

# BC's DISASTER RECOVERY MARKET MESSAGING RESEARCH

Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology

Webinar Series: What to Say to Foster Visitation: Post-Wildfire Marketing Messages

Thursday, June 6, 2019 / 10:00 – 11:15 AM

- The 2017 and 2018 fire seasons prompted Provincial State of Emergencies for British Columbia.
- The longest Provincial State of Emergencies in the province's history.
- The first to be declared since the 2003 firestorm.

## Wildfires (2017)

NEARLY  
1,400  
FIRES

OVER  
1.2  
MILLION  
HECTARES OF  
LAND BURNED

ROUGHLY  
65,000  
PEOPLE  
WERE  
EVACUATED

\$568  
MILLION  
SPENT IN  
FIRE  
SUPPRESSION



# BC wildfires and tourism

Provide regions with safety and travel option messaging

#realtime hashtag

British Columbia, Alberta, Washington

“Know before you go” messaging

Cariboo Chilcotin Coast, Northern BC, Thompson Okanagan, Kootenay Rockies

British Columbia wildfires

Cancellation of short-haul market trips

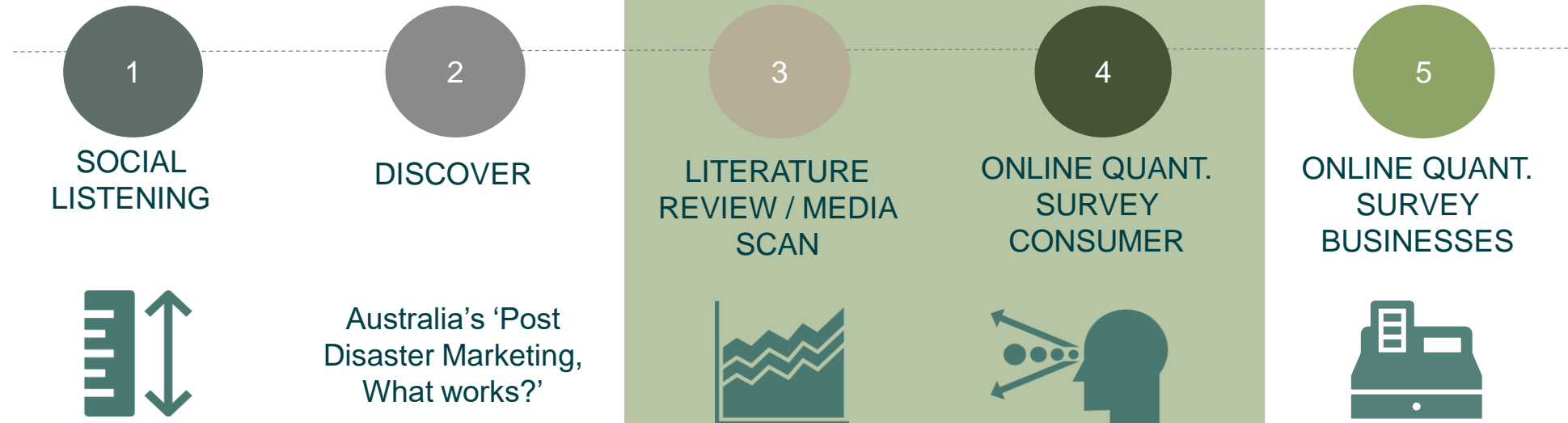
Coordinated communications

Support / market affected areas

# Research process



# Research process



# Objectives

1. What marketing message themes are being used globally to communicate with visitors/potential visitors post-natural disasters?
2. What's the awareness of BC wildfires and areas affected?
3. Did the wildfires/smoke impact travellers' plans in BC 2018?
4. Do different marketing messages have different impacts on travellers in/to BC?



## GLOBAL NATURAL DISASTER MESSAGE THEME

## BC WILDFIRE MESSAGES

Business as usual

'It's business as usual'

Confidence restoration / resilience

'The wild is always open'

'Smoke clears, our spirit remains'

'Smoke clears, beauty remains'

Empathy

'Every single visit helps'

Repeat visitation

'Return to the wild'

Shared values

'We are all wild at heart'

Short-term discounts

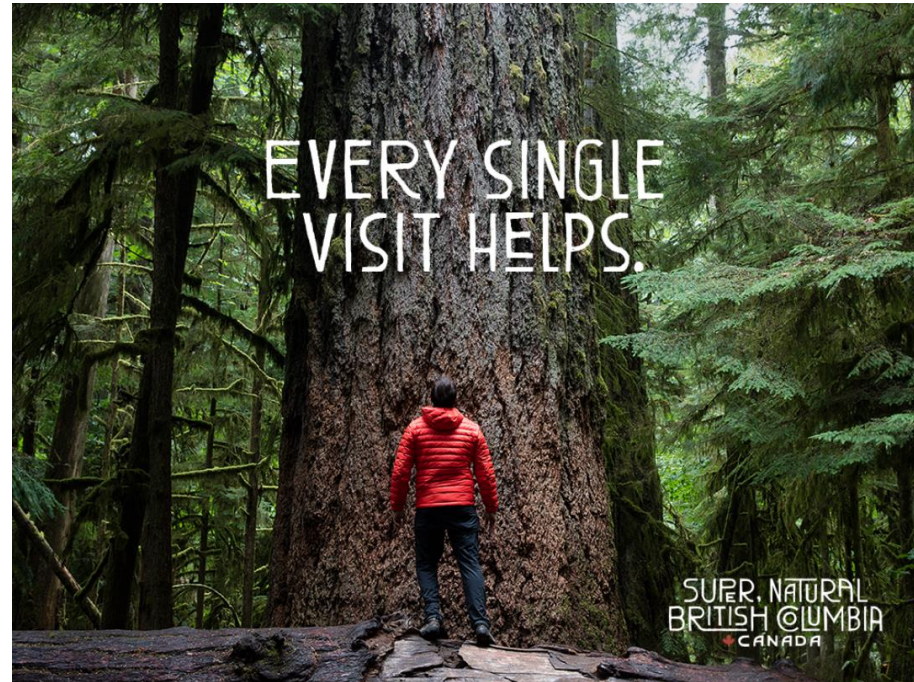
'Save money and spend some time'

Solidarity

'Our home is yours to explore'

Still beautiful

'Beauty still runs deep'





# THE AHA'S

BC's short-haul markets have varying degrees of awareness of the wildfires occurring in the province

Values likely play a role in what people want to do versus what they do in terms of travelling post-wildfire

Two distinct marketing message themes were identified as best to encourage visitation, post-wildfires in the province

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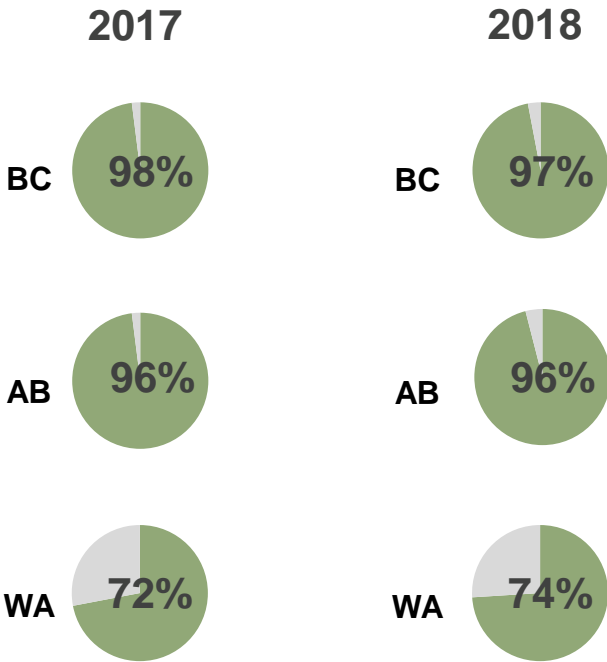
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# Washingtonians are not as aware of the occurrence and the locations of the BC wildfires



## Awareness of British Columbia Wildfires in Summer of:



## Perception of Location of 2018 British Columbia Wildfires

	BC	AB	WA
Thompson Okanagan	65%	46%	17%
Kelowna	64%	56%	11%
South Okanagan	60%	42%	13%
Cariboo Chilcotin Coast	60%	34%	15%
Kamloops	58%	41%	10%
Northern BC	54%	39%	16%
Kootenay Rockies	45%	46%	11%
Vancouver Island	24%	7%	7%
Vancouver Coast & Mountains	23%	10%	21%
Vancouver	21%	7%	26%
Whistler	17%	8%	14%
Victoria	9%	2%	9%
Gulf Islands	6%	2%	4%
Don't know	3%	13%	37%

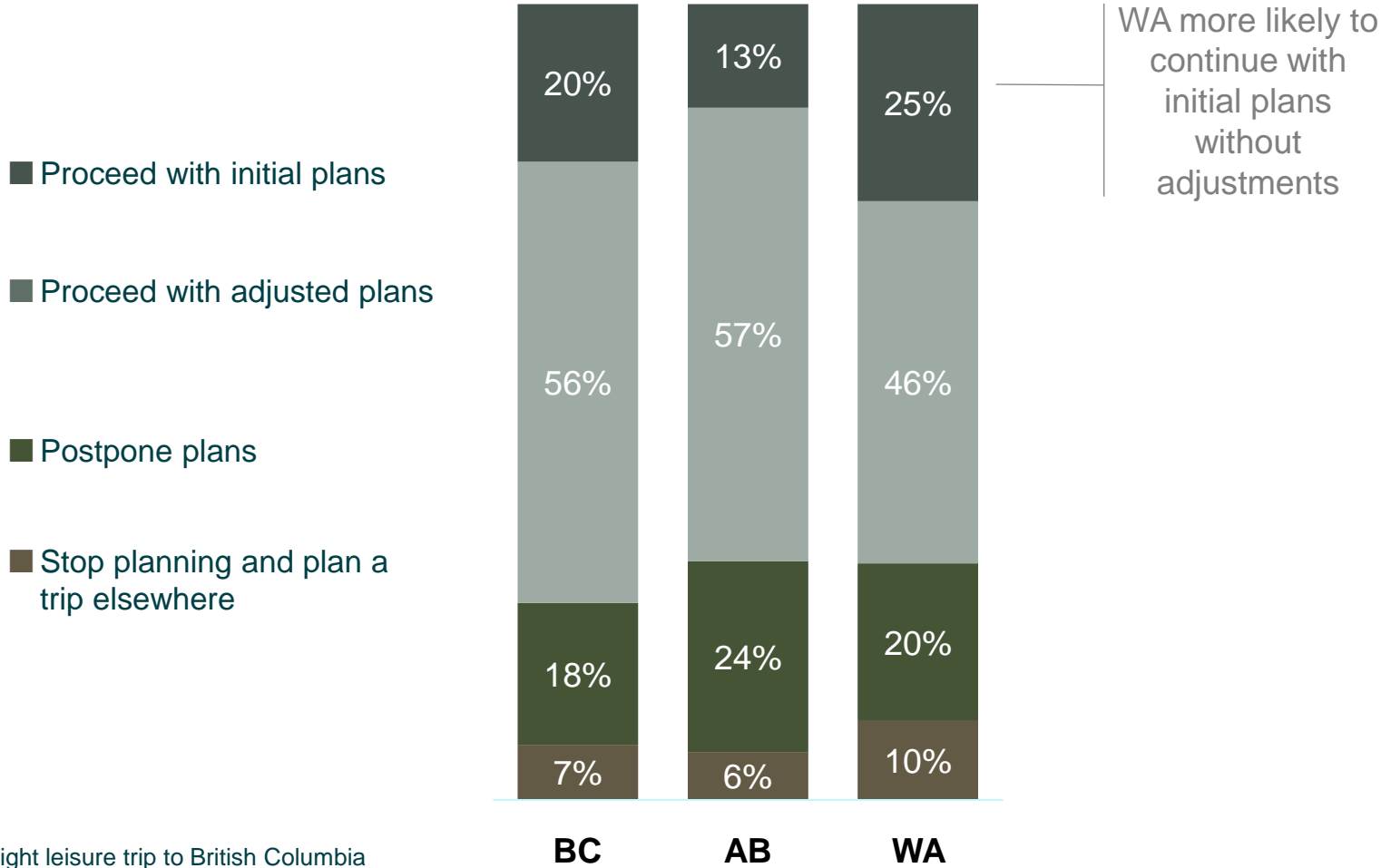
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# Overall, short-haul markets would continue with their travel plans to BC following awareness of wildfires

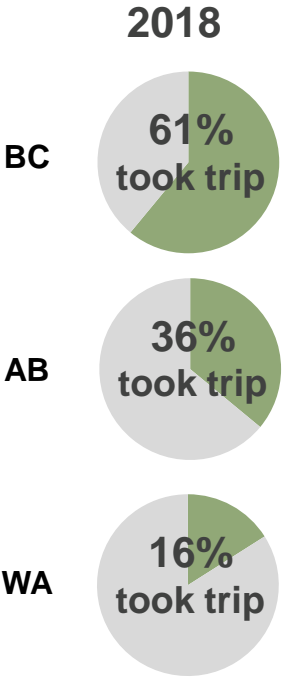


Q7. Imagine you are planning an overnight leisure trip to British Columbia and you learn that a wildfire has just occurred there. Which of the following would you be most inclined to do?

Washingtonians said the wildfires wouldn't bother them when asked hypothetically; when in reality, not as many visited to BC, relative to their counter parts, and said the fires played a role



**Leisure Travel to/within British Columbia in summer of:**



**Impact of Fires or Smoke on Travel Plans Summer 2018 to British Columbia**

	BC	AB	WA
<b>Travel plans were impacted by fires/smoke</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>33%</b>
Changed types of activities participated in	11%	8%	5%
Reduced trip length	6%	7%	14%
Changed city, community or route	4%	6%	6%
Changed trip date	3%	2%	16%
Changed accommodations	3%	2%	4%
Increased trip length	1%	1%	5%



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# MARKETING MESSAGE THEMES WERE SUCCESSFUL IF THEY:



1

Resonated with visitors/potential visitors (e.g. seen as believable, affected feelings, had clear meaning)

2

Ensured greater likelihood of keeping BC travel plans (as opposed to postponing or cancelling plans)

3

Ensured greater likelihood of making travel plans to BC in the future



# Top message themes resonated on an emotional level with visitors/potential visitors

This message is: <i>Average % agreeing 'somewhat' or 'strongly'</i>	Overall	TOP Theme 1	TOP Theme 2
It has a clear meaning	72%	81%	82%
It is believable	71%	82%	76%
I felt positive towards the advertisement	65%	77%	69%
It is trustworthy	62%	72%	66%
It is personally relevant to me	51%	60%	54%
It affected my feelings	51%	59%	59%

Upon seeing marketing messages, visitors/potential visitors are twice as likely to move toward keeping travel plans, than postponing/cancelling plans

Impact of Ads on Trip Planning Intentions to British Columbia Following a Wildfire <i>Average % agreeing 'somewhat' or 'strongly'</i>	Overall	TOP Theme 1	TOP Theme 2
Intentions More Positive	19%	19%	24%
Intentions Unchanged	73%	73%	69%
Intentions More Negative	8%	7%	8%

Upon hearing about the wildfires, visitors/potential visitors are more likely to begin planning a trip to BC

The messaging makes you...	Overall	TOP Theme 1	TOP Theme 2
More likely to start planning a trip to BC	62%	71%	65%

‘Solidarity’ and ‘Confidence Restoration / Resilience’ were identified as the top two marketing message themes

TOP Marketing Message  
Themes and Messages



SOLIDARITY



CONFIDENCE RESORTATION / RESILIENCE



'Discount' and 'Business As Usual' were identified as marketing message themes not to use

BOTTOM Marketing Message  
Themes and Messages



DISCOUNT



BUSINESS AS USUAL





# MARKETING MESSAGE IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS



## Awareness of Wildfires

- Virtually all in BC and AB were aware of wildfires in 2017 and 2018
- 37% of WA travellers admitted they didn't know where the wildfires occurred or inaccurately cited Vancouver and the surrounding area



## Risk Aversion

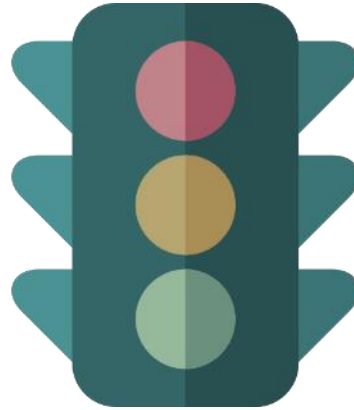
- **BC:** Not as likely to be affected as other short-haul markets
- **AB:** most sensitive to risk and changing or postponing plans due to a natural disaster



## Timeline for Tourism Recovery

- Strong majority who would postpone their BC trip would take their trip within a year
- BC travellers would take their postponed trip within six months

# Implications / Implementation of Research Findings



## Start

- Segment by risk orientation
- Sequence messaging to inspire immediate travel sooner, particularly in BC
- Expand “know before you go” messaging into WA to address gap in awareness

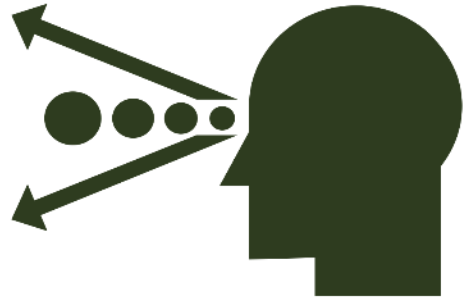
## Continue

- Restore confidence
- Reach WA, AB audience
- Coordinate marketing activities with affected Regions and Communities

## Avoid

- Refrain from “business as usual” messaging at provincial level





**“Who should deliver post wildfire communication marketing messages?”**



**“What has been the impact of wildfire and floods on businesses?”**

# Thank you! Questions?

**For marketing message  
research-related questions:**

Kailee Penner  
Senior Researcher  
Research and Analytics  
604-953-6722  
[Kailee.Penner@DestinationBC.ca](mailto:Kailee.Penner@DestinationBC.ca)

**For implementation-related  
questions:**

Elisa Tang  
Manager  
Strategy and Content Integration  
604-202-1728  
[Elisa.Tang@DestinationBC.ca](mailto:Elisa.Tang@DestinationBC.ca)