

Agents witness Turkey unplugged

DURING Mar, three groups of agents from Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory travelled to Turkey with On The Go Tours to experience the Turkey Unplugged 10-day tour.

Starting in the vibrant and cosmopolitan city of Istanbul, the groups explored the streets of Bosphorus, wandered through laneways in the Old City, met with friendly locals and learned about the history of Istanbul, once the ruling capital of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires.

"We loved seeing the streets overflowing with locals shopping and bargaining their way through the weekend," said Lisa McCowan, On The Go Tours BDM for Vic and Tas, who hosted 10 agents from Victorian stores.

The 10-day tour discovered Turkey's landscapes, cultural and history, from Istanbul's bazaars, Roman ruins in Pergamum, the Aegean Coast to the natural wonder of Pamukkale.

"Visiting Gallipoli was very moving," McCowan said.

"It's an incredible place at any time of year but being there just ahead of ANZAC Day made it feel even more poignant."

McCowan went on to say, "We went on a jeep safari amongst the valleys of fairy chimneys and had lunch overlooking the Goreme Valley, which was the best day on the tour."

While tourism took a turn in 2014 following political turmoil, Turkey is making a comeback with tourist numbers rising and coastal resorts operating as usual.

"As at the end of Mar we are 125% up year-on-year for Australia and 162% growth globally for Turkey sales," said Natalie James, General Manager Australia for On The Go Tours.

"It truly is the best time to book a trip to Turkey as you'll find less crowds and an incredible array of local cuisine," James said.

"The iconic Blue Mosque has re-opened after a three-month renovation last year, making this unique building more appealing than ever," she said.



STRIKING a pose at Ortisaah.



THE archway at Pergamum.



SELFIE time at Cappadocia.



THE group at Pergamum.



OUTSIDE the Blue Mosque.



SNAPPING a photo at Ephesus.



A CEREMONIAL site at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli.



THE Group at Ephesus.



INSIDE the Blue Mosque.



THE group at Pergamum.