MEDIA RELEASE

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Echidna Walkabout wins another international award.

Melbourne wildlife tour operator Echidna Walkabout Nature Tours have won the prestigious Seatrade Cruise Award for World’s Most Innovative Shore Excursion.

Shore excursion expert Roger Smith is thrilled to be recognised for Echidna Walkabout’s shore excursion “Koala Clancy Foundation & book.”

“The tour involves cruise guests participating in our wild koala conservation project in the You Yangs near Melbourne,” said Smith.

“The tour is our most successful shore excursion, and to date we’ve carried over 10,000 passengers on this tour,” he said.

“Bookings have increased by 25% since the koala conservation component was introduced.”

“To have won this prestigious award is a triumph for sustainability in the cruise industry.”

The tour was nominated for the award by Abercrombie and Kent’s (AKORN) Cruise Ambassador, Toby Biddick.

“We nominated Echidna Walkabout’s tour because they have got the balance right – their tour is loved by our guests and regularly sells out; plus the tour is really helping koalas,” said Biddick.

Abercrombie & Kent senior vice president David Vass collected the award in Hamburg, Germany.

Speaking with Seatrade Cruise News, David Vass said, “we are delighted to have won the Seatrade Innovative Shorex Award.”

“With the amount of third-party tour operators flooding the shorex market, the authentic experience that can only be offered by a quality operator that reinvests in the regions they service becomes even more important,” Vass noted.

Smith added, “we are so pleased that Abercrombie & Kent picked up the award – they have been so supportive of this concept and deserve credit.”

On this shore excursion, cruise passengers help koalas in four ways:

- Guests are encouraged to Make a Home for Koala Clancy by removing one invasive weed that is destroying koala habitat;
- Included in the tour cost is a donation to Koala Clancy Foundation who plant trees to create better quality koala habitat for the future;
- Guests receive a copy of the book “Koala Clancy of the You Yangs” to take home and spread the message about koala conservation;
- The tour pays for wild koala research in the You Yangs, a project that has shown that koalas are in decline in the region and won’t survive without our help.

Echidna Walkabout’s Make a Home for Koala Clancy project has already delivered benefits to the local koala population. After 10 years of decline, 2016 was the first year that koala numbers increased in the You Yangs.
Read about how Echidna Walkabout’s tours are helping koalas here

ABOUT ECHIDNA WALKABOUT NATURE TOURS:
Founded in 1993 by Janine Duffy & Roger Smith, Echidna Walkabout Nature Tours is an international award-winning, mission-driven social enterprise that offers wildlife tours for cruise and independent international travellers. The owners started the not for profit Koala Clancy Foundation which works with local volunteers and educational groups. They won Gold for “Best for Wildlife Conservation” at the World Responsible Travel Awards in London in 2014.

Echidna Walkabout's popular half-day and full day shore excursions are included in the Melbourne programs of the world’s major cruise ships including Carnival Corporation vessels, Royal Caribbean, Crystal Cruises and The World.

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High resolution images and interviews available on request.

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