

TIME scholarship

APPLICATIONS for the first Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) scholarship opportunity for 2020 close in just two days time, on Fri 10 Jan 2020.

The scholarship funds 60% of the program fees, and comes with the help of TIME board members Fiona Dalton and Trish Shepherd, who were last year sponsored by the industry to abstain from alcohol for three months.

The 2020 scholarship, which is a nationwide opportunity, applies to TIME intake number 37, commencing on 19 Feb.

For more information see travelindustrymentor.com.au.

Lyft adds rentals

RIDESHARING giant Lyft has launched Lyft Rental in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Users in those cities can rent vehicles from dedicated locations via the Lyft App, with refuelling charged at local market prices.

HK hits United

UNITED Airlines has recorded a hefty US\$90 million "impairment charge" due to Hong Kong's ongoing anti-government protests in recent months.

A quarterly earnings update included a review of the carrier's intangible assets, with UA citing a "decrease in demand for the Hong Kong market" for a decision to completely write off the value of its Hong Kong routes.

Excite cites "financial loss"

EXCLUSIVE

TERMINATION letters issued to some Excite Holidays staff just before Christmas advised that their employment is ceasing "due to the severe loss of revenues and financial loss by the Company".

Travel Daily has obtained a copy of one of the letters, signed by Excite Director Nic Stavropoulos, who earlier this week claimed an "exciting deal was in the works" relating to a potential sale of the business (**TD** 06 Jan).

Excite Holidays continues to maintain that mounting numbers of unpaid bookings are due to a "platform issue", while agents with disrupted clients are being told to get them to pay the travel provider direct, keep their receipts and lodge a service complaint within 30 days.

Stavropoulos told **TD**: "we are still working hard with our global team" to rectify the problems.

Staff at Excite's Sydney office have been dealing with several furious agents who have turned up in person to complain.

Hundreds of agents have commented on the crisis, with some highlighting Excite Holidays' call centre wait times of more than two hours.

Others have noted that Excite's entire BDM team are on annual leave until next Mon 13 Jan, and have been instructed to leave their phones off so agents can't contact them.

The potential sale of part of the business is understood to be subject to ongoing negotiations with Las Vegas-based North American inbound tour operator Bonotel.

Bonotel already works closely with Excite Holidays, with Excite's Athens-based operations centre including staff dedicated to servicing Bonotel clientele.

Excite Holidays "voluntarily withdrew" from the AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) just over a year ago (**TD** 12 Dec 2018), with the board of the AFTA Chargeback Scheme subsequently saying that meant agent bookings with the company are excluded from the Supplier Failure Benefit of the program (**TD** 17 Dec 2018).

MEANWHILE anyone with further information can confidentially contact **TD's** tip line via the encrypted messaging app WhatsApp on +61280076760.

Istanbul closure

ISTANBUL'S Sabiha Gokcen Airport was temporarily closed overnight after a Pegasus Airways Boeing 737-800 arriving from Sharjah skidded off the runway in heavy rain, with emergency slides deployed but no injuries reported.

Albatross rewards

ALBATROSS Tours is offering travel agents a \$100 gift card per person per tour in conjunction with bookings of any 2020 Albatross European Summer Tour before 28 Feb.

For details see the **last page**.

Infinity
MAKING HOLIDAYS EASY™

Making holidays easy.

Land | Air
| Cruise | Rail |
Sports & Events

☎ 1300 007 429

FIND OUT MORE

ATAS
travel accredited

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news and photos, plus a full page from:

- Albatross Tours



Join us for our 2021/22 Antarctic & 2021 Global launch in your city!

Register now!

MW Tours

New Year, New Opportunity!

MW Tours is seeking an experienced team leader to lead its growing Inside Sales Team. You'll be responsible for managing workflow with ongoing performance evaluation of team members and coaching them to achieve KPIs. A competitive salary package with long term career stability. Click [HERE](#) for full Job description.

To apply email your resume to sales@mw tours.com.au by 15th Jan.

More fire updates

HELLOWORLD Travel will match the funds donated to its GoFundMe bushfire appeal, which will stay active for the month of Jan.

All funds raised will go directly to the Red Cross Disaster Relief and Recovery Fund - **CLICK HERE**.

The travel agency has also donated 2,000 bales of hay and 575,000 litres of water through the Buy a Bale campaign, helping farmers impacted by both the drought and fires.

MEANWHILE, the South Australian Tourism Commission has lamented the extensive damage on Kangaroo Island, with some of the tourism business on the southern side of the Island hit particularly hard including Hanson Bay Cabins, Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, Kangaroo Island Wilderness Retreat and Western KI Caravan Park, in addition to the destroyed Southern Ocean Lodge (**TD** Mon).

AFTA offers fire assistance

EXCLUSIVE

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents is urging members impacted by the bushfire crisis to highlight any challenges or issues via a dedicated email address at firerecovery@afta.com.au.

CEO Jayson Westbury said AFTA was already engaged with the government "as consideration is given to what may be required to support the nation, support the industry and potentially support you as an AFTA member."

"It is difficult to determine what should be done from an industry perspective until the scope of challenges are known," he said.

"What we ask you at this time is that if you find yourselves confronted with a challenge with a client, or a booking or any aspect of your business as a result of the fires, please let us know."

Westbury said an email to the special address "will get our full

attention and we will do what we can to support and assist if we are able".

He also urged the industry to provide suggestions as to how more help and support relating to the fires can be provided.

"As you would know the Federal Government has put in place an incredibly large recovery package, and we will monitor how that will be administered," Westbury said.

"At this time of national pain, it is important for all AFTA members to know that your Federation is taking the situation very seriously, and is and will continue to engage at both a state and federal level to help support the country as the fire recovery begins," he said.

Westbury noted that the crisis is not over, adding "our hearts and prayers go out to all those who have been impacted by fires thus far, and we remain committed to being engaged and supportive".

DL flags free wi-fi

DELTA Air Lines CEO Ed Bastian has envisioned the technology-driven future of flight in a keynote address at the massive Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

One key opportunity is the availability of fast, free internet access in the air, but Bastian said this was still some way off.

"Wi-fi should be free on all flights...I'm confident we will reach that goal within the next couple of years at speeds as fast as on the ground," he said.

Other potential tech rollouts by DL include more detailed boarding alerts, multi-lingual airport status screens, the ability to start an in-flight movie en route to the airport and then continue it on the plane, and biometric passenger identification.

Bastian said the initiatives were all aimed at making sure "travelling isn't something that stresses you, but something that delights you".



Wendy Wu Tours

FLY FREE

TO CHINA & JAPAN

OVER 30 TOURS AND 220 DEPARTURES

SAVE UP TO \$900 PP

FIND OUT MORE

ATAS
travel accredited

AWA's return to Haslam

AUSTRALIAN Wildlife Adventures (AWA) has returned to 100% ownership by the Haslam family following a share buy-back from the Intrepid Group.

The move ends a four-year partnership with the Intrepid Group, with AWA one of the founding members of the Adventure Tours Australia Partner (ATAP) program.

The development followed Intrepid's sale of Adventure Tours Australia (ATA) to Imperium Capital Group (**TD** 20 Dec 2019).

AWA operates tours between Adelaide & Perth & was Adventure Tours Australia's exclusive touring partner for the area.

The company will continue to service Intrepid bookings until the end of 2020, and future ATA bookings through the new Imperium Capital Group-owned program.

"The Adventure Tours Australia

sale to the Imperium Group came at a surprise, with no consultation prior from Intrepid," AWA Director Craig Haslam said.

"However, it made sense, with their recent pivot to a DMC model in Australia," he added.

AWA said the buy-back enabled the Haslam family to take back full control of the company and ramp up investment in its operations and fleet as they target further expansion in South Australia and Western Australia.

"We were already in discussions with Intrepid for a share buy-back and the Imperium sale just accelerated the process," he said.

There will be no fundamental changes to AWA's Xplore Eyre or Nullabor Traveller brands and departures will continue to operate as scheduled, AWA said.

The company also said at this stage, it did not foresee any commissions changes.

Railbookers release

RAILBOOKERS has launched a collection of eight new itineraries to Alaska, serviced by Alaska Railroad's Denali Star and Coastal Classic trains, which will explore locations such as Resurrection Bay and Denali.

Among the new trips include the seven-day Highlights of Alaska, priced from \$3,199; the eight-day Denali National Park trip, priced from \$2,899; and the 10-day Grand Alaska Adventure, priced from \$4,999.

CLICK HERE for more info.

Uniworld offer ext

UNIWORLD & U River Cruises have extended their 100th Anniversary Celebration offer (**TD** 07 Nov 2019) through to 29 Feb.

The brands have also added new itineraries and 2020 dates to the promotion, with travellers able to save up to 30% on over 200 departures.



Window Seat

ANOTHER year means another list from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) detailing some curious goods which were seized in the United States in 2019.

An early contender came in Mar, when TSA came across a military-grade rocket-propelled grenade launcher (**TD** 08 Mar 2019) stowed in carry-on.

Another surprise for airport security came in May (**TD** 13 May 2019), when a 60cm machete was unearthed.

However, our favourite for this year was the traveller who just couldn't travel without their hessian sack of animal pat.



Go your OWN way



الإتihad
ETIHAD
AIRWAYS

etihad.com

Story Bridge climb

STORY Bridge in Brisbane is now taking bookings for its new Cantilever and Walk the Plank experiences.

The two new adventures are run by XBrisbane, and lead in at \$40 for one or \$50 for both, on top of the base cost of \$129 for the standard bridge climb.

Queensland Tourism Industry Development Minister Kate Jones said these were the first of up to eight additional new attractions to be offered at Story Bridge, thanks to the \$36 million Growing Tourism Infrastructure fund.

"New experiences will grow our tourism industry and create local jobs," she said.

"These new attractions will position the Story Bridge as Australia's number one bridge adventure precinct."

Jones also said the new experiences are expected to attract 45,800 extra tourists per year, and an additional \$3 million for local businesses.

New faults in 737

BOEING'S hopes to return the 737 MAX to the skies in Mar (**TD** 17 Dec 19) may be dashed after a "potentially catastrophic" flaw was found by a safety review ordered by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) late last year.

As reported in *The New York Times*, the review discovered that bundles of electrical wiring in the tail of the plane may be too close together, creating the risk of a short circuit that could send the plane out of control.

"We are working with the FAA to perform the appropriate analysis...it would be premature to speculate as to whether this analysis will lead to any design changes," Boeing spokesman Gordon Johndroe said.

Additionally, FAA affirmed it would "ensure that all safety related issues identified during this process are addressed before the aircraft is approved for return to passenger service".

ETG goes on a safari!



EXPRESS Travel Group (ETG) & African Travel Specialists recently hosted 10 agents on an eight-day luxury safari through Kenya.

The group explored Samburu National Reserve, Lake Nakuru and the Maasai Mara, staying in luxury tent camps and lodges, and getting up close and personal with Africa's wildlife across several game drives led by expert local guides.

Highlights included spotting a pride of lions with eight cubs, tracking three lionesses stalking prey on a hunt, and sunrise hot air ballooning over the Maasai Mara.

The group also visited a Samburu village, where they were educated on the local way of life.

"The guides were excellent,



sharing jokes and funny stories, teaching us Swahili (or trying to), running through animal facts and memories of past safaris, sharing what life was like for them growing up and how different Kenya is now," said famil host, Express Travel Group's Jake Manwaring.

Pictured on their game drive are Briony Thomas, Julie Edwards, Jackie Middler, Stefania Scuderi, Astrid Jane and Sandy Hopper, while **inset**, some large kitties enjoy a snuggle.



PHIL INVITES YOU TO JOIN THE PHIL HOFFMANN MOBILE TRAVEL BRAND

This year Phil Hoffmann Travel will be celebrating 30 years of business in South Australia. Over the course of the 30 years we've been asked many times if we would expand outside of SA, the launch of Phil Hoffmann Mobile Travel now gives opportunity to extend the reach of our brand throughout Australia. We are very excited to be able to share the benefits of the Phil Hoffmann Travel brand with our interstate colleagues. Phil Hoffmann Mobile Travel offers experienced travel consultants the autonomy of their own business with the security and strength of our brand behind them. Having grown to a team of over 200 staff Phil Hoffmann Travel offers access to unique product and a full suite of support which covers all business needs. We recognise that there is a genuine need, now more than ever, for a healthy integration of work and life. Whether you're a parent seeking more time at home, wanting to experience the world on your terms, looking for balance, or transitioning to retirement Phil Hoffmann Mobile Travel may be the answer you're looking for.

HAVE A CHAT WITH BELINDA, OUR MOBILE BUSINESS COACH
ON 08 8179 9625

MORE INFORMATION

Phil Hoffmann
mobile travel

Wednesday 8th January 2020

Ground Control out

THE fourth issue of the Council of Australian Tour Operators' (CATO) *Ground Control* magazine has been released.

Covering topical issues for the land sector and travel, the quarterly publication is available for digital download, featuring 64 pages exploring artificial intelligence in travel planning, understanding the legal liabilities around refunds, and the effect of Brexit on travel.

CLICK HERE to download.

Explore on sale

EXPLORE is offering 15% off more than 150 of its trips and over 400 departures until 22 Jan, including the 13-day Cycle Japan itinerary, which takes guests through Japan's historic cities and rural landscape.

South Africa's Garden Route and the Highlights of Costa Rica trips are also included - more **HERE**.

Insight extends sale

INSIGHT Vacations has extended its Anniversary Sale until 10 Jan in celebration of parent company The Travel Corporation's 100th anniversary.

The sale offers travellers savings of 15% on 22 European Discovery, Spain, Portugal & Morocco trips.

The offers applies to an Apr to Oct travel period - **CLICK HERE**.

LO/SQ codeshare

LOT Polish Airlines and Singapore Airlines have expanded their codeshare from Singapore to New Zealand, with LO placing its code on SQ flights from SIN to AKL, CHC and WLG, effective immediately.

MEANWHILE, LO will expand its code partnership with Air India from 10 Jan, covering services from Warsaw to Amsterdam, Delhi, Brussels, Gdansk, Katowice, Krakow, Luxembourg, Munich, Poznan, Wroclaw, and Zurich.

ACCOMMODATION

WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



Rosewood Little Dix Bay in the British Virgin Islands has unveiled the results of an extensive four-year renovation. The works have introduced new elements, including a butler service, additional wellness and recreational offerings, new ultra-luxury catamarans and a private dock.



A new restaurant has opened at **Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai**, located in northern Thailand. Char by Four Seasons pays homage to grilling traditions, and is focused on farm-to-table cuisine and premium cuts of meat, with more than 60% of the ingredients sourced from local farms.

Tea and temples for PTMs



NINE Personal Travel Managers (PTMs) had the opportunity to experience Sri Lanka on a 10-day famil hosted by Chad Carey from GetAbout Asia last year.

A rail journey through the misty green tea hills of central Sri Lanka, a safari in Udawalawe National Park, a trip to a spice garden in Matale, and a visit to the ancient rock fortress at Sigiriya and the city of Galle on the south coast were just some of the highlights of the itinerary.

"The famil was fast-paced because there was so much to see," PTM Timo Bohlender said.

"I'd love to go back and take it all in at a slower pace...it's a beautiful country with lush tropical forests and great beaches plus some amazing sites - definitely worth another trip."

Pictured ready to ride the rails

at Kandy train station in the back row are PTMs Di Yates, Simon Tinkler, Gina Passfield, Lisa Malnar and their local tour guide.

In the middle row: host Chad Carey from GetAbout Asia, local tour guide Alyssa Pretorius and Joanne Haines.

Front row: Timo Bohlender, Rachael Portelli, Phoebe Luong and Sarena Taylor.

Asia leads Henley

ASIAN countries continue to dominate on the Henley Passport Index, a rank of the world's passports based on the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa.

For 2020, Japan tops the index for the third year in a row, giving its passport holders visa-free/visa-on-arrival access to 191 destinations worldwide, followed by Singapore, and a tie between South Korea and Germany.

Australia has retained its position in the top 10, coming in as number nine, with the US and UK also remaining in the top 10, both sharing the eighth position, down from their number one rank in 2015.

Middle Eastern countries have made significant progress, with the UAE and Saudi Arabia each climbing four places, while Oman moved up three.

The index results for 2020 show a widening divide between countries when it comes to travel freedom, with Afghanistan at the bottom of the index, offering its citizens visa-free access to only 26 destinations.

WRD heads north

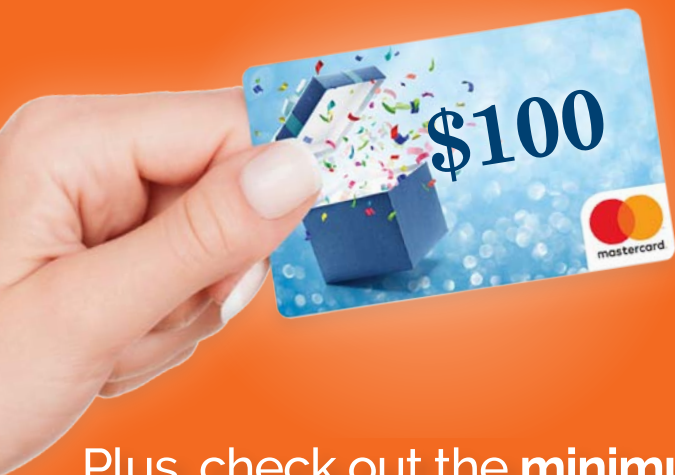
WORLD Resorts of Distinction (WRD) has this week expanded into the Northern Hemisphere with the addition of ANI Private Resorts to its portfolio.

ANI is a collection of high-end, all-inclusive private resorts, with locations in Anguilla, Dominican Republic, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

It has resorts accommodating for groups of eight to 30 people and its properties feature chefs, butlers, housekeepers and bartenders.

Amenities on offer include waterslides, tennis courts, spas, fitness centres, private pavilions and multiple pools and dining areas.

100% Guaranteed Departures + \$100 Guaranteed Rewards!



Be rewarded with a \$100 Gift Card Per Person, Per Tour when you book your clients on any 2020 Albatross European Summer Tour before 28 February 2020*!

Plus, check out the **minimum** commission you are guaranteed to earn **per couple booked**:

- Italian Grande - **\$1,671 commission**
- 'Magnifico' Spain & Portugal - **\$1,939 commission**
- Scandinavia 'In the footsteps of Vikings' - **\$2,797 commission!**

PLUS a \$200 Mastercard Gift Card!



Book with confidence with our ENTIRE 2020 Summer Tour program guaranteed to depart!

Albatross Tours - giving our trade partners the confidence to book, and the ability to earn more.

**TO HELP YOU GROW
YOUR ALBATROSS
SALES, SEE OUR FREE
TRADE MARKETING
RESOURCES**

VISIT AGENT PAGE