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**Today's issue of TD**  
Travel Daily today features seven pages of travel industry news, plus full pages from:

- Collette
- Abercrombie & Kent

**Visit Bluey's World**  
BRISBANE is preparing to open a new interactive experience where visitors can step inside the home of hugely popular animated children's program, *Bluey*.  
Bluey's World is situated inside a new purpose-built pavilion at new arts and entertainment hub, Northshore, with tickets going on sale tomorrow starting at \$49.90.  
The attraction, which opens from 07 Nov, features a range of recreated sets, recognisable scenes, characters and interactive games from the hit TV show.

**Vivid unveils 'Tekno Train'**

ARIA-AWARD winning music producer, Paul Mac, will collaborate with Sydney Trains to introduce 'Tekno Train', a one-of-a-kind moving sensory light and sound experience for the upcoming Vivid Sydney festival.

Available throughout the 23-night Destination NSW annual showcase of innovation, ticketed passengers will travel Sydney's existing and disused rail lines accompanied by an original Paul Mac custom electronic light and music show inside each carriage.

As the train moves, lights and music will adjust to suit the speed and changing landscape.

Patrons can select from two 60-minute rides, both departing from Central Station.

'The Scenic Route' is aimed at families with children and takes riders across the Sydney Harbour Bridge and down to Lavender Bay.

Alternatively, the 'Tech Express' route will loop the City Circle and around South Sydney on what is being described as a "more lively and full-bodied journey".

Tekno Train Creator and Composer, Paul Mac, said trains have always fascinated him.

"Their mix of rhythmic clicks and clacks, the screech of metal on metal, and the sound and smell of brakes are all interesting sensory experiences that everyone can relate to," Mac said.

Prices for both experiences are set at \$19.90 for adults and \$13.90 for children aged 5-12. *ML*



**Travel Daily ON LOCATION**

**MELBOURNE**

Today's issue is coming to you courtesy of Tourism Australia.

MELBOURNE is playing host to the 44th edition of the Australian Tourism Exchange today, the industry's largest annual business-to-business event in Australia.

After a press conference from Tourism Australia and Visit Victoria this morning, the tradeshow floor will open up for networking, followed by a sporting-themed party at the John Cain Arena at Melbourne Olympic Park this evening.

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**TONY QUARMBY**  
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**Collette's Canada**

COLLETTE is showcasing its new premium tour through Canada and Alaska for 2025.

The 15-day tour features the Rocky Mountaineer and a seven-night Alaska Cruise, with a \$400 earlybird credit up for grabs - see **page eight** for details.

**Earn more in May**

ADVISORS can earn a reward voucher of up to \$1,000 for new A&K bookings they make this month for journeys that depart in 2024 - see the **back page**.

**The Star takeover?**

THE Star Entertainment Group has issued a response to media reports speculating a takeover proposal by Hard Rock Hotels and Casinos could be imminent.

In a statement to the ASX this morning, The Star said it had not received a direct proposal but instead from "a consortium of investors which includes the entity Hard Rock Hotels", as one of numerous interested parties.

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Travel Daily ON LOCATION

**SRI LANKA**

Today's issue of TD is coming to you courtesy of Inspiring Vacations, which is hosting its maiden trade famill this week.

OVER the weekend, TD flew to Sri Lanka to join a group of top-selling agents on an immersive tour of the country with Inspiring Vacations. After a driving tour of Colombo yesterday, the group made their way to Tissamaharama ahead of a safari game drive of Yala National Park. Today we head north towards the tea trails and cool climates of Nuwara Eliya, stopping along the way at the Nine Arch Bridge, also known as 'The Bridge in the Sky'.

## Training for China tourism

THE Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) has been awarded \$405,000 to deliver China-ready training to tourism businesses to help them cater to cultural expectations of Chinese visitors.

The funding was one of 27 grants announced by the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations (NFACR) in its 2023/24 round, designed to enhance engagement between Australian businesses and Chinese markets.

ATEC's 'China Host' training will now be rolled out to 500 more Australian tourism businesses, building on a further 200 that have already received the training through a previous cooperation with Destination NSW.

A program of 18 two-pronged workshops will be hosted across Australia, featuring access to a self-paced online program and a face-to-face skills session.

"We are proud to be offering the industry access to our China

Host training program, which provides the most up-to-date content focused on attracting and servicing Chinese visitors, with specific focus on being culture-ready, service-ready, product-ready and trade engagement," said ATEC Managing Director, Peter Shelley.

MEANWHILE, further funding of \$180,000 has been awarded to the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operations Council for the same purpose, to help Indigenous tourism brands understand Chinese traveller perceptions and demand. ML

## New Eurostar trains

EUROSTAR will invest in up to 50 new trains in a massive boost to capacity to meet huge demand.

The company said its new fleet will feature an improved energy consumption system and will be on the tracks by the early 2030s.

## Shopping with ALL

WOOLWORTHS' Everyday Rewards loyalty program has launched its first one-way inbound points transfer deal in partnership with hospitality giant Accor.

Under the deal, members of Accor's ALL (Accor Live Limitless) program can convert 2,000 ALL points to 4,000 Everyday Rewards points, instantly unlocking a \$20 discount off a shop at Woolworths, Big W, or any of the group's other retail brands.

## Bali back in business

TOURISM officials in Bali believe 2024 will be the year the island hotspot surpasses pre-pandemic arrival figures.

Data from Denpasar's N'gurah Rai Airport showed more than 1.9 million passed through the arrivals hall in Apr 2024, a jump of 19% year-on-year.

The busiest air routes to DPS came from Kuala Lumpur, followed by Perth and Melbourne.

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<p><b>14-DAY SOUTH PACIFIC:</b>                  FIJI, VANUATU &amp; GREAT BARRIER REEF                  FROM CAIRNS                  NORWEGIAN SUN   APR &amp; AUG 2025</p>  <p>Airlie Beach, Australia</p> <p>Cairns, Airlie Beach, Townsville, Noumea, Lifou, Port Vila, Mystery Island, Dravuni, Suva, Lautoka</p>	<p><b>14-DAY SOUTH PACIFIC:</b>                  FRENCH POLYNESIA, FIJI &amp; SAMOA                  FROM LAUTOKA                  NORWEGIAN SUN   MAY &amp; SEP 2025</p>  <p>Bora Bora, French Polynesia</p> <p>Lautoka, Dravuni, Suva, Pago Pago, Aitutaki, Rarotonga (Cook Islands), Bora Bora, Raiatea, Moorea, Papeete (Tahiti)</p>

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## Hewlett landing at Albatross



**ALBATROSS** Tours has landed the services of James Hewlett as its new Director of Marketing.

Hewlett, who departed a similar role at Collette late last year, also brings experience with Titan Travel, Wendy Wu Tours and as a volunteer on the Visit USA Executive Committee.

Albatross Tours Managing

Director, Shelley Poter, welcomed Hewlett to his new role, saying his "exceptional calibre, impeccable reputation and value alignment" makes him an ideal fit for the company's marketing strategy for both its Australian and UK teams.

Hewlett is **pictured** right with Poter and Albatross Tours Founder, Euan Landsborough. *ML*

## The Chat

with Jenny



Travel Daily

A conversation with Michelle Ashcroft

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## Sydney's new Song

**SONG** Hotel Sydney on Wentworth Avenue is welcoming back visitors after undergoing a complete transformation.

The property offers 156 newly renovated rooms, including 62 rooms with private balconies, eight family rooms, six larger corner rooms, as well as an on-site restaurant and bar (**pictured**), and a 40m<sup>2</sup> events room.

The hotel donates 25 cents of every dollar spent by guests to YWCA Australia, which supports women across housing, services, and leadership pathways.

Rates start from \$200 per night, including a complimentary hot breakfast - more info **HERE**.



## IATA returning bags

**THE** aviation industry is making progress to reduce rates of baggage mishandling, according to a new global baggage tracking progress report from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

A survey of 155 airlines and 94 airports demonstrates that 44% of airlines have fully implemented Resolution 753, which requires tracking baggage at acceptance, loading, transfer and arrival, and a further 41% are in progress.

China and North Asia airlines had the highest adoption rates at 88%, followed by 60% in the Americas, 40% in Europe and Asia-Pacific, and 27% in Africa.

Of those surveyed, 75% of airports have the capability for baggage tracking, with 54% of mega airports already implementing the more advanced RFID tracking technology.

Between 2007 and 2022, baggage mishandling reduced by nearly 60%.

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## Window Seat

**SOME** people take the tagline 'The Happiest Place on Earth' a little too far.

A Disney cast member in a Goofy costume at EPCOT reportedly asked a family of four to leave the park after an amorous grandmother squeezed his rear end during a character meet-and-greet.

According to an Orange County Sheriff's report from earlier this year, the grandma - who was wearing a T-shirt reading 'Nana Mouse' - allegedly grabbed Goofy on his 'butt', leading the cast member to allege he had been groped.

The grandmother denied any wrongdoing, however a Disney photographer who witnessed the incident said the family were then spoken to by law enforcement before leaving.

## WA gets Klook-y

**TOURISM** Western Australia has announced a new partnership with Asian travel platform Klook to showcase the state's best experiences to travellers across key markets in Asia Pacific.

From May through Jul, the campaign will highlight WA's must-visit locations to audiences in various Asian markets including Singapore and Hong Kong.

The marketing collaboration will see immersive content, social media activations, and exclusive travel experiences rolled out across Klook's digital channels, with Tourism WA also leveraging Klook's affiliate program to engage content influencers.

"We embrace the opportunity to showcase the natural wonders of the Dream State and grow awareness among our closest neighbours of the incredible experience Western Australia has to offer," said Tourism WA Executive Director of Marketing, Melissa Forbes.



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Travel Daily

## "We will be back this year"

**FEDERAL** Tourism Minister Don Farrell (pictured) believes Australia's tourism economy will recover to pre-pandemic levels before the end of the year.

Speaking at the opening of the Australian Tourism Exchange in Melbourne (ATE24), Farrell said that today's tourism trade show would be a principle driver of the predicted rebound.

"We have 1,500 sellers here today and 700 overseas buyers here to look at our wonderful offerings, whether it's accommodation, events in our capital cities or the experiences in the regions," Farrell said.

"Already, 50,000 appointments have been made and I'm also told if you have some of the fantastic coffee here today there will be even more than the 50,000."

As of Mar 2024, inbound arrivals had recovered to around 91% of pre-pandemic volumes.

ATE24 has attracted a record



number of delegates, including 60 first-time sellers and 109 new overseas buyers.

This year, 37 countries are represented by overseas buyers, with a concentration on 15 core markets, including 151 from Greater China alone.

The strong delegation from China is significant, with the former number one inbound source country languishing at only 51% of what it was in 2019 (733,100 for the FY to Mar 2024).

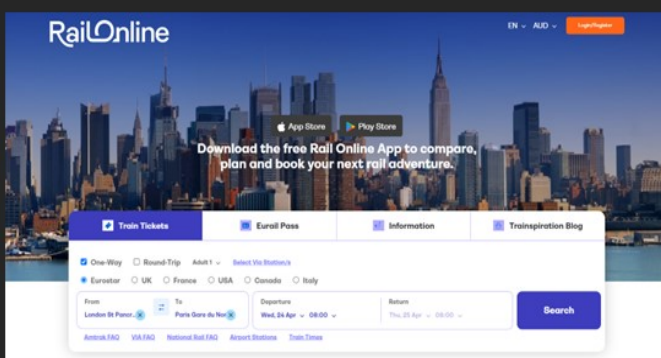
In more positive news, tourists from India and South Korea have eclipsed 2019 levels, at 103% and 118% of pre-COVID respectively.

ATE24 will run from today through to 23 May. AB



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## APAC tourism bodies join heads

**THE** Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) has inked a new agreement with the East Asia Inter-Regional Tourism Federation (EATOF) with the aim of developing tourism across the Asia Pacific region.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed last week during the PATA Annual Summit 2024, and will see the two organisations collaborate on initiatives ranging from educational endeavours to regional tourism programs.

The partnership will also see PATA and EATOF participate in key events hosted by each association, as well as foster the exchange of sustainable practices and big data analyses.

## Sri Lanka inspires trade



**INSPIRING** Vacations is hosting its first trade faml this week, reinforcing the touring brand's commitment to working with travel agents.

Speaking to **TD** ahead of the faml, Global Head of Sales, Cameron Hunt, shared that this week's trip is just the start, with the brand planning more trade famls in the future.

"We want to work with agents," Hunt enthused.

"There will be more of these coming up, and this is an opportunity to meet us, to test out our product, and to experience it."

Twelve top-selling advisors from the US and Australia were invited to attend the five-day tour of Sri Lanka, which is being hosted by Inspiring Vacations' Cameron Hunt and Emily Humphrey.

This week's carefully crafted itinerary includes safari game drives, visits to temples, cooking experiences, and tea sampling. **AP**

**Pictured:** Cassandra Trezise,

Jessica Hernadi, and Emma Sullivan keep their eyes peeled for leopards, elephants and peacocks on a game drive at Yala National Park.

## Ler takes on A&K

**ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K)** Travel Group has appointed Evon Ler (**pictured**) to the new role of Director of Sales, Asia.

Ler brings more than 20 years' experience to the position, including roles such as President (Asia) of The Travel Corporation brands, Insight Vacations and Luxury Gold.

Based in Singapore, Ler will work closely with Crystal's VP Sales, APAC, Tony Archbold, and Susan Haberle, A&K's VP Sales & Partnerships, APAC.

"With Evon's enviable track record, we know she will make a significant impact with our trade partners introducing new guests to both A&K and Crystal," said A&K MD Australasia, Deb Fox.



## Ladies-only safari

**BENCH** Africa has successfully hosted its inaugural ladies-only safari in Kenya, which was led by a Kenyan female tour leader.

Highlights of the 10-day itinerary included a rail journey to Tsavo East National Park to see large herds of ochre-red elephants, exploring vast savannahs, and experiencing the Masai Mara, one of Africa's most wildlife-rich safari regions.

Following overwhelmingly positive feedback, Bench Africa has added two new 2025 departures for the ladies-only tour, which is priced from \$8,895 with no solo supplement.

For more info, **CLICK HERE**.

## Club Med to Oman

**THE** Arab Gulf States is set to welcome its first Club Med resort, with an all-inclusive beachfront property to open in Oman on the Musandam Peninsula in 2028.

Club Med Musandam will sit five minutes by boat from Khasab City and will feature 300 rooms, wellness amenities including a spa, fitness centre and yoga school and an array of land and water activities.

Surrounded by the Hajar Mountains, the A\$151 million property will also offer a restaurant and bar and wine venue, as well as shopping and live entertainment.

## Cruisers go visa-free

**FROM** May, tour groups of two or more people arriving in China by cruise ship and organised by Chinese travel agencies will no longer need to a visa to enter and stay for up to 13 days.

The new visa exemption applies to cruise ports in 13 cities including Tianjin, Dalian in Liaoning, Shanghai; Lianyungang in Jiangsu, Wenzhou and Zhoushan in Zhejiang; Xiamen in Fujian; Qingdao in Shandong; Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong; Beihai in Guangxi, Haikou; and Sanya in Hainan.

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## LLoA adds Bullo

**BULLO** River Station has now joined the Luxury Lodges of Australia (LLoA) collection.

Set on 400,000 acres in the NT's Kimberley region, the property offers an authentic working cattle station experience.

# Unlocking luxury's future



**THE** Luxury Travel Collection's inaugural Business Owners Soiree on Hayman Island provided the keys to unlock leadership in luxury travel, in many cases referencing lessons from the world's most famous luxury retail brands.

Setting the scene at the InterContinental Hayman Island Resort was Global MD of Luxury & Independent Leisure, Danielle Galloway, and Travel Associates General Manager, Rachel Kingswell, who presented owners with key lessons on luxury retail.

One of these takeaways included the alarming "devaluation of luxury", with travel sellers needing to be on guard against the mass market looking to appropriate the segment's boom.

The luxurious and informative

affair also included a number of prize giveaways, brand immersion sessions operated by key partners, and naturally, plenty of fine dining and upmarket parties.

Flight Centre Travel Group's (FCTG) Luxury Travel Collection already has many key pieces in place, including a stellar line-up of foundation members and the impressive luxury framework of the Galeries de Luxe platform. *AB*



**THE** Luxury Travel Collection's in-demand General Manager, Nikki Glading, flanked by her growing network of luxury travel sellers from around Australia.



**FCTG** Global MD of Luxury & Independent Leisure, Danielle Galloway; RSSC VP Sales & GM Asia Pacific, Lisa Pile; Travel Associates GM, Rachel Kingswell and RSSC Senior Business Development Manager, Elsa McLean.



**KEEPING** the soiree moving smoothly was Luxury Travel Collection Event Manager, Lisa Wright, and Global Brand Marketing Leader, Anna Burgdorf.



**DISCOVA** VP Sales for ANZ, Nick Shuttleworth, with Teniesha Gill from Travel Associates Geelong.

**THE** Collette team of David Farrar and Karen Deveson explain the virtues of the touring brand during an immersion session.



**TRANSPORT** in style - the transfer to Hayman Island on a premium yacht set the tone for the luxury gathering.



**TRAVEL** Associates' Christine Bottrell was among the prize-winners, scoring a free stay on Lizard Island.

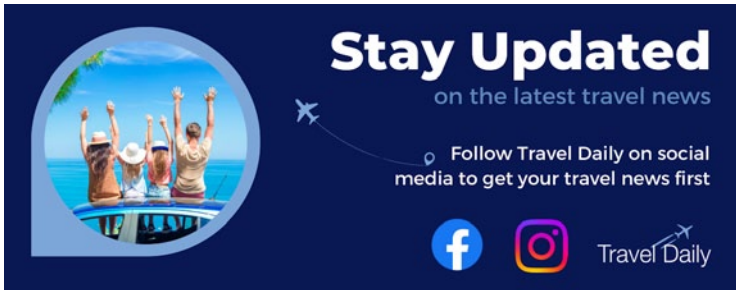


**OCEANIA** Cruises Sales Director James Sitters was all smiles at the cruise line's sponsored evening party on night two of the event.



**THE** brains of FCTG Leisure and Luxury - Dani Galloway and James Kavanagh.





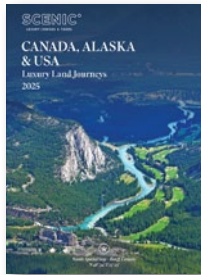
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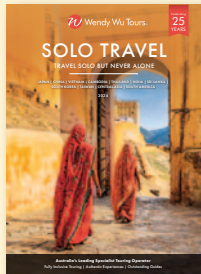
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### Scenic - Canada, Alaska and USA 2025

Scenic's new 'Canada, Alaska & USA 2025 Luxury Land Journeys' brochure showcases new itineraries, unique stays, and the all-inclusive Scenic Freechoice and Scenic Enrich Experiences. Guests can now experience a new 19-day 'Autumn Colours of Eastern Canada and New England' tour from Toronto to Boston, with the option to experience the new Scenic Freechoice excursions, such as a walking tour to experience 250 years of history on Boston's iconic Freedom Trail, a visit to JFK Presidential Library, and more. Guests who are especially discerning when it comes to accommodation can take their pick from the Scenic Special Stays options, which encompass the iconic Fairmont Hotels across Canada, including historic landmarks like the Fairmont Empress in Victoria, Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac in Quebec, and Fairmont Banff Springs. The 'Autumn Colours of Eastern Canada and New England' itinerary is now available to book, with Super Earlybird savings of up to \$1,250 per person up for grabs.



### Wendy Wu Tours - Solo Travel 2024

Catering to travellers looking to holiday on their own this year, Wendy Wu Tours has gone to press with its Solo Travel brochure. Out of the 17 tours that are detailed throughout the guide, nine tours are dedicated to solo departures, including the 'Golden Triangle'; 'Vietnam at a Glance'; 'Discover Japan'; 'Majestic Yangtze'; 'Inspiring India'; 'Wonders of China'; 'Japan Uncovered'; 'Angkor to the Bay'; and 'Magnificent China' itineraries, which span from 10 to 22 days. Most tours are fully inclusive from various points in Australia, and travellers can find the physical difficulty level of each itinerary in the top right corner to check if a tour is suitable.



### Albatross Travel - European Christmas 2024/25

Albatross Travel has unveiled its new European Christmas, New Year and Northern Lights travel brochure, showcasing all the wonders of the festive season in Europe. Keen holidaymakers can discover the booklet's meticulously curated small-group itineraries. From charming Christmas markets to fairytale winter landscapes across the continent, the tour operator offers travellers unforgettable experiences, with longer stays and 'My Time' guaranteed. To secure your copy of the brochure, email

trade@albatrosstours.com.au.

## P&O Cruises to the rescue



**OCCASIONALLY** called upon to conduct a rescue at sea as per maritime tradition, P&O Cruises Australia instead answered a call for help from a group of Aussies stranded on land in Vanuatu.

This group of young Australian Rotary volunteers (**pictured**) had been in Vanuatu since 05 May volunteering on a youth project run by Hive Rotary Club Australia, where they were helping to run health clinics and provide medical assistance to disadvantaged locals.

Midway through their efforts, the collapse of Air Vanuatu left the group with no way to get home, forcing them to issue a plea for help through the media.

This led P&O Cruises to step up, collecting the group in Port Vila last Fri and transporting them home to Australia, with the added bonus of a stop on Mystery Island to enjoy some beach time.

"P&O Cruises Australia is delighted to help this inspiring group of students get home," said P&O Cruises Senior Vice President, Peter Little.

"We are proud of our Australian heritage that extends back more than 90 years, and answering a call to help young Australians stranded a long way from home, is the right thing to do.

The 16-strong group and their chaperones will also enjoy all the splendours of *Pacific Adventure* as a well-deserved reward before the ship returns to Sydney on Thu.

## New Cordis in China

**LANGHAM** Hospitality Group (LHG) is expanding the footprint of its upscale Cordis Hotels & Resorts brand in China's province of Jiangsu, with the opening of a new hotel in Kunshan.

Situated in a vibrant commercial centre close to Yangcheng Lake, the 285-key hotel is designed to appeal to both leisure and business travellers.

The property represents the 10th Cordis Hotels & Resorts property in operation or development in Mainland China, and the second in Jiangsu.

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\*Based on 10 May, 2025 departure. Rate is per person, land only, double occupancy, tour inclusions and available options may vary based on departure date. Availability varies by destination and month of travel. Other conditions may apply. Prices, dates and availability are correct at the time of printing and are subject to change. Visit the website for more dates and prices. \*\*Early Bird credit of \$400 per couple may be used towards tour upgrades or pre/post hotel nights arranged through Collette by 31 July 2024. ABN: 32 600 161 671 | ATIA and CATO Members





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As a thankyou for your continued support of A&K the rewards are on us this month! Simply make and deposit a new A&K booking between 01 – 31 May that departs in 2024, and receive a Pre Paid Visa voucher based on your booking value.

It's that easy. Happy Shopping on A&K!

Terms & conditions: Applicable for any new bookings made and deposited 1-31 May 2024. Valid for bookings departing in 2024. Excludes AU/NZ bookings. Applicable to AU/NZ agents only. Once deposit is made and deposited agent needs to email booking number to [salesupport@abercrombiekent.com.au](mailto:salesupport@abercrombiekent.com.au) to register for the reward. All reward vouchers will be reconciled and sent to qualifying agents on Friday 14 June. If booking cancels the agent will need to refund the reward value back to A&K. Booking must be 5 nights or more on any A&K Tailor Made, Luxury Small Group Journey or Luxury Expedition Cruise. Reward is non transferrable or combinable with any other trade incentive. Applicable for bookings through A&K's Melbourne office not direct to DMC.