

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features eight pages of the latest news including our **Sustainability** page plus full pages from:

- Oceania Cruises
- Cruise Lines International Association
- Abercrombie & Kent

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## AFTA secures skills win

**EXCLUSIVE**

**TRAVEL** consultants have been added to the Government's key Skills Priority List of professions in short supply, with the move aiming to help build the industry's desperately depleted workforce.

The move means employer incentive support under apprenticeship programs will now cover traineeships in Certificate III Travel, all the way through to the Advanced Diploma of Tourism and Travel Management.

AFTA CEO Dean Long told *Travel Daily* the organisation's National Taskforce for Skills and Careers had been actively lobbying for the changes, given the chronic workforce shortages currently

holding back the sector's recovery.

Long said the Taskforce had met with departments and officials including Minister for Skills & Training Brendan O'Connor, Tourism & Trade Minister Don Farrell and Immigration Minister Andrew Giles, to highlight the industry's concerns.

"We very much appreciate their support in getting the important role of travel professionals recognised," the AFTA CEO said.

"We look forward to continuing to drive change on behalf of our members and the wider travel sector, given the ongoing massive challenge faced across the board as a result of the chronic workforce and skills shortages."

AFTA will now write to state and territory leaders to ensure funding is allocated to the courses, with commencement and completion incentives available as well as wage subsidies of up to \$15,000.

## Oceania offer

**IN CELEBRATION** of 20 years at sea, Oceania Cruises is giving away a free cruise to the top three performing travel agents, while clients can enjoy 50% reduced deposits and receive up to US\$800 in shipboard credit.

For details, see **page nine**.

## Sail free with A&K

**AGENTS** can earn a free cruise for themselves and a guest when they book three staterooms on any Abercrombie & Kent (A&K) Luxury Expedition Cruise between 17 Oct 2022 and 31 Mar 2023, for voyages departing between 01 Nov 2022 and 31 Jan 2024.

For more info, go to **page 11**.

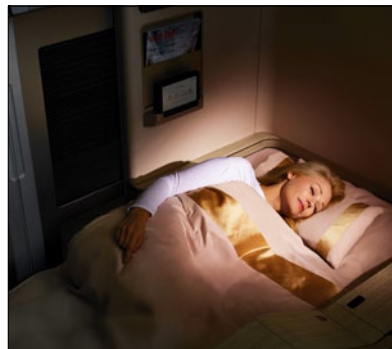
## Travel Daily on location in Hobart

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Viking, which is taking guests across the Tasman aboard *Viking Orion*, sailing from Hobart to Christchurch.

**THIS** morning *Travel Daily* has embarked onto Viking's *Viking Orion*, on a mini-famil sailing across the Tasman Sea.

The itinerary is part of *Orion's* larger "Discovery Aussie & Kiwi Splendors" cruise from Sydney to Auckland, which lasts 15 days all-up and also saw industry guests hosted on a previous Sydney-Melbourne segment.

We will be on board *Orion* for five days, experiencing all the ship has to offer, ahead of enjoying some of the most tempting ports and scenic fjord cruising in New Zealand's spectacular South Island.



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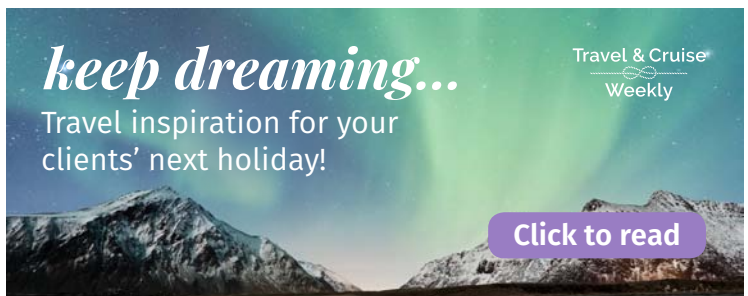
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## Schwartz tackles shortage

**HIGH-PROFILE** hotelier Dr Jerry Schwartz has partnered with the University of Newcastle to help combat the hospitality skills deficit, announcing the creation of the Hunter Hospitality School Training Academy.

The new education facility will be housed inside Schwartz's property in Newcastle's Honeysuckle district, offering courses in hospitality, spa therapy and brewing, with the new Cert IV course flagged as a possible bolt-on to the University of Newcastle's Bachelor of Tourism, Hospitality and Events course.

The Cert IV course will be structured to allow credits for the first year of the new three-year tertiary course.

"The University degree and our college diplomas will place a major emphasis on developing practical skills, particularly in relation to the Hunter region... and getting experience in areas

like wine and craft beer sectors will be important as these are major tourism drivers for the regions," Schwartz said.

Schwartz owns three hotels in the Hunter Valley: Rydges Newcastle, Newcastle Novotel and Hunter Valley Crowne Plaza.

## Visit USA reminder

**VISIT USA** is reminding travel agents that there are only two weeks to go before its Expo Series takes place in Australia.

Spots for the first event in Brisbane on 20 Feb are available to waitlist apps only, while Melbourne (21 Feb) and Sydney (22 Feb) are nearing capacity.

The marketing body is also requesting any advisor who has registered to attend but can no longer make it to please cancel their e-ticket to make space for other attendees.

Register to attend **HERE**.

## RCG hops into new office



**ROYAL Caribbean Group (RCG)** this morning formally cut the ribbon on its new office in North Sydney, which is believed to be the first of the cruise giant's locations to combine Royal Caribbean International, Silversea Cruises and Celebrity Cruises under a single roof.

Staff were welcomed to a special breakfast event during which the three local VPs - Tim Jones from Celebrity, Royal Caribbean's Gavin Smith and Silversea's Adam Radwanski (**pictured**) - spoke about their excitement at the new space, which provides expansive common areas, meeting rooms and collaborative spaces and is expected to significantly improve inter-brand collaboration.

Smith recounted some of the group's long history in Australia, telling *Travel Daily* that when

Royal Caribbean first turned its sights on the local market about 25 years ago, the brands at that time collectively transacted about \$20 million in sales annually.

That has now grown to something more like half a billion dollars, he noted, setting the stage for further expansion - with the new office currently housing about 110 people including the local Silversea call centre, but with capacity for up to 160.

The new office also has harbour views, allowing the team to watch ships as they come and go from White Bay and the Overseas Passenger Terminal.

Today's event was the culmination of an eight-month process delivered by Scope Projects, which celebrated the moment by donating an auspicious rabbit artwork to the organisation.

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## Attention Vic agents

**TRAVELMANAGERS** is reminding travel advisors based in Victoria that they can join the company's network without a joining fee until 31 Mar.

Business Partnerships Manager Despina Madden has hit the road in the state to recruit travel advisors to join the TM family, even those that have left the sector and are currently mulling a possible return to travel.

For a confidential chat, call Madden on 0434 747 293.

## IATA Somalia pact

**THE** International Air Transport Association has signed a new agreement with the Government of Somalia, seeking to formalise cooperation with the aim of strengthening the economic and social benefits of aviation there.

A new framework will see IATA's activities in Somalia expand as part of the Association's mission to support aviation in Africa.

## Conferma pay role

**SABRE** Corporation has announced the appointment of Jason Lalor as the new CEO of Conferma Pay, the virtual card payments business it acquired late last year (**TD** 12 Aug 2022).

Lalor has more than two decades of executive leadership experience, and was most recently the Dublin-based CEO of the European business of credit card processor Square and has also spent more than six years with Mastercard.

He takes over from interim CEO, Aussie technology executive Martin Cowley, who has been acting in the role since the Sabre acquisition.

Sabre Travel Solutions Executive VP, Roshan Mendis, said Lalor's appointment was the next step in the organisation's payments journey, with plans to build new and enhanced virtual card capabilities to transform the payment experience for the global travel industry.

## AFTA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



**TODAY** I am back in Canberra for the first sitting week of parliament and to say it has been a busy start to the year would be an understatement.

As most would have seen, last week AFTA lodged three submissions to the ACCC in regards to the reauthorisation of a number of commercial arrangements.

AFTA is not providing any further comments and will be working with the ACCC on the issues raised as we seek to have those issues addressed.

However, I do want to acknowledge the positive feedback that AFTA has received from all sections of the sector.

In Canberra I will be reconnecting with ministers, assistant ministers and departments as they seek to understand our recovery and what more needs to be done.

One of the meetings that is always beneficial is with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

AFTA has an incredibly

rich history with DFAT, with embedded relationships from the consular services team to the passport office.

We have always worked hand in glove to ensure travel is safe and that the role of ATAS-accredited businesses is properly understood and valued.

On this visit we will be working together on what new processes and systems are under development and how ATAS businesses will be able to use them effectively.

The team is also back assessing renewal applications from ATAS businesses and we have already assessed over 20% of the members, which is one of the fastest submissions rates we have ever seen.

Finally, we will soon be releasing details about the Women in Travel Summit coming up on 13 Mar in Sydney.

The Summit will seek to identify what we as an industry do well and what we can improve on, which will all be captured in what will be the industry's inaugural Workforce Report.

This report will detail our aspirations and create meaningful targets that we will seek achieve as a collective.

BUSINESS  
REWARDS



## WIN 100,000 Qantas Points

We're giving away 100,000 Qantas Points to five lucky agents.\* To enter, complete the Qantas for Business course on the Qantas Learning Hub, fill in a short survey and answer a question in 25 words or less. Entries close 31 March 2023. Visit [qantas.com/agencyconnect](https://qantas.com/agencyconnect)

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\*To enter, Eligible Entrants must during the Promotion Period complete the 'Qantas for Business' learning course on the Qantas Learning Hub, answer a short survey, and detail in 25 words or less 'How will you use your refreshed understanding of Qantas' SME products to unlock more value for your customers when flying Qantas?' between 1 February and 31 March 2023. 5 winners will each receive 100,000 Qantas Points each. Entrants must be members of the Qantas Frequent Flyer program and provide their unique Qantas Frequent Flyer member identification number to be in the running. Visit [qantas.com/agencyconnect](https://qantas.com/agencyconnect) for full T&Cs.





## CLIA LIVE 2023

**CRUISE** Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia has announced more details about its CLIA LIVE education series for this year, with events already locked in for several Australian cities.

The education forum provides agents with a two-day seminar format to learn more about the latest developments across ocean, river and expedition cruise lines, including new product developments and initiatives.

Dates have now been confirmed between Mar and May for Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, as well as Auckland in New Zealand, with presentations to be geared toward both new-to-cruise travel agents as well as more experienced cruise specialists looking to update their knowledge bases.

Tickets are only available to CLIA member travel agents, costing \$55 per day - more details [HERE](#).

## Turkey hit by earthquake

A **DEVASTATING** series of earthquakes that struck close to the Turkish city of Gaziantep have caused widespread damage in Turkey and Syria.

Responding to the tragedy overnight, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has advised Australian travellers in Turkey to contact friends and family as soon as possible to let them know they are safe.

Any visitors in Turkey that have significant concerns for their own welfare should contact the Consular Emergency Centre on +61 2 6261 3305, while Australians that have concerns for family members in Turkey can call 1300 555 135 for assistance.

The earthquakes are believed to be the deadliest to strike Turkey since 1939, seeing around 6,217 buildings collapse across 10 provinces, many located in Adiyaman and Diyarbakir.

The quake has also badly damaged historic tourist attraction Gaziantep Castle.

Intrepid Travel has responded quickly to the crisis, this morning launching an emergency appeal via the Intrepid Foundation to help those affected.

In partnership with the Red Cross, Intrepid Travel will match the first \$100,000 in donations made via the appeal, and is additionally donating all profits from Turkey bookings made between now and 30 Apr to the special appeal.

## Silversea events

**SILVERSEA** Cruises' Senior VP of Expeditions, Conrad Combrink, will host a series of events in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney in the coming weeks, showcasing his extensive experience and Silversea's global expedition itineraries - info on 1300 306 872.

## Sunshine Coast leverages Bonza

**VISIT** Sunshine Coast and Expedia's Wotif site have launched a new promotional campaign, designed to build on the success of Bonza's launch.

The push will target residents in NSW, Victoria, and Southeast Queensland, offering special deals on accommodation to spike bookings for the shoulder period in the coming months.

Part of the Find your Sunshine Moment campaign, the latest instalment deliberately coincides with the introduction of new budget carrier Bonza (**TD** 31 Jan), which is tipped to create a renewed sense of tourism interest in the Sunshine Coast.

Discount deals include 10% off stays at Oaks Oasis Sunshine Coast Resort, Caloundra, 15% savings at RACV Noosa Resort, Noosa Heads, and 15% off Beach Road Holiday Homes, Noosa North Shore - more details [HERE](#).

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## Quipmo closes down

**QUIPMO**, the Brisbane-based online surf, bike and snow equipment rental marketplace, has announced its closure.

Launched by well-travelled surfer Chris Evans in 2016, the tech startup allowed adventure travellers to rent electric bikes, surfboards, paddleboards, and snowboards from peers in 21 countries around the world.

The closure followed a promising start for the business, which won Austrade's Going Global award in 2019, and was named Most Admired Startup for 2020 by Startup News.

Evans revealed the "incredibly difficult and saddening decision" to close the company's doors via a post on LinkedIn late last week, citing a number of circumstances which made Quipmo's shutdown "inevitable".

The challenges of the pandemic, as well as the recent catastrophic flooding in Australia, both played

a pivotal role in the company's closure, Evans wrote.

"Deteriorating conditions in the global economy coupled with a contraction in early stage investment in Australia along with thematic trepidation around travel and leisure - both at an investment and partnership level, led to the company being unable to raise our next round and we simply ran out of time and cash to take the business forward."

## Radisson rebranded

**RADISSON** Blu has unveiled its newly transformed Berkshire Hotel on Oxford Street in the United Kingdom, which has been rebranded to Radisson Blu Edwardian, Bond Street.

The boutique hotel is ideally positioned in central London, and offers 149 bedroom and suites as well as tea rooms, and a lounge bar serving Italian cuisine.

## Chinese students enjoy sunshine



**BRISBANE** Airport has welcomed the arrival of overseas students from China, who are preparing to resume face-to-face learning later this month.

Valued at \$3 billion, the international education & training sector was Queensland's largest services export in 2022, and the return of overseas students from China is "extremely significant for South East Queensland's economy", Brisbane Airport Corporation CEO Gert-Jan de Graaff said.

"China is a critical market, and our aviation team is actively engaging with airlines to bring back direct services to make it easier for students and tourists to connect to Brisbane and Queensland," he added.

The influx of students is expected to peak on Fri, with more than 100 students booked on a single Cathay Pacific flight from Hong Kong.

**Pictured:** Some of the new arrivals, ready to study and enjoy Queensland's attractions.

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## FCTG agents in the Sky



**SIX** Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) Independent agents and their partners recently had the opportunity to experience Viking's eight-day Journey to Antiquities voyage from Athens to Rome, hosted by Viking Cruise Consultant Liz Sawyers.

While on board *Viking Sky*, the group enjoyed destination-inspired cuisine, afternoon tea in the Wintergarden, cocktail-making courses, the Nordic spa and fitness centre and informative lectures.

The 930-guest small ship visited historic ports in Greece, Turkey and Italy, allowing the agents to participate in a myriad of exciting excursions, such as climbing Mount Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe.

The group also explored the charming coastal town of Taormina and its Greek theatre, which dates back to the 2nd Century; explored the UNESCO

World Heritage Site of Pompeii; and enjoyed a stroll through the narrow streets and alleyways of sunny Sorrento.

The group raved about the experience, with Melissa Goodwin saying, "this was just what I needed to reinvigorate my love for travel and build my confidence in cruising again".

Anna Bayley echoed the sentiment, particularly impressed by the ship's facilities and spaciousness, personalised services, food options and shore excursions to suit everyone.

"As a travel agent in the industry for over 30 years, this is definitely the best ocean cruise I have ever done," Julianne D'Allesandro added.

**Pictured** overlooking Sorrento: Sarita O'Sullivan (daughter of Kerri), Kerri O'Sullivan, Damien Lynch, Liz Sawyers of Viking, Melissa Goodwin, Mark Goodwin and Cameron Wark.

## Window Seat

**MOST** of us have experienced a holiday that didn't live up to expectations, but spare a thought for a man from New York whose planned trip to Sydney, Australia was derailed by a spelling mistake.

Kingsley Burnett recently booked an adventure to enjoy an Aussie summer and escape the blistering cold of New York, but while flying to his destination quickly realised something was terribly wrong.

"I saw a mountaintop covered in white snow [from the plane] and at that point, I knew I was in trouble," a forlorn Burnett told KTVQ.

It turns out the hapless traveller had booked a plane trip to Sidney, Montana by mistake, a small US city with a population of around 7,000 people and a far cry from the summer paradise of Sydney.

"It's a matter of acronyms, the S-Y-D as opposed to S-D-Y - somebody needs to fix that," bumbling booby Burnett insisted during an interview.

Despite failing to notice the clear price difference and the much shorter flight duration, Burnett insisted the mistake was an easy one to make.

The final indignity was knowing he would not be able to make his booked cruise from Sydney.

## Surfs up at Ingenia

**INGENIA** Holiday Parks has renewed its partnership with Surfing NSW, which will see it promoted as the favoured accommodation option for the country's surfing community.

With surfing now recognised as an Olympic sport, Ingenia will also support the 2023 Team NSW, and will be the preferred destination for training camps offered to the athletes throughout the year.

"Complimenting Ingenia Holiday Parks growth and our Surfing NSW continual growth as an Olympic sport with a stronger, more established pathway, we will work closely with Ingenia to ensure their parks and services are top of mind for surfers," Surfing NSW Head of Partnerships, Media & Marketing, Emma Porter, said.

## New Japan dates

**INSIDEJAPAN**, part of Inside Travel Group, has closed bookings for its Japan cherry blossom season tours in late Mar and early Apr due to high demand.

According to Marketing Manager Harry Sargant, factors in its tours reaching capacity included reduced flight capacity and pent-up demand for InsideJapan's cherry blossom season this year.

The operator has now launched its 2024 small group tour dates for Japan, including the 13-day Japan Unmasked itinerary departing 19 Feb 2024 - to see the full list of dates, [CLICK HERE](#).

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### The Star's farm

**THE** Star Entertainment Group has acquired a 170-hectare plot of farmland near Gympie in Southeast Queensland, which it will use to manage its future carbon emissions reduction.

The Australian company will plant over 100,000 native trees on the land over the next five years to generate carbon credits, as well as to help create habitats for local, endangered species, particularly koalas.

The sustainability project will support The Star's target of net-zero carbon emissions for wholly owned and operated properties by 2030.

### Sweden invests

**SWEDEN** is set to invest US\$1.4 million each year into research and innovation activities to support the uptake of electric aircraft in the country, according to the latest industry update from The International Air Transport Association (IATA).

**MEANWHILE** in Asia, Asiana Airlines has signed an agreement with Shell to secure SAF from 2026, while All Nippon Airways and Japan Airlines have committed to sourcing SAF from US producer Raven, from as early as 2025.

## TRAVELLERS NOT TO BLAME: REPORT

**AUSTRALIAN** travellers feel airlines and regulators should shoulder the burden of how to manage carbon emissions in air travel, with very few people feeling that individuals should be primarily responsible for managing their own footprint.

The findings were contained in Airservices Australia's *Travel Sentiment Index 2023* report released this week, with more than half of respondents indicating that governments and airlines should be the prime movers on reducing carbon emissions, with a considerable amount also suggesting the "travel industry as a whole" should also take charge of the challenges faced.

The same report also showed that when it comes to what



the airline industry's priorities should be moving forward, reducing emissions ranked lower than what travellers felt were more pressing issues, such as enhancing the reliability of flights, increasing the number of flights on offer, and improving flight times between key destinations.

The only issues to trail emissions reduction in the report

were noise reduction of aircraft on communities and increasing airport capacity.

Predictions contained in the report also found that 38% of Australians believe that the aviation sector as a whole is "likely" be completely carbon-neutral before 2050.

**Pictured:** A Qantas plane being refuelled with SAFs.

### TTNQ introduces sustainability hub

**TROPICAL** North Queensland (TTNQ) has launched the Tropical North Queensland Sustainable Travel Hub, a new dedicated page on its website showcasing eco-friendly and sustainable activities.

The new hub also allows travellers to interact with conservation projects and local cultures in the region, with TTNQ CEO Mark Olsen suggesting there is a growing concern among Aussies about the impact of climate change,

leading many to plan travel trips with greater purpose.

"Consumers are increasingly concerned about the impact of climate change which has resulted in people travelling more thoughtfully and with more intent," he said.

The hub will also highlight the large number of eco-certified tourism operators in the region, the new Pathway to Sustainable Tourism toolkits, and various sustainability collaborations - view the hub [HERE](#).

### Fresher seafood

**HYATT** Regency Sydney is now offering guests the 'Seafarer Dinner at Sailmaker Restaurant', a sustainable seafood dining experience at the property's restaurant.

Available Thu, Fri, Sat and Sun evenings from 6pm-9.30pm for \$74pp, guests can enjoy a Mediterranean tapas table followed by a three-course choice menu using produce sourced from sustainable fisheries - [CLICK HERE](#) to see the menu.

## Connect with your clients and ramp up your social media content

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## MONEY

**WELCOME** to Money, *TD's* Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

**AU\$1 = US\$0.688**

**THE** Australian dollar has taken a nosedive, falling by 2.2% on Fri and only slightly picking back up again this week.

Conversely, the US dollar surged against most of the major currencies after the country's unemployment rate fell to its lowest since 1969, with 517,000 new jobs last month.

As a result, the US Federal Reserve will likely continue its rate-hike cycle.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.688
UK	£0.572
NZ	\$1.092
Euro	€0.642
Japan	¥91.26
Thailand	฿24.66
China	¥4.675
South Africa	12.156
Canada	\$0.925
Crude oil	US\$73.39

## SA wine festival

**SOUTH** Australia's Tasting Australia wine festival will offer a wider range of masterclasses and a series of more intimate Tasting Table events across Adelaide and regional venues.

Presented by RAA Travel from 28 Apr - 07 May, the festival is another reason for interstate visitors to holiday in SA, according to the state's Minister for Tourism, Zoe Bettison,

"South Australian strength in food and beverages is a crucial element of our state's appeal, enticing visitors to explore Adelaide and regional SA."

## Branded merch can mean much



**TRAVEL** Agent Finder founder Anna Shannon has put the call out to the travel industry to donate branded merch items, along with Travel Prospects Managing Director David Wright, who is organising a collection for Thomas' House, a charity run by two Aussies in Phnom Penh for underprivileged kids.

Wright is looking for any branded pens, notepads, t-shirts, caps, backpacks, airline toiletry bags or similar items to donate.

"What sits in our drawers unused for months can provide so much value to these kids,"

## Ovolo sweats deal

**GUESTS** staying at Ovolo hotels across Australia can now enjoy personalised workouts using the fitness machine, Vitruvian Trainer+, in the comfort of their own room at no extra cost.

The offer, which is the result of a new collaboration between the independent hotel brand and Vitruvian, will end on 30 Mar.

Shannon said on a LinkedIn post, already garnering responses from several travel industry friends, including Finnair.

If you have anything to donate, like such items **pictured** above, email David at [travelprospects@internode.on.net](mailto:travelprospects@internode.on.net).

## WA made in shade

**TENS** of thousands of visitors are expected to flock to Western Australia's Gascoyne and Pilbara regions to experience the 2023 Total Solar Eclipse on 20 Apr.

Three thousand general admission tickets priced at \$50pp are now on sale for the prime viewing location, where visitors will be plunged into darkness, experiencing a 100% solar eclipse.

The WA Government has announced almost \$22 million in funding, including grants for 40 local businesses and funds to help set up temporary camp sites, in order to help the region prepare for the influx of visitors.

**CLICK HERE** for tickets and info.

## Reflecting on Coffs

**REFLECTIONS** Holiday Parks has announced a partnership with free adventure-mapping app, CAPRA, to offer virtual guidance to travellers visiting the Coffs Coast region in NSW.

The mobile app will allow travellers to digitally explore the region's outdoor adventure activities and nature trails, including terrain details.

The digital solution is 100% free to download, can be used with zero mobile reception and without wi-fi, and will automatically update to reflect real-time destination information each time the user opens the app.

The tailor-made Reflections Adventure Guide for the Coffs Coast Region will be the first in a series of digital guides to be rolled out soon.

## ANZCRO brochure

**ANZCRO** has this week introduced its 2023 Winter Holiday Collection brochure, featuring the brand's winter collection of New Zealand ski trips across 20 pages.

The latest brochure includes details on five South Island ski fields, various crafted holiday packages, as well as plenty of inspiration off the mountains.

"We wanted to make planning an NZ winter holiday easier than ever," Managing Director Nick Guthrey said.

"You'll find packages that range from a seven-night Ski Queenstown trip for under \$1,000pp, to an 11-night Snow & Rail Explorer package that starts in Christchurch and takes in the TranzAlpine rail journey."

Access brochure online **HERE**.





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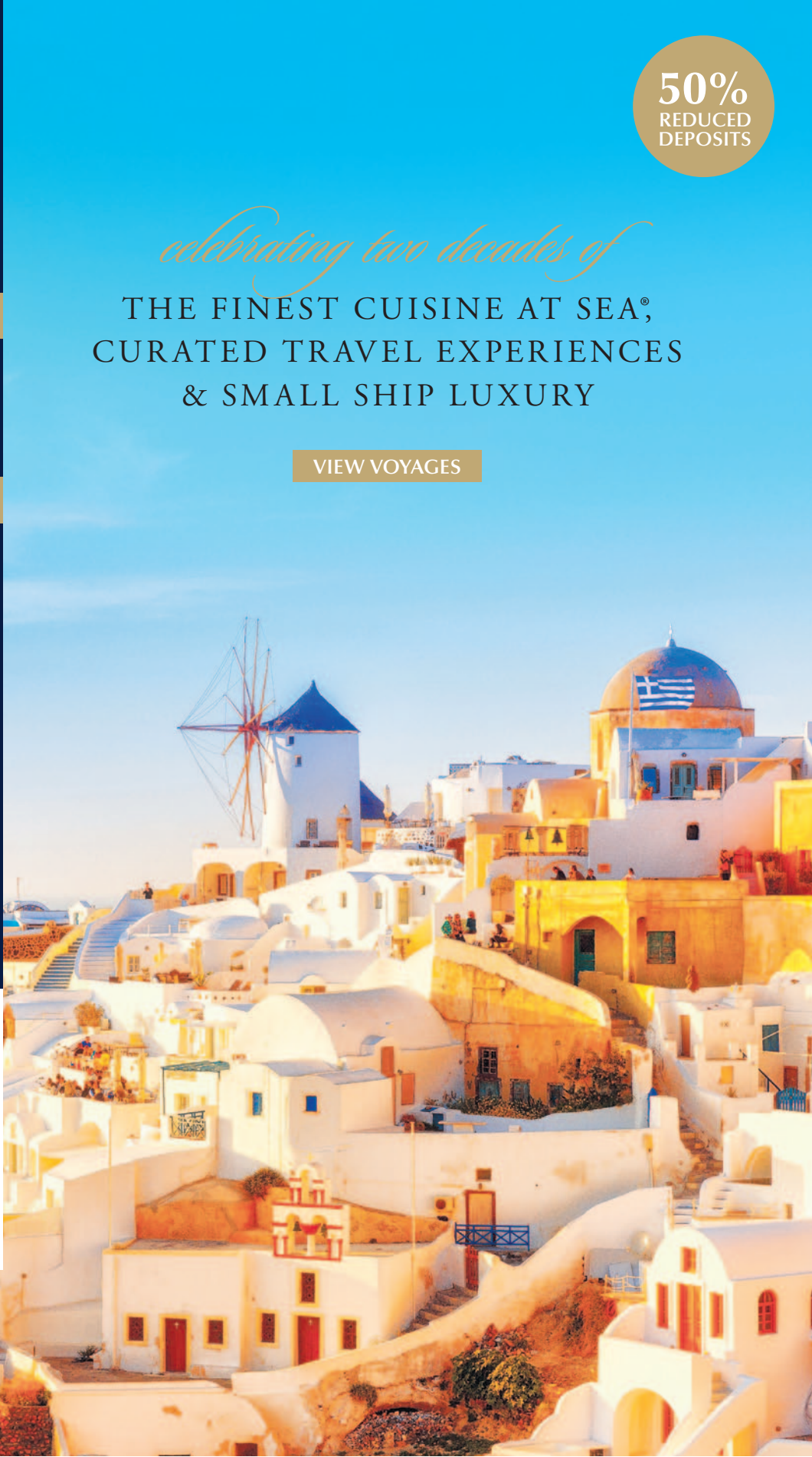
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**Industry Recognition**

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**Connect with Key Industry Representatives**

**Cruise Specialist Listing**



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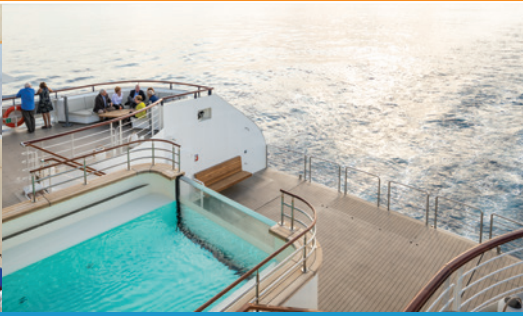


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Upon confirmation of eligibility, A&K will contact the travel agent to book the free cruise. Free cruise is one run-of-ship double occupancy stateroom. The free cruise can be confirmed once full payment has been received for the qualifying three bookings, 120 days out from their departure. International and internal flights, insurance and any government taxes and fees are not included. Standard terms and conditions apply. Free cruise is subject to availability, capacity-controlled, non-transferable, has no cash value and is not combinable with A&K Group policy. Limit one free cruise per travel agent.