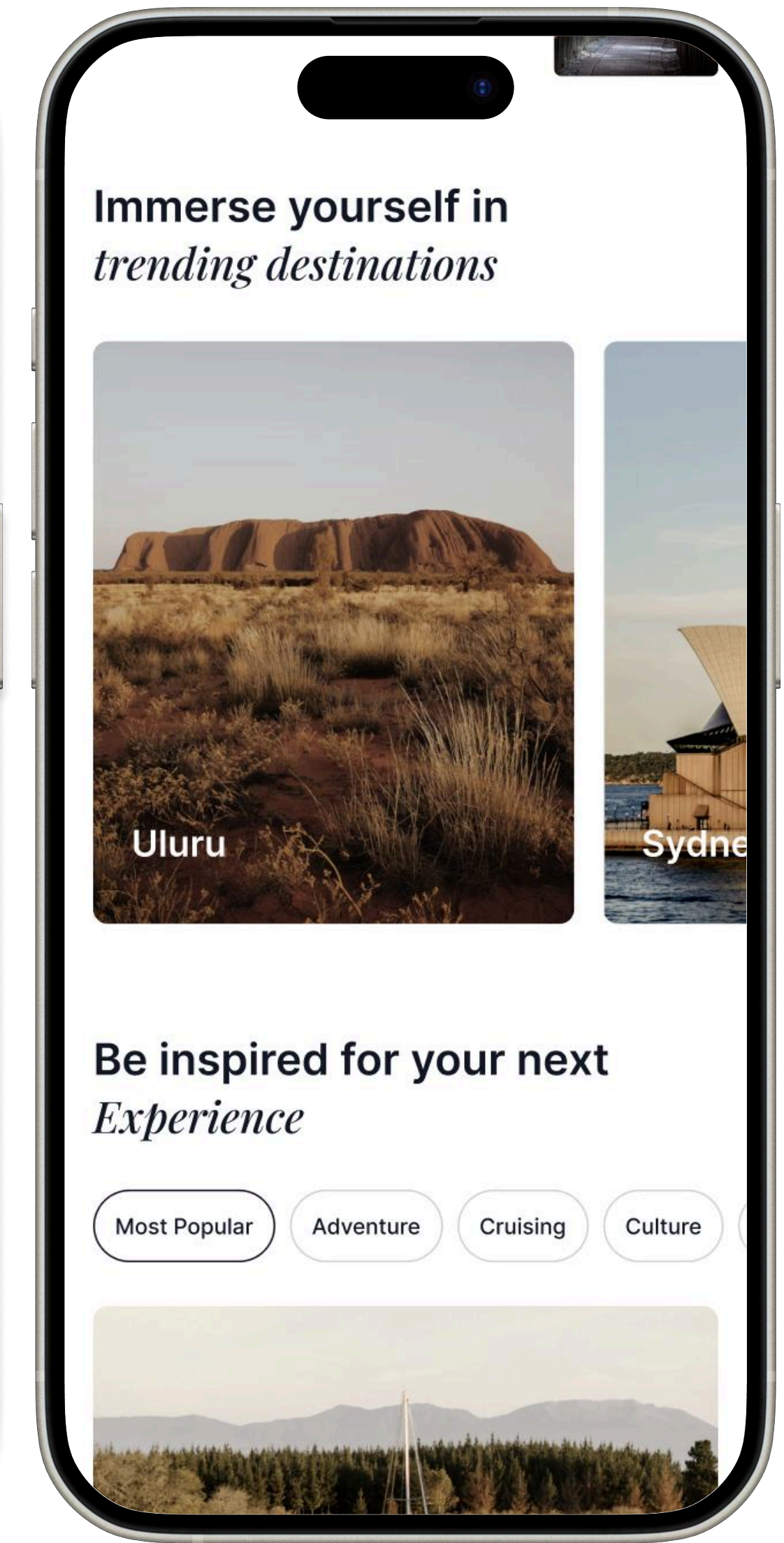
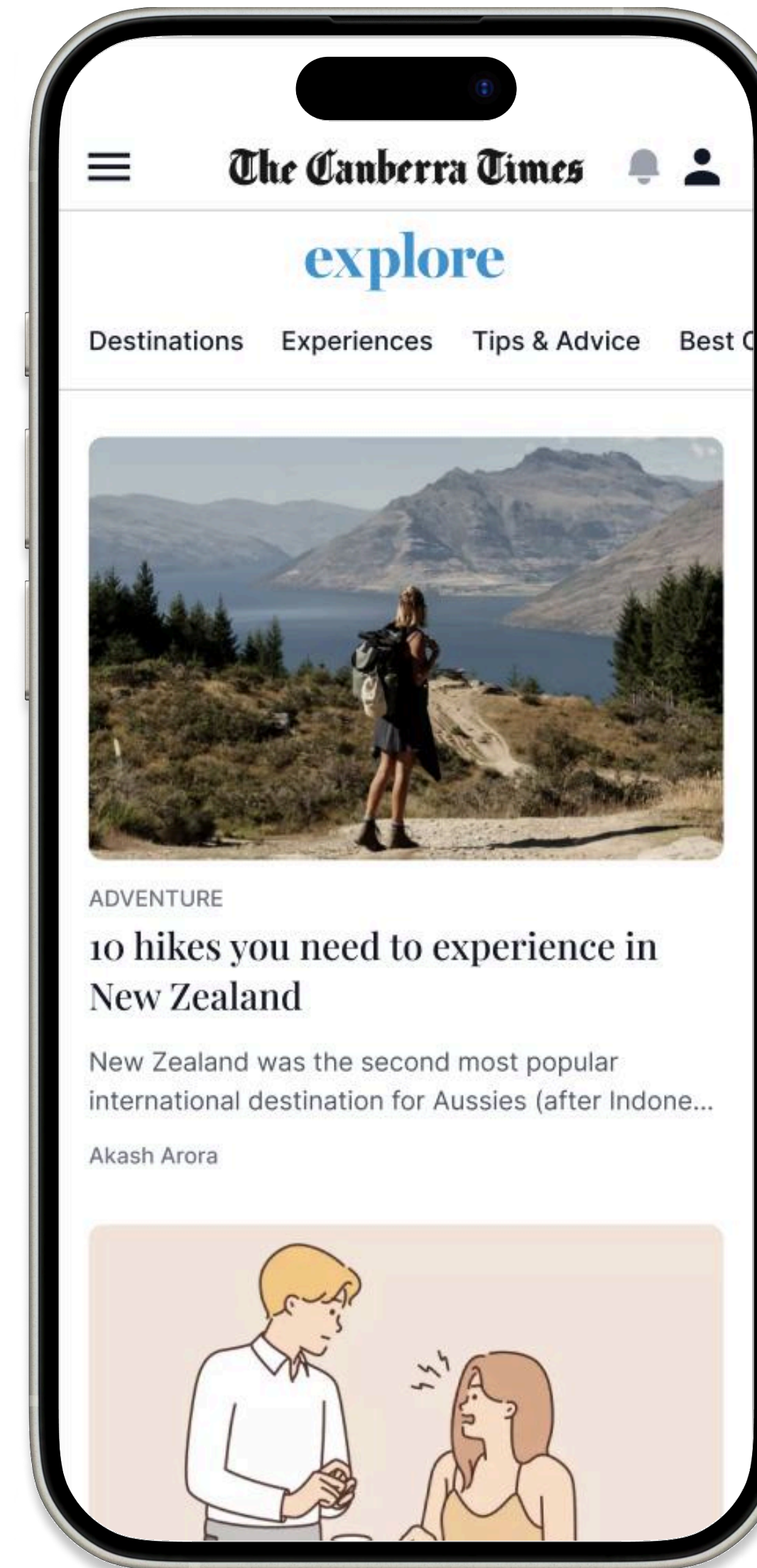


From Standalone to Scaled: How Explore Travel evolved into a network-native growth engine.

A six-month product iteration that transformed Explore Travel from a standalone site into a network-native product: scaling trusted travel journalism across 60+ mastheads through structure and distribution, not increased content volume.

Goal	Outcome
Reduce reliance on direct traffic	+237% organic traffic, +291% newsletter traffic
Increase reach without volume	+270% monthly average page views
Build habit	Sustained monthly growth
Grow audience	400% growth in average monthly users



Problem / Opportunity

Why was change needed? Was it to solve a challenge or seize a new opportunity?

Explore Travel had strong authority but had reached a ceiling as a standalone site. Growth was seasonal, habit relied on direct navigation, scale was limited. Audience behaviour had shifted toward discovery via search, newsletters and trusted local mastheads.

Opportunity: Evolve Explore into a network-native product, embedding premium travel journalism across multiple brands to unlock scale and improve habit without sacrificing trust.

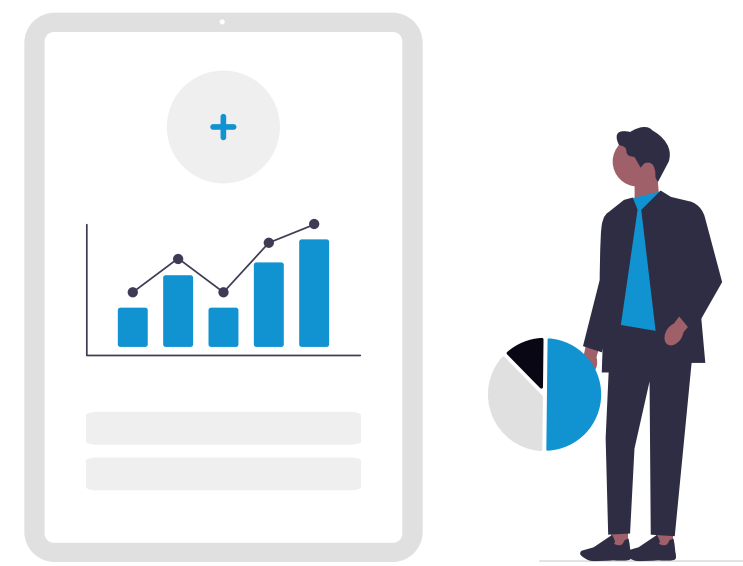


User impact

Which audiences were affected, and how did you address their needs?



- **Readers:** Easier access to trusted travel journalism within familiar local news environments, designed around audience needs. The iteration helped reduce friction, encouraging deeper scrolling, repeat visits, and exploration across destinations.



- **Advertisers:** Greater scale, predictability and performance transparency. The Explore iteration gave advertisers confidence they were appearing in premium, high-intent travel environments rather than fragmented placements.

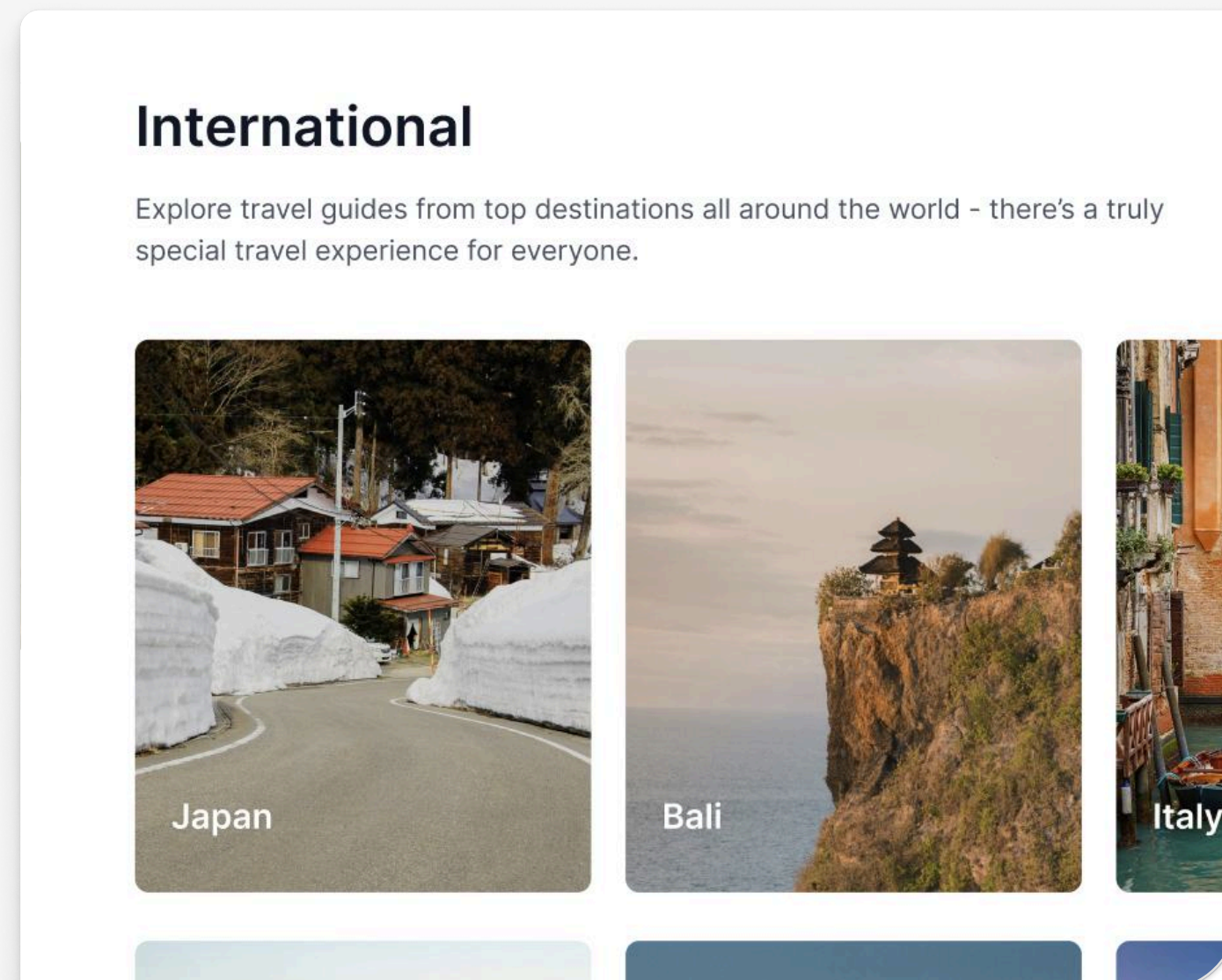


- **Editorial:** Clearer priorities, shared infrastructure and workflows built for digital discovery, enabling greater reach, more follow-ups and increased potential for growth.

The process - designing the product experience to drive engagement and increase reach.

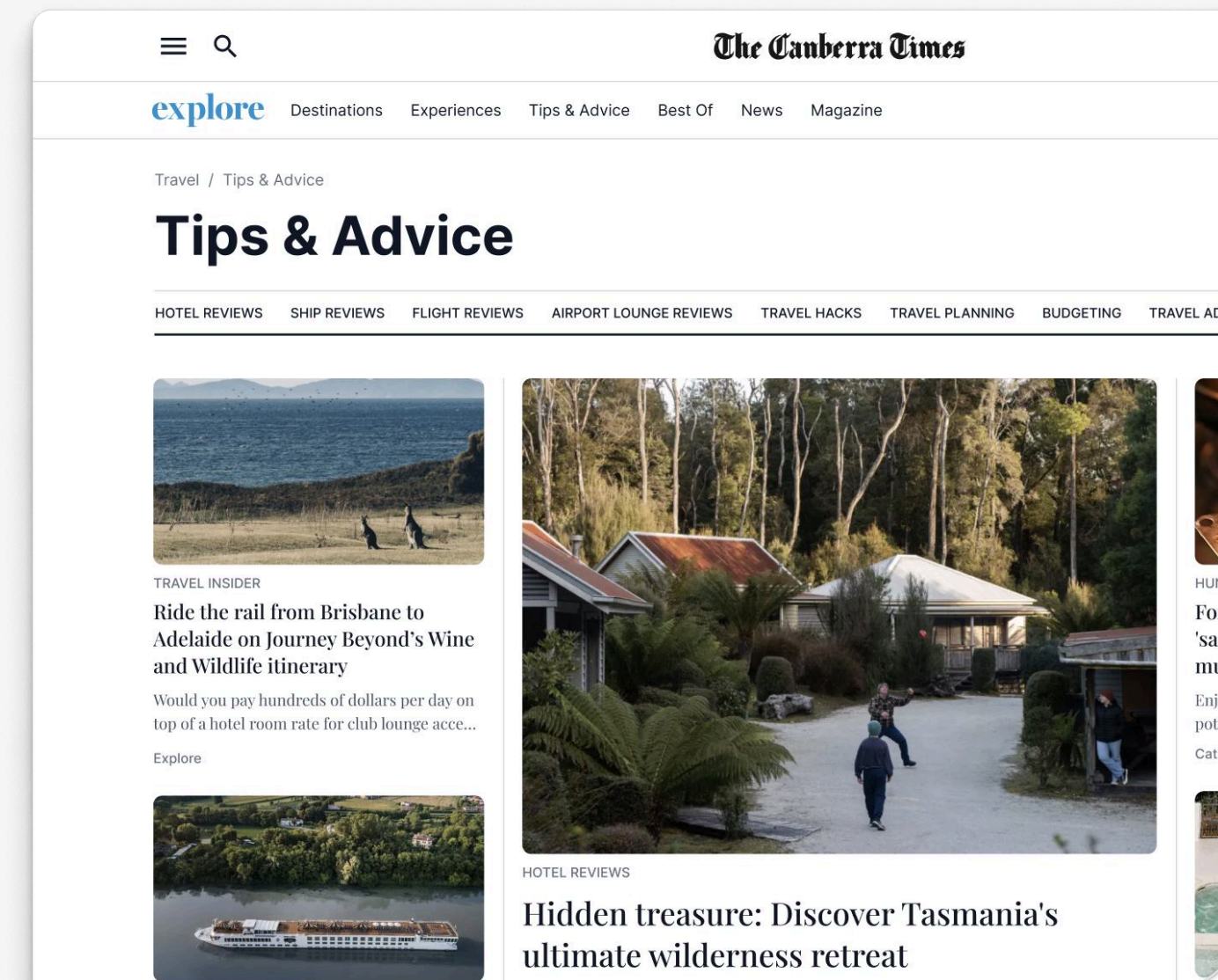
1

Reworking the information hierarchy to prioritise location-led discovery



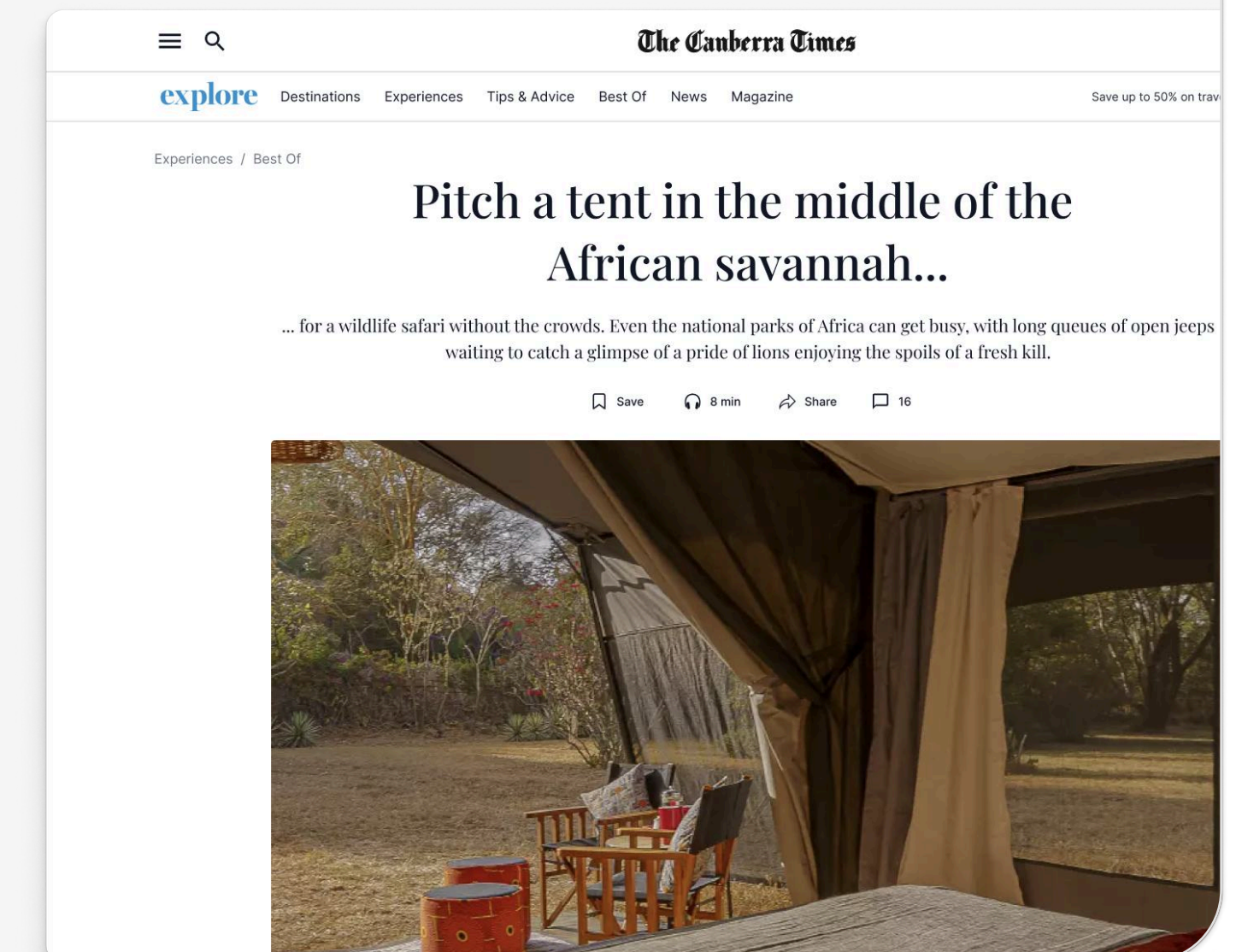
2

Introducing clear content groupings and entry points by region and travel type



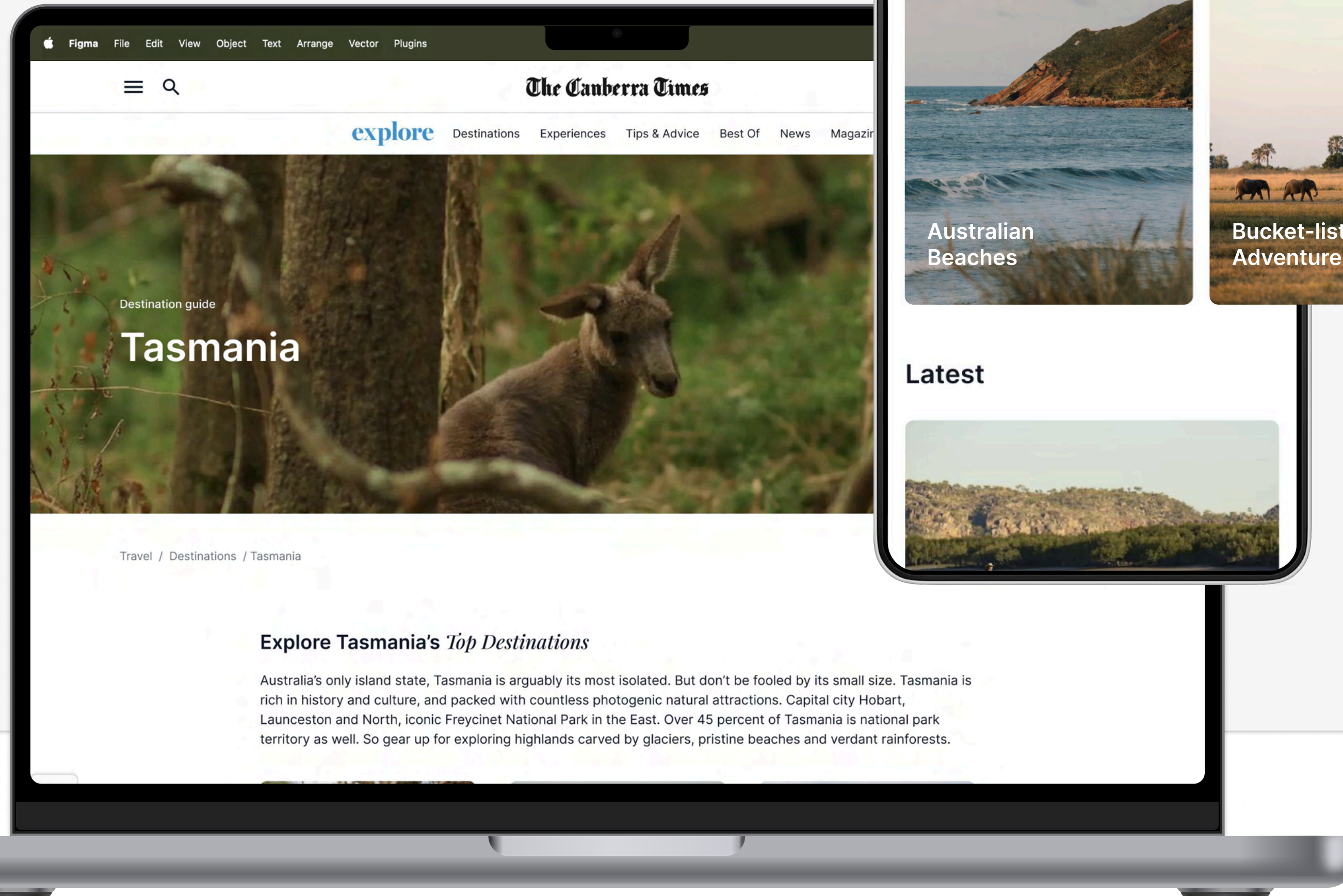
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Aligning with the 3 phases of the traveller journey: inspire, planning, booking



4

Creating an immersive experience to encourage deeper scrolling & time on site

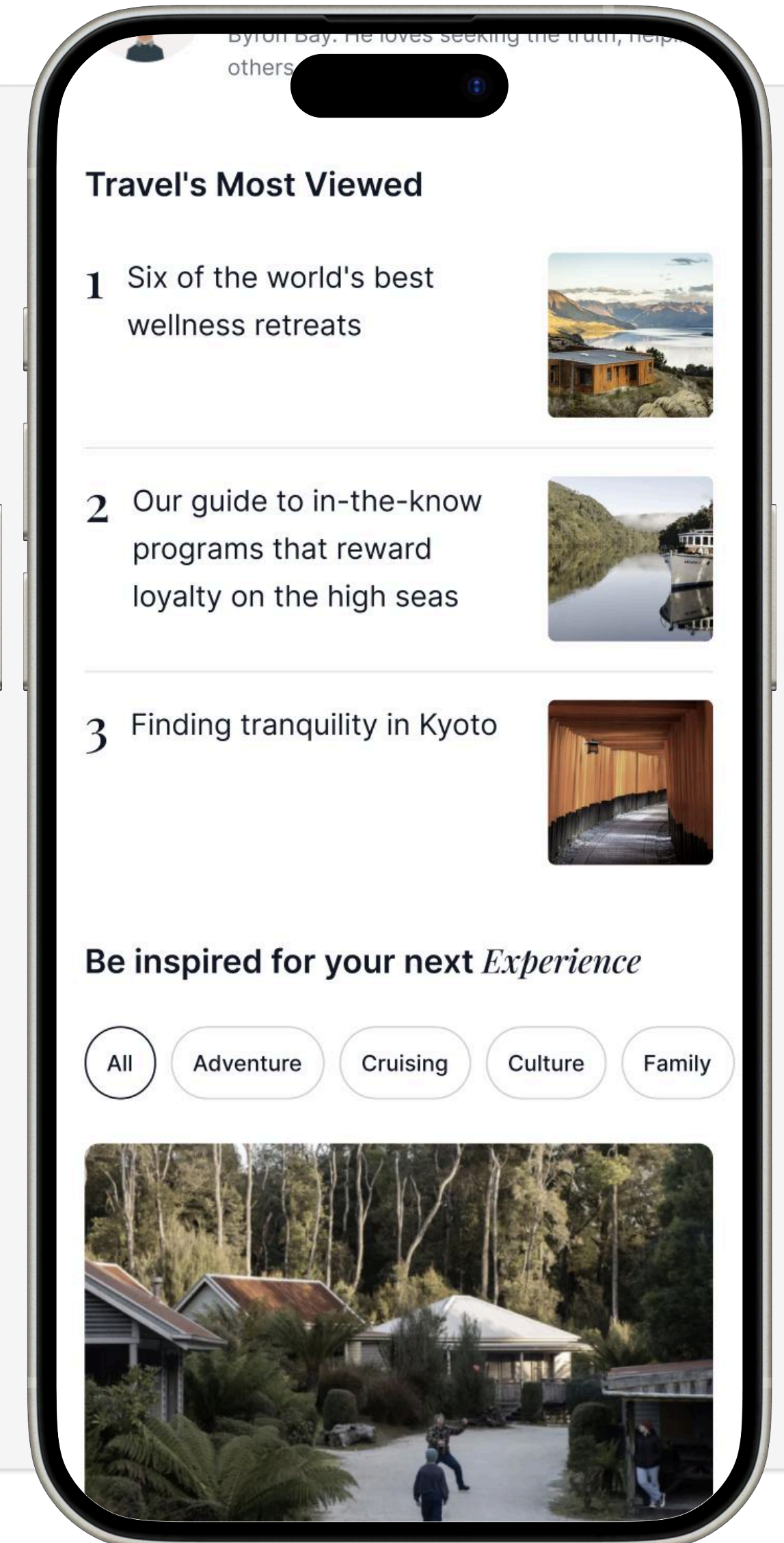
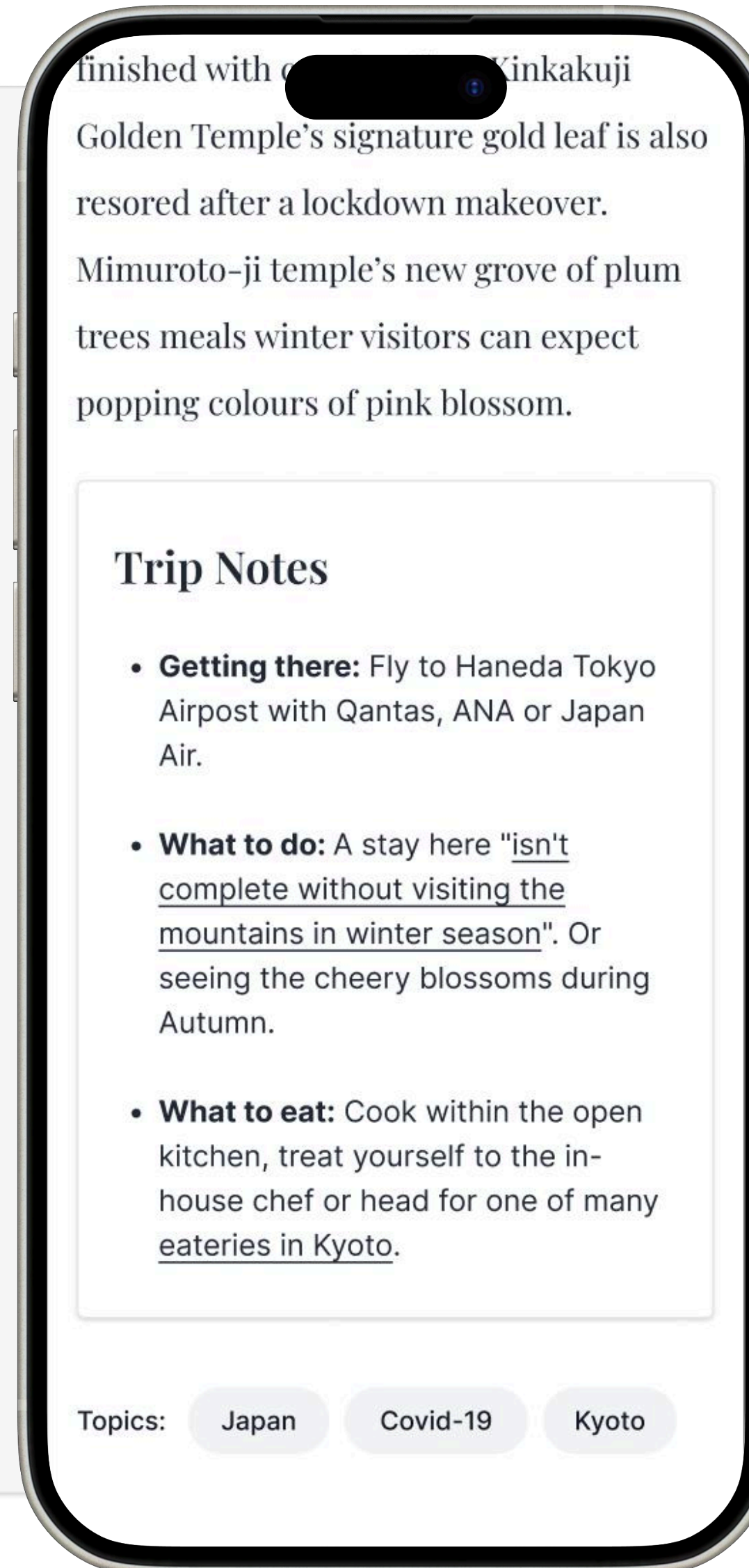
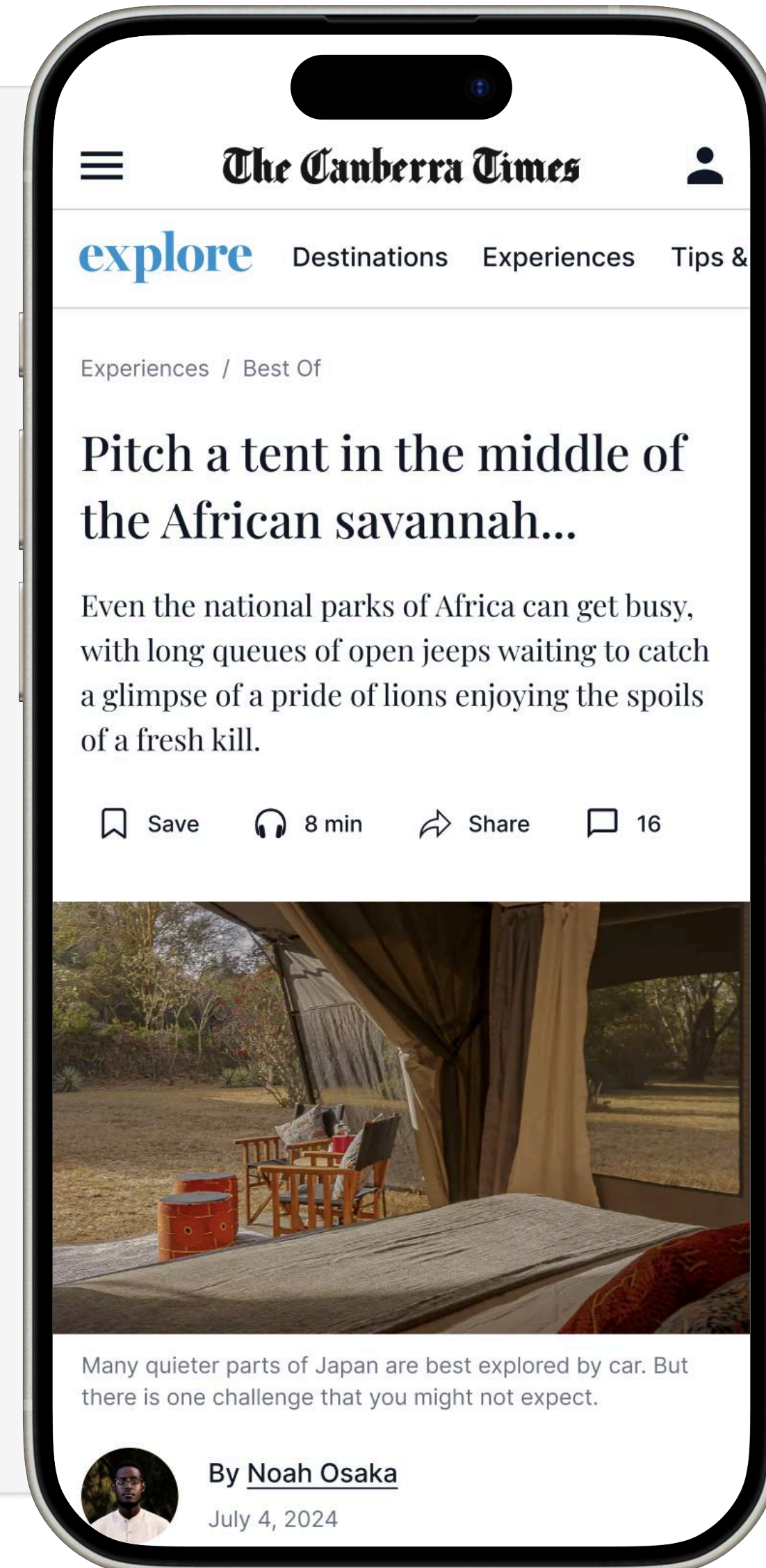


5

Article page iteration; moving towards a desirable reading experience

We evolved an existing template through iteration, learning, and constraint. The goal was to increase time on site & encourage deeper article scroll.

Below the article we have introduced recommended stories to encourage recirculation. These modules include; **contextual stories, travel's most viewed & curated top stories.**



6

Features to drive engagement & build user habits.



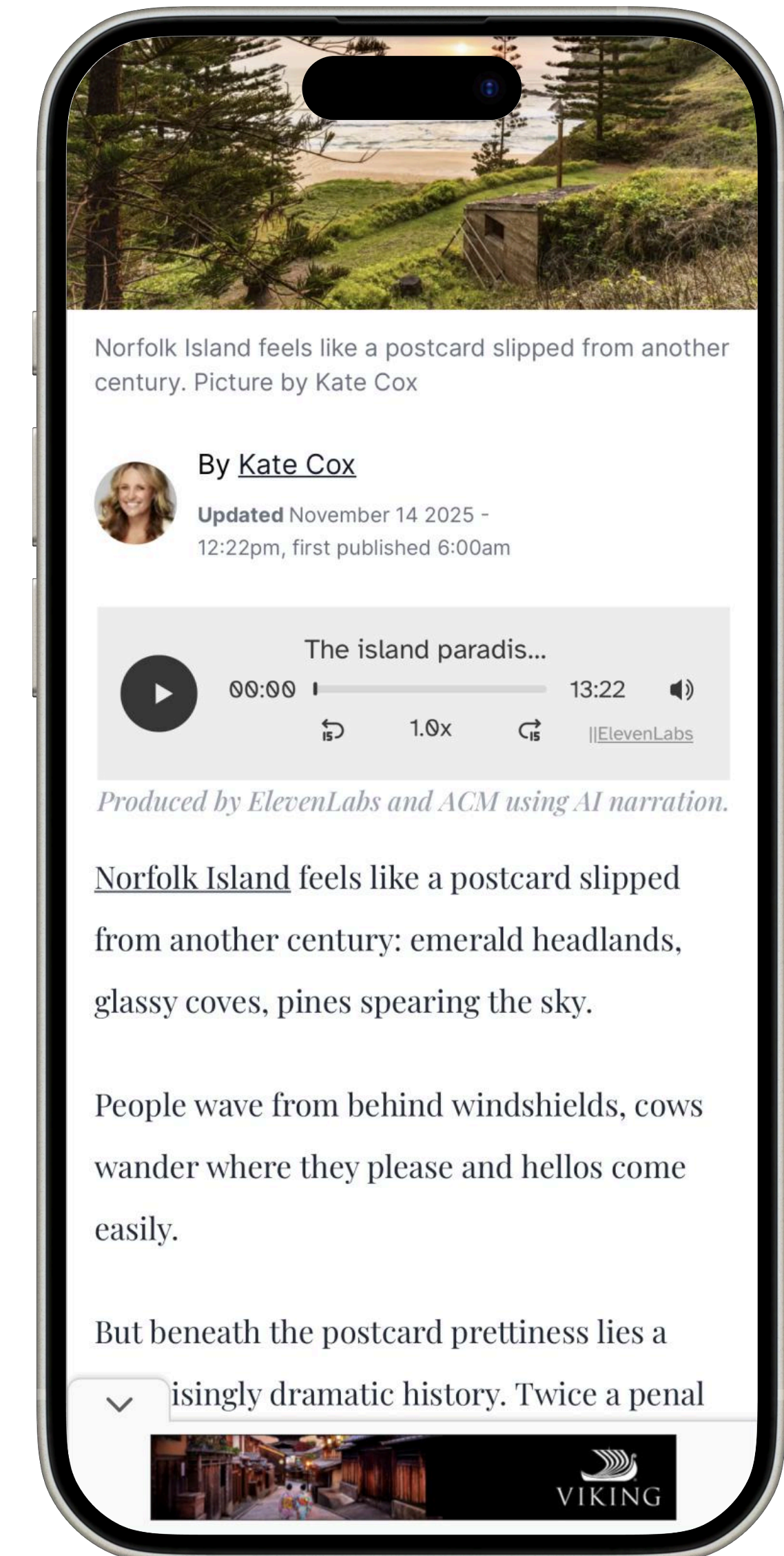
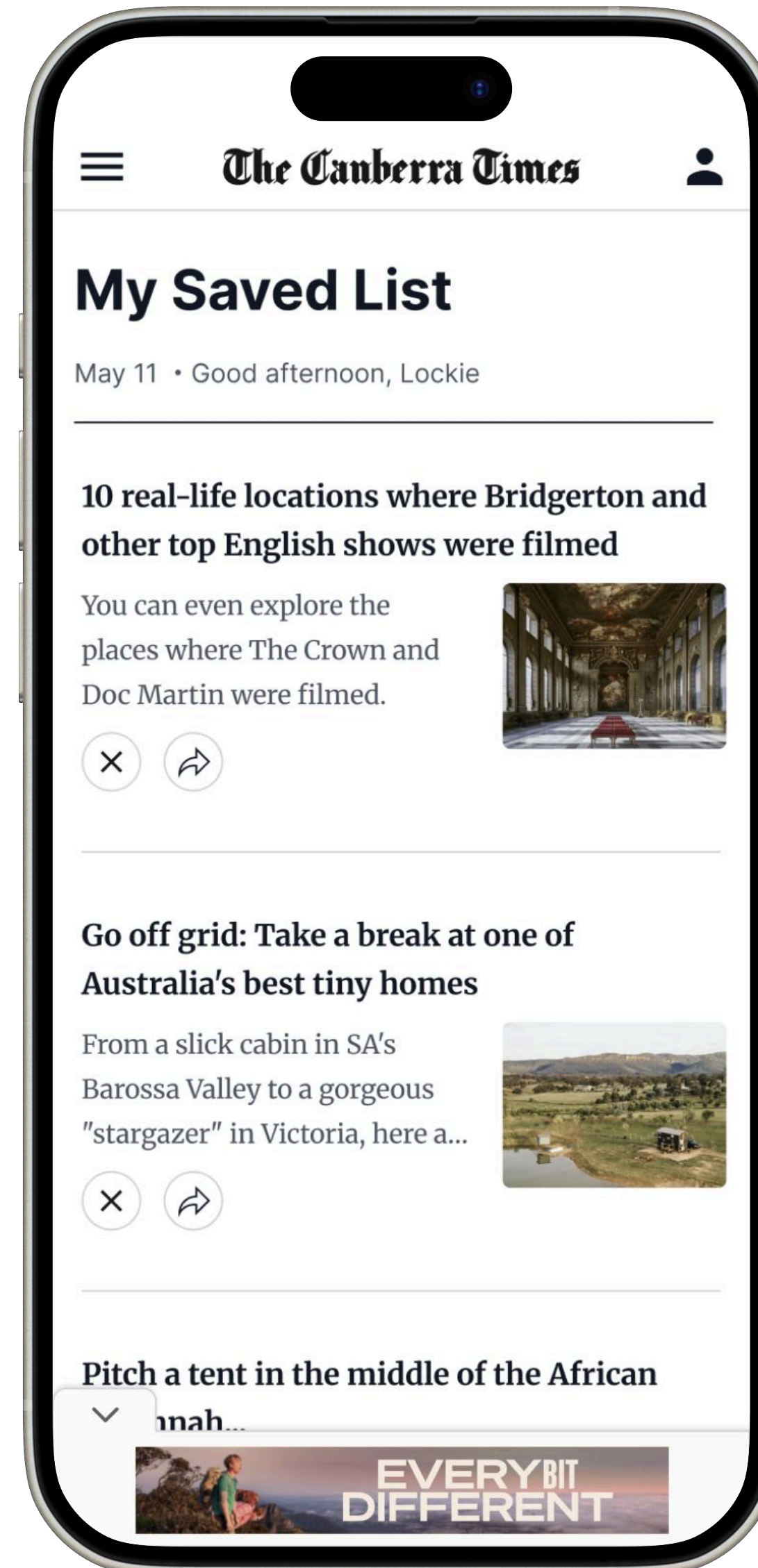
Save

As part of the migration we introduced helpful features so users are able to **save stories for later**.



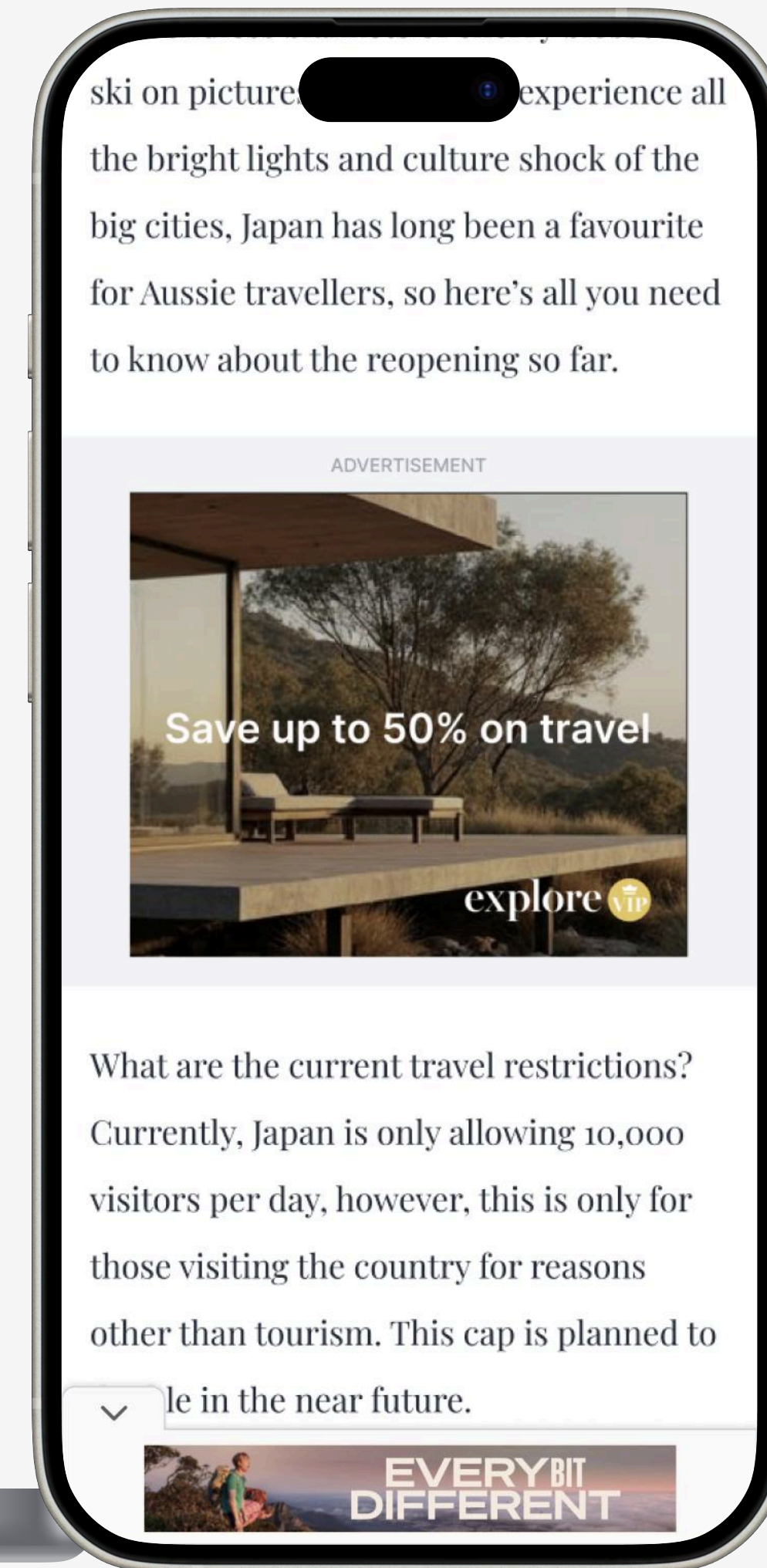
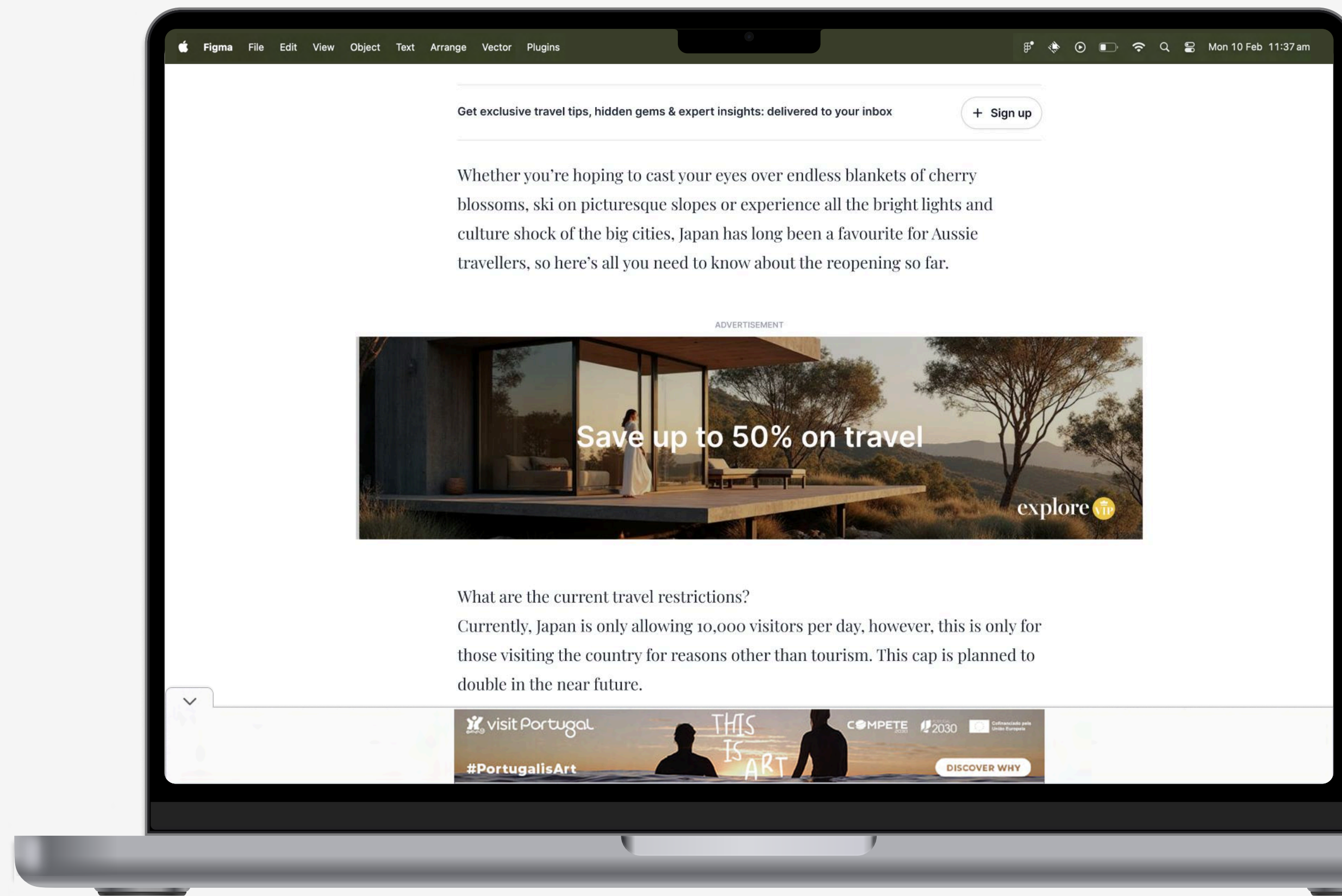
Listen

We also introduced audio so that **readers can listen to the stories using text-to-audio**. The takeup surpassed expectations, increasing engagement across all stories, and as a result has now been implemented across other brands and mastheads.



7

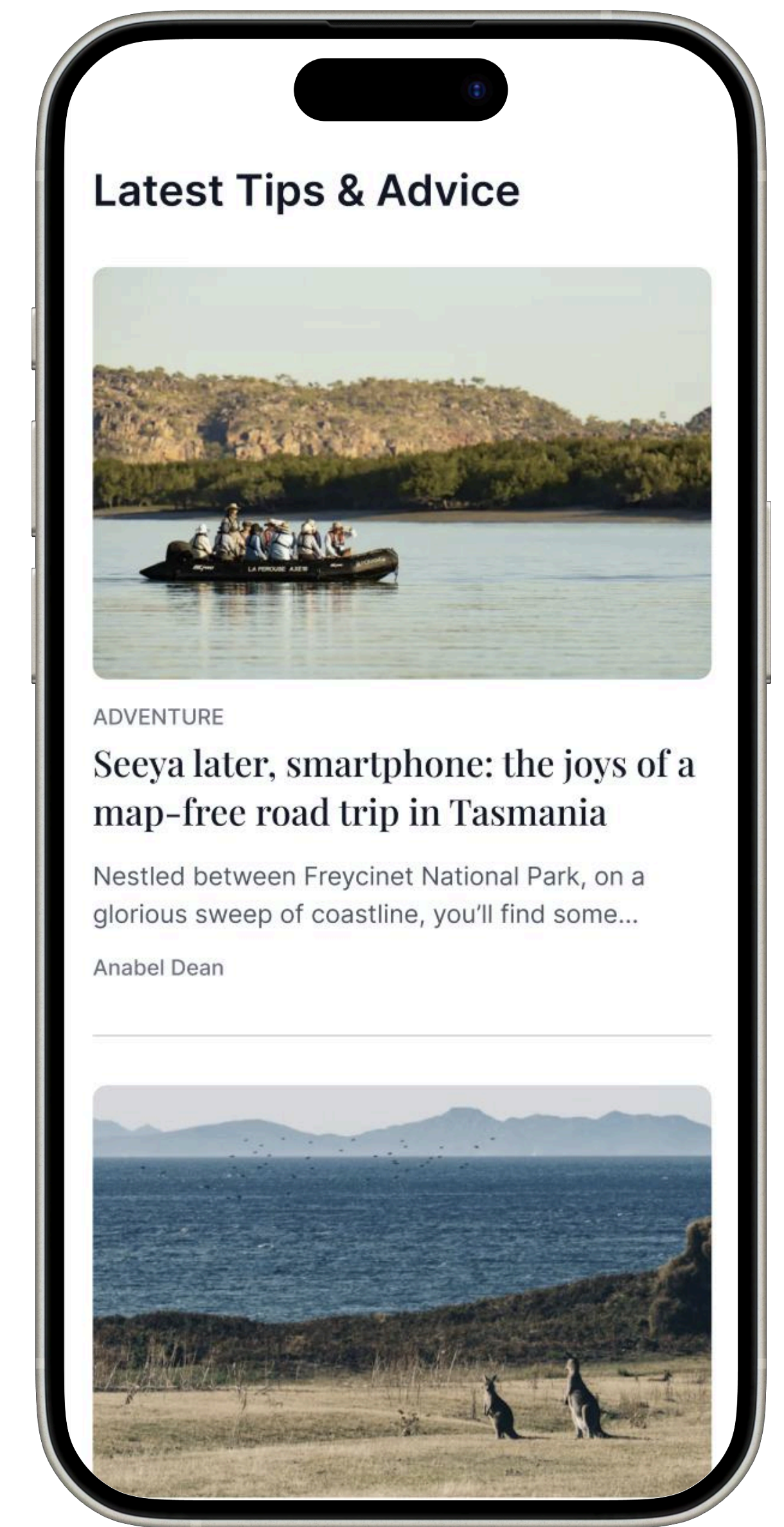
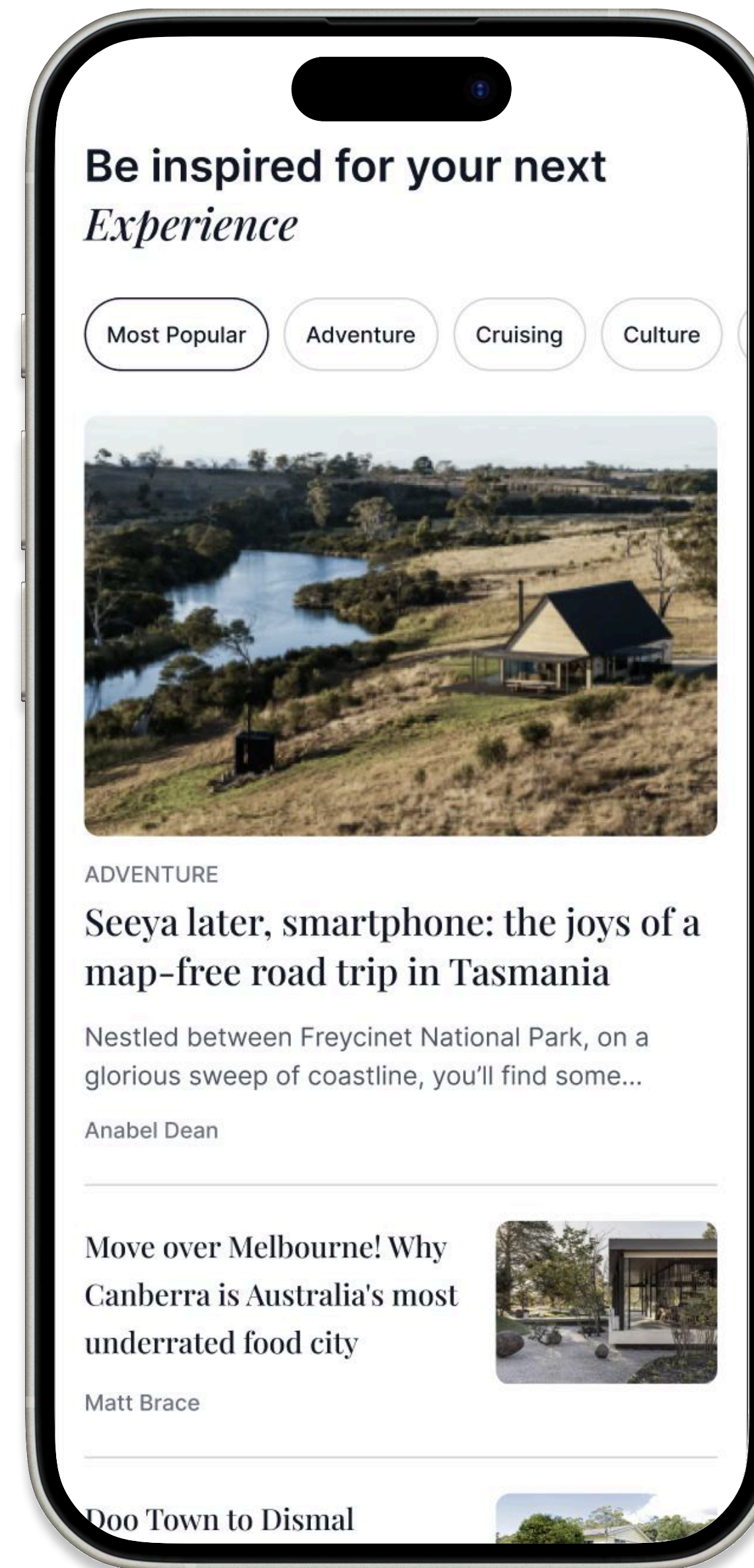
Commercial ad units were reduced in number but designed to be more high impact, leading to higher yield with less clutter. This was an iterative approach between Data, Product & Commercial.



Collaboration

Which teams and stakeholders shaped the decisions?

Editorial, product, audience, commercial and technology teams worked together. National and regional editors aligned on brand voice and trust, supported by data-led commercial and audience insights and senior leadership oversight.



The Results

The transformation exceeded expectations, delivering strong growth in reach and engagement, improved long-tail performance and increased habit through search and newsletters.

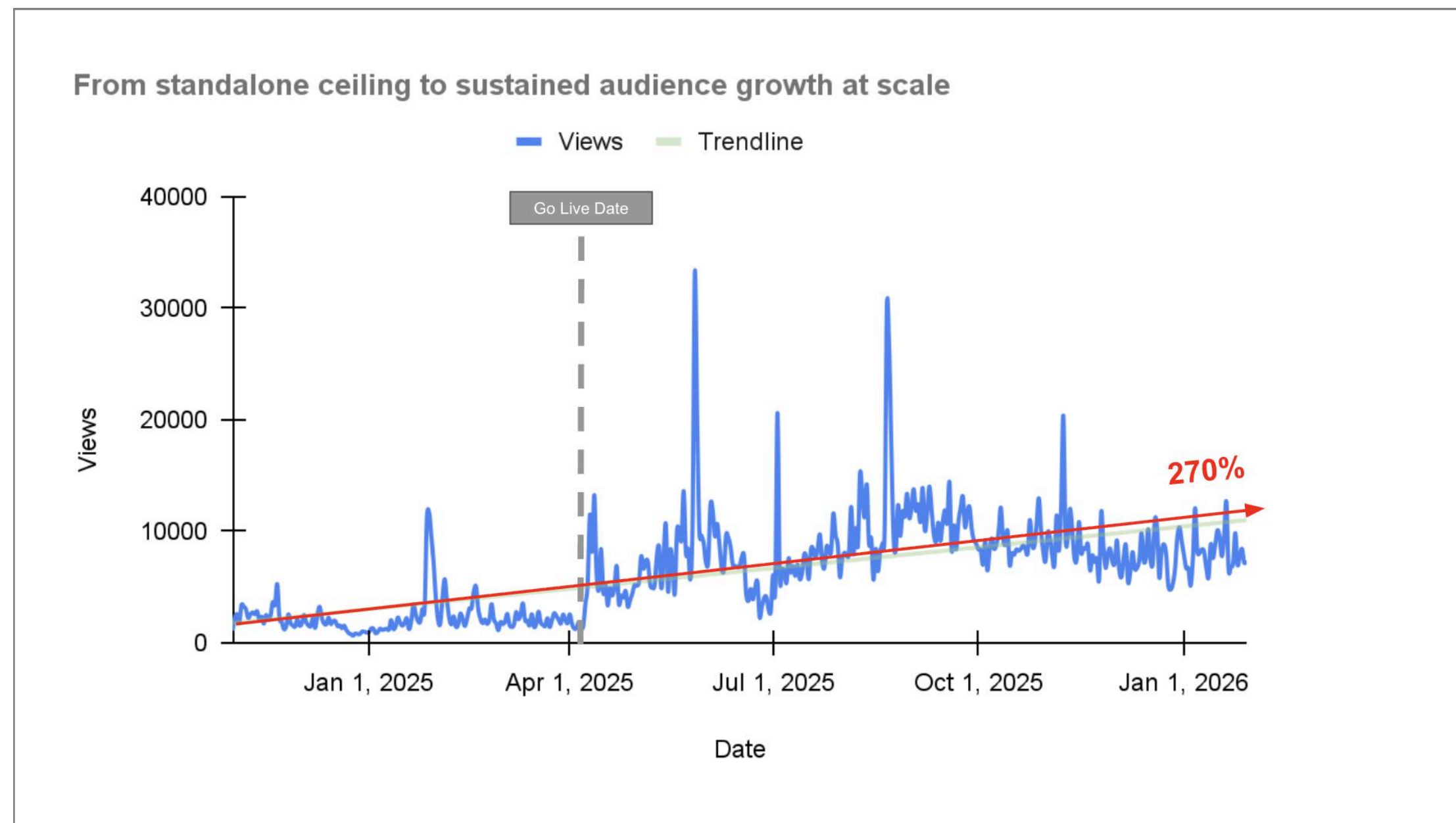
By evolving Explore Travel from a standalone destination into a network-native product embedded across 60+ mastheads, we have demonstrated how purposeful iteration can turn trusted journalism into a scalable, sustainable growth engine.

Since the April 2025 migration baseline;

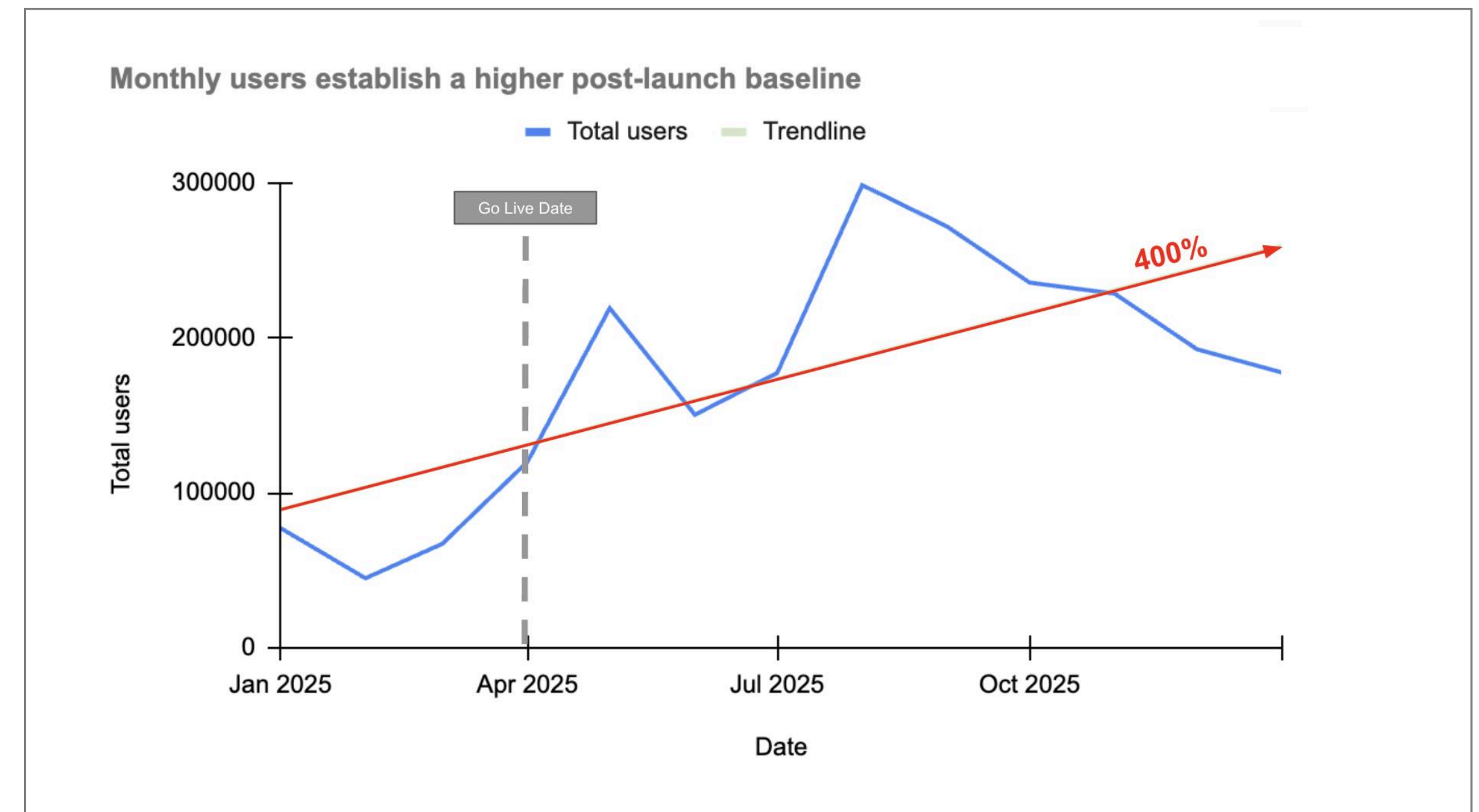
- **270% growth** in average monthly pageviews
- **400% growth** in average monthly users
- **237% growth in organic traffic**, driven by improved SEO architecture and evergreen storytelling
- **291% growth in newsletter traffic**, reinforcing that trust and repeat engagement within known audiences

From standalone ceiling to sustained audience growth at scale.
Rollout delivers a step-change in audience scale.

- **270% growth** in average monthly pageviews.



- **400% growth** in average monthly users.



The Takeaway

Scale came from structure and distribution — not from more content.

At a time when publishers struggle to balance scale with credibility, Explore offers a transferable blueprint: build around user intent, design for distribution and let trusted journalism do the work.

explore **ACM**

