

ISSUE 6

JULY

2026

INTRODUCING THE
LUMO x FFR RISING STAR
AWARD + AMBASSADOR
CALL + ADC YOUNG GUNS
+ PIXELS + MORE

FIRST
FIVE
RUNGS

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Kia ora

Welcome back!

Congrats for surviving all the way through to the final-ish stretch of New Zealand winter. We say it's time to reward yourself with five minutes away from your inbox to read this newsletter. Read on to see our chunkiest Opportunities section ever, an interview with one of New Zealand's emerging talents in media, and even a section where we require audience participation (in the form of a 🎉 reader's survey 🎉). Please take a moment to let us know how we're doing! Our goal is to reach even more people in the industry, so if you have any recommendations or feedback, we'd loooove to hear it.

Without further ado...

Opportunities

Introducing the LUMO x FFR Rising Star Award

First Five Rungs and LUMO have launched the **Rising Star Award**, a new accolade to celebrate trailblazers in their first five years of careers in advertising, media and PR who make the industry better for those around them. Whether they're sharing knowledge, mentoring peers or leading by example, the award shines a light on emerging talent proving that influence isn't defined by seniority



Launching first in Wellington before extending to the Auckland region, the award is open to staff at Comms Council affiliated agencies. Nominations can come from peers, managers or the nominees themselves, with the inaugural winner receiving a \$200 Prezzy Card, thanks to LUMO.

Keep an eye on our socials and look out for an email from us on Monday 3 August, to have a crack at being the first ever LUMO x FFR Rising Star winner!

Our search for FFR Ambassadors

If you're into what we do, and see yourself as a bit of a shepherd when it comes to rounding up the crew, why not sign up to become a FFR Ambassador? It's a great way to signal your leadership potential to your managers, and it gives you one of the funnest volunteer responsibilities possible (i.e. encouraging your work mates to have fun). Interested? [Click here to sign up.](#)

Sign up to be an ambassador



LAST CALL for LUMO Pixels

The curtains are closing soon on the must-enter competition for our community.

The Pixel Awards are a free-to-enter opportunity for creatives to showcase innovative thinking through pushing LUMO's digital OOH offerings in ways that the world's never seen before.

In addition to winning \$50,000 in free media for your clients, the winners will also receive a cash prize of \$5000, \$2000 and \$1000 respectively for first, second and third place. Being that this is the only award in NZ where the entrants win cash money, it's well worth you putting all the love you can muster into your entry.

[Click here to learn more](#)



Under 30? Art Directors Club Opens Call for Entries For Global ADC Young Guns 24

ADC Young Guns is the industry's only global, cross-disciplinary, portfolio-based awards competition that identifies and celebrates today's vanguard of young creatives. The program is open to creatives ages 30 and under who have been working for at least two years, full-time or freelance. Eligible entrants can submit a combination of professional and personal work.

The online entry system is now open, with the reduced-fee regular deadline of August 27, 2026, and final deadline September 24, 2026. Winners will be announced in January 2027, with the YG24 awards ceremony and party slated for January 27, 2027 in New York.

[Click here to Enter](#)

The Quick Fire Five with Henry Sneddon

What's the secret to bringing home a Beacon? We caught up with the 2026 Beacons Emerging Talent in Media Agency winner Henry Sneddon to find out.



Q: Did you have any idea you were going to receive the Emerging Talent award, or did it catch you by surprise?

A: It completely caught me by surprise. I had no idea anyone at work had nominated me, so seeing the email from the Comms Council naming me as a finalist was unexpected. At first, I honestly thought it was one of those corporate security emails trying to get me to complete a verification exercise. Once I realised it was genuine, it was a really exciting moment.

Q: What does a typical day look like for you at PHD?

A: My role is very end-to-end. I work across several clients, developing digital media strategies based on their business objectives and performance. That involves researching opportunities, building strategic media recommendations, presenting them to clients, and working through how we'll implement them.

Once a media strategy is approved, I also help execute it, whether that's implementing changes directly on the client's website or overseeing delivery. I don't have an account manager sitting between me and the client, so I'm responsible for media strategy, client relationships, and execution.

Q: What's the piece of work you're most proud of?

A: A client came to us with ambitious KPIs and a tight timeframe. We developed a media strategy based on how search is evolving through AI, including ChatGPT, LLMs, Google AI Overviews, and changes to Google's search ecosystem.

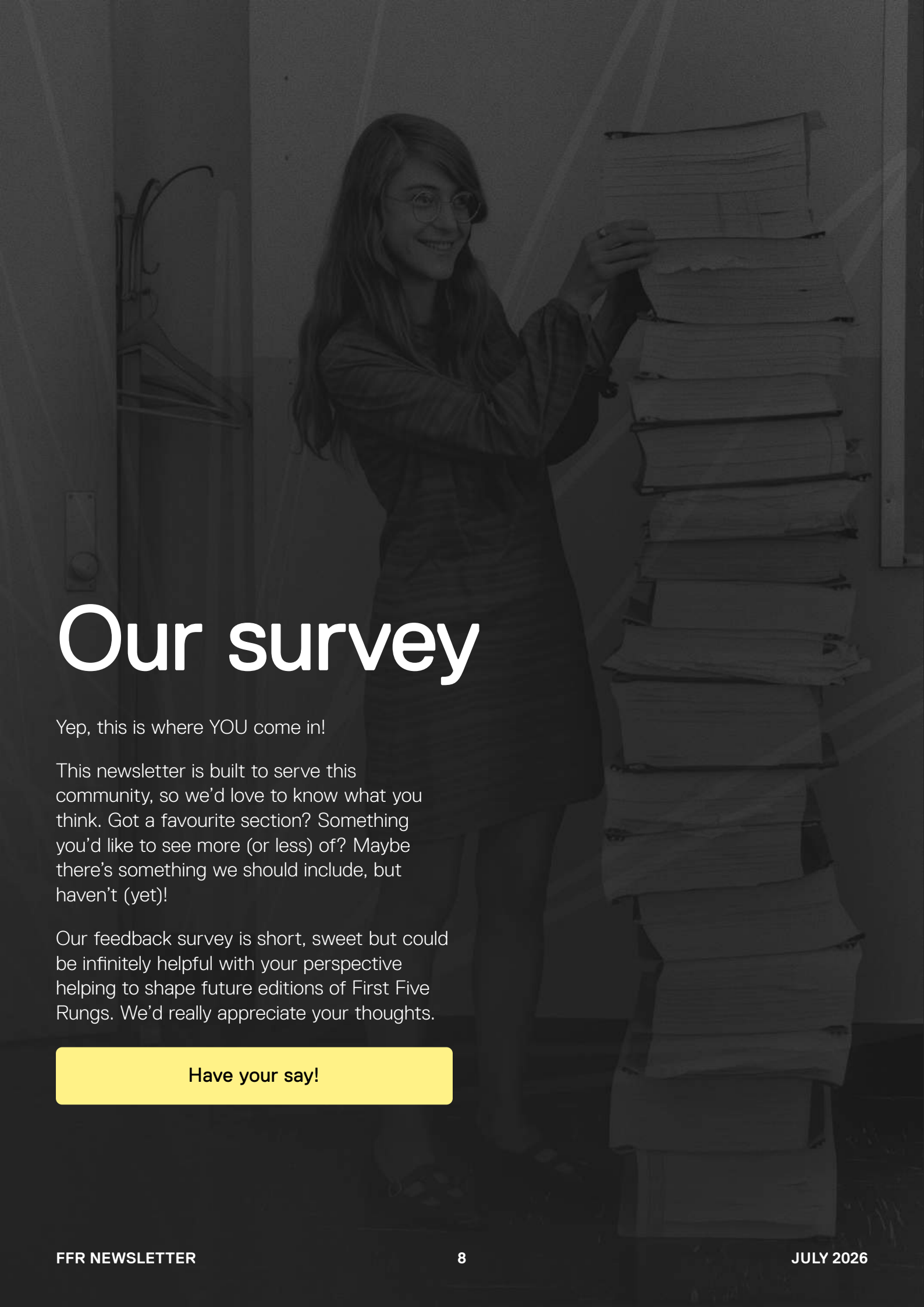
Working alongside the client, we created and implemented a media strategy that achieved first-place rankings for a key industry search term. At the same time, the brand gained visibility across emerging AI search experiences like ChatGPT and Google AI Overviews. Achieving strong performance in both traditional search and AI-powered search made it a particularly rewarding project.

Q: How do you switch off after work?

A: I try to disconnect from work as soon as I close my laptop. Exercise helps, but spending time with friends is probably the biggest thing. Having conversations that have nothing to do with work helps me reset, laugh, and focus on life outside the office. It's important to stay connected with people outside your workplace.

Q: What's the best piece of advice you can give to someone who's just starting out in advertising?

A: Put your hand up for every opportunity you can. Even if something hasn't been directly offered to you, look for ways to get involved and broaden your experience. Don't be afraid to step into situations that feel uncomfortable or beyond your current experience. Those are often the moments where you learn the most, and in my experience, they almost always pay off.

A woman with long hair and glasses, smiling, holding a large stack of papers. The image is dark and serves as a background for the text.

Our survey

Yep, this is where YOU come in!

This newsletter is built to serve this community, so we'd love to know what you think. Got a favourite section? Something you'd like to see more (or less) of? Maybe there's something we should include, but haven't (yet)!

Our feedback survey is short, sweet but could be infinitely helpful with your perspective helping to shape future editions of First Five Rungs. We'd really appreciate your thoughts.

Have your say!

What we're loving

Here's what the FFR crew have been a bit kinda maybe obsessed with lately:



LILY LOVES

Fonts In Use

You're on a walk. You see a poster. You spend the rest of the day trying to identify the font. We've all been there. Fonts In Use is a searchable archive of real typography out in the actual world... who used it, where, and why. Warning: extremely dangerous if you have anything due today.

[Check it out](#)



CRYSTAL LOVES

Vox Crosswords

It just gets to a point where you can't do another Stuff quiz. Like, literally there are none left. Because you are a master procrastinator. Luckily, Vox Media releases a new crossword every day. Take another 5 mins rn to let your brain have a wriggle.

[Check it out](#)



ANDREW LOVES

Poolside FM

It's 3pm. The brief is due at 5. You need to feel like you're working from a villa in the South of France in 1987 but you are, in fact, in an open plan office in Auckland. Poolside FM is a lo-fi synthwave radio station with a retro Mac interface that makes everything feel cinematic and vaguely European. Put it on. Do not look at Slack.

[Check it out](#)