05 Manual focus vs auto
One thing you can’t fix in post-production is an out of focus picture! Practice focusing and experiment with different techniques, on auto and manual.

"On land I will always use manual focus, as I feel the human eye can do a better job at finding your focal point than the camera," says Keelan. "You also have more time to get it right when you’re on land. However, when I’m shooting a sunrise from the ocean I use auto focus with tracking to ensure I’m spot on. I’m also being washed around in the ocean so I don’t always have the luxury of standing still and taking my time!"

If you’re shooting into the sun there are other issues to contend with, says Tabor: "If your camera can’t find focus due to the flare, set your lens manually to infinity and that should give you a crisp image with an aperture around the f/22 mark."

06 Focal lengths
Wide-angle lenses can create sweeping landscape shots, but if the sun is included in the shot it will appear quite small. If you do want the sun to be a feature of the shot you’ll want to zoom right in as well. But be aware that you shouldn’t be staring at an increasingly strong sun as it begins to rise. When the sun is very low on the horizon its intensity is less, but its colour is often warmer.

07 Don’t forget your tripod!
If you’re shooting at slower shutter speeds and with longer focal lengths, setting up with a tripod is the only way you will get a sharp image.

"It’s possible to get a good sunrise photo handheld," says Tabor, "but it’s not preferable, because a tripod will let you compose the image better and you can line up horizon lines and bracket the shot."

Join a photo tour
One way to improve your photography is to plan a trip where you not only get to shoot all day, but you get to do it in an amazing place, under the watchful eye of a professional photographer. I spoke to Luke Hanson of Pinetrees Resort on Lord Howe Island about the Resort's photography weeks.

Q: What was the idea behind your walking photography week?
A: Lord Howe is an iconic walking and photography destination. Everywhere you go, you have ‘wow’ moments. Combining walking and photography is logical and it satisfies the ‘slow movers’, because they want more time to take photos.

Q: What will people get out of the photography week?
A: The walking and photography weeks give people the chance to take photos for eight hours a day over five days. That’s a load of photos. They’re mixing with other photographers and taking photos all week long. Combine that with a dramatic and inspiring landscape, and the help of professional photographers, and the guests’ photographic ability evolves on an exponential scale.

We run an informal competition each day, not so much to find the best photo, but to give guests some structure and focus for their photography. We also run workshops on technical topics and have ‘show and tell’ sessions to help guests understand what other photographers see in the same location.

Q: What professional support do they get?
A: We have three photographers on each trip who work one-on-one with the guests, and in each group there’s always at least one guest who’s a professional photographer and keen to help as well. Often guests learn just as much from each other as they do from the instructors.

More info: www.pinetrees.com.au