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Travel Daily AU
First with the news

Tue 05 Jan 10 **Page 1**

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FAA watcing AA

THE US aviation watchdog has said it will be closely monitoring American Airlines following three serious incidents inside 11 days.

The FAA is lifting its scrutiny of AA's operations following the 22 Dec incident involving one of its Boeing 737s overshooting the runway in Jamaica (TD 24 Dec), and a MD-82s damaged wingtip that resulted on 13 Dec when the jet's main landing gear veered off a runway in Charlotte, NC.

In the latest run of bad luck for AA, on Christmas Eve an MD-80 landing at Austin, Texas had its wingtip scrape the ground.

Burj Dubai opens

DUBAI is hopeful to attract a fresh wave of tourists to flock to the Emirate after it opened the world's tallest tower, the 828m Burj Dubai, yesterday.

The super skyscraper features an Armani Hotel on its first eight floors and on levels 38 and 39.

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VTIC calls for govt action

THE Victoria Tourism Industry Council says that the state's tourism industry and economy will suffer if prompt action is taken to make Victorian streets safer.

The call comes after Indian-based media began running negative stories about Victoria following the stabbing death of an Indian national last weekend, and

DL NW closer to one

DELTA Air Lines and Northwest Airlines were given approval by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to operate under a common certificate on New Year's Eve, a move that brings the carriers closer to becoming one entity.

Delta executive vice president Steve Gorman said the green light means employees from both airlines can work together "with the same manuals, organisational structure and oversight."

"Among other things, it also means that for the first time, premerger Northwest operations will be combined into Delta's operations," he said.

The FAA now recognises Delta and Northwest by a single carrier code and allows them to combine operations, some 14 months after the deal was struck.

The authorisation will also permit DL and NW pilots to share a single cockpit, and interchange plane routes and schedules.

MEANWHILE, Delta has begun phasing out the NW flight code on a number of codeshare partner flights, including Air France, KLM and Malev on 03 Jan; Alaska Airlines/Horizon Air and American Eagle on 31 Jan; and Hawaiian Airlines & Korean Air from 01 Feb.

VA serves a winner

V AUSTRALIA has today been named as the official airline of VA the Australian Open and Brisbane International tennis tournaments.

Executive GM Scott Swift said, "In the same way tennis appeals to a large cross-section of the community, so to does V Australia which offers a suite of travel options from premium top-end Business to spacious Premium Economy and Economy travel."

The agreement will see all Tennis Australia staff travel with VA internationally and Virgin Blue domestically.

claims the Indian govt is looking at placing a travel advisory about safety in the state.

VTIC chairman Jermy Johnson said, "these attacks are random and senseless... which is particularly frightening for international guests who are in Victoria to work, study or tour."

The council says India is a key market for overseas students and tourism, showing a close to a 40% growth in visitor numbers for the twelve-months to Sep 2009.

"A diminished Indian tourist market would greatly impact on Victorian accommodation, tour and attraction providers," he said.

Johnson said a delayed response by the government could harm the state's appeal to host major events and conventions and impact on the appeal of further direct flights to Melbourne by airlines.

The VTIC head says the "latest attacks show the urgency of an increased police presence, tougher sentencing and improved safety measures... if we hope to avoid being slapped with travel warnings from intl governments."

China flights frozen

THOUSANDS of air travellers in China have been stranded at airports after northern parts of the country were blanketed in snow, closing down airports at Beijing, Tianjin, Hohhot and Dalian.

The heaviest snowstorm in close to six decades left up to 30cm of snow in spots over China.

Over 90% of flights from Tianjin were cancelled on Sun, and only one runway at Beijing Intl Airport was operational, which forced 655 flights to be abandoned and 520 to be delayed.

Today's Travel Daily

TD today has three pages of news and photos, plus a page of jobs from AA Appointments.

Hargrave hiccup

QANTAS' brand new superjumbo dubbed *Lawrence Hargrave*, which was only handed over two weeks ago (TD 21 Dec), has experienced its first fault.

443 passengers aboard the flight from Melbourne to Los Angeles had their travel plans thrown into chaos yesterday after the new Airbus A380 could not depart as scheduled due to a faulty gauge.

The flight was due to depart at noon on Mon, but the mechanical situation held up the Qantas pax initially for 1.5hrs, and then a further 4 hours when the same problem reoccurred while taxiing.

QF93 was postponed until 11am today, with passengers offered overnight accommodation and free transport to and from the airport.

A Qantas spokesman said the flight delay caused by a "fuel indication defect" would have resulted in the pilot and crew exceeding their operating hours.

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NSW tourism growth

TOURISM operators across NSW are expected to prosper in Jan after early trends indicated a rise of up to 10% in the number of summer holiday bookings.

According to NSW Government's Minister for Tourism, Jodi McKay, more people are travelling this summer season than last year to recover from "what has been a tough year."

McKay said late last month, "It's no secret 2009 has been a difficult time for tourism operators across the State, however we are heading into typically the strongest month for domestic tourism."

She said figures from Jan 2008 showed that domestic holiday makers boosted the State's economy by \$1.4 billion.

And domestic travellers are not just limiting themselves to the NSW capital either, with McKay saying regional centres are also expecting a boost in visitors.

Chairman for the Tourism Industry Council of NSW, Ken Corbett said the govt's report was encouraging for the industry.

"Bookings over summer are looking great for the coastal areas from the Tweed to Eden," he said.

US tightens security grip

THE US Transportation Security Administration has implemented a new directive on airport security for US bound travellers, replacing its enhanced safety measures that were introduced late last month.

Under its new guidelines, air passengers from 10 "countries of interest" and four nations which the TSA believes could harbour terrorism activity, will face the tightest security scrutiny.

"Because effective aviation security must begin beyond our borders...TSA is mandating that every individual flying into the US from anywhere in the world travelling from or through nations

that are state sponsors of terrorism, or other countries of interest, will be required to go through enhanced screening," a TSA statement explained.

The "long-term, sustainable security measures" apply to pax flying to the US directly or via another country from Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Yemen.

Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria are the four countries listed on the US State Department's list of nations that sponsor terrorism.

Pax on flights into America from other countries, incl Australia, may still be selected at random for 'pat down' searches under the updated directive which came into effect overnight.

MEANWHILE, London Heathrow airport operator BAA has said it plans to install full-body scanners as an added security measure for air pax "as soon as practical."

A BAA spokesman said, "It's our view that a combination of technology, intelligence and passenger profiling will help build a more robust defence against the unpredictable and changing nature of the terrorist threat to aviation."

Solomon shaking

WATERS off the coast of the Solomon Islands were struck by two earthquakes inside an hour yesterday, the strongest of which was at a magnitude of 7.2 on the richter scale.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre said that the quake generated small non-destructive sea level changes but there was no threat of a tsunami.

JAL shares rocket

SHARES in Japan Airlines Corp. (JAL) surged by more than 30% on Mon following the Development Bank of Japan's decision to raise its credit line to ¥200 billion (TD yest.) for the struggling airline.

Last week, investors were spooked by reports alleging JAL may be heading into bankruptcy protection which saw the oneworld carrier's shares drop by 24% in one day (TD Thu).



Window Seat

SOME people would do anything to go on a holiday.

A penniless Indian man recently staged his own kidnapping to fund a trip to Macau to fulfil his girlfriends New Year's wish.

Unluckily, the 22 year old was caught red-handed at a new Delhi shopping mall whilst on his way to collect the \$45,000 ransom demanded from his dad.

Rather than celebrating New Year's Eve under the lights of the Chinese gambling resort, the man's poor attempt landed him in jail instead.

WHERE's the sense in this?

Whilst the UK experiences one of the coldest winters in years, over 300 couples are planning to slip away to a hotel completely made of ice.

The Ice Hotel in the Fagaras mountains, Romania has received an overwhelming number of bookings from British couples.

A stay at the luxury property made from giant blocks of ice is quite a novelty, with guests sleeping on ice beds and eating from deep frozen plates.

"I guess ice isn't as much fun if you're trying to scrape it from your car windscreen to get to work," said a hotel spokesman.



It's time for b-b-b-bed.

Gilly's Quest for Charity



ABOVE: Former Australian test, one-day and 20Twenty cricketer Adam Gilchrist was a special guest at the Quest Annual Conference held recently.

Gilly donated a cricket bat with the signatures of the entire Australian Cricket Team for the conference, which featured in a silent auction to generate funds for charity.

The winning bid of \$3,750 came

from Quest on Rheola, West Perth franchisee, Anderw Clarke, who elected Ronald McDonald House Charities as the recipient of the funds.

Pictured here passing on the donation at the Ronald McDonald Charity Pro Am Golf Event at Mt Lawley Golf Club in Dec, from left are: Angela West, Andrew Clarke, Adam Gilchrist, Garrett Goodenough and Jeff Shearman.

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Exploring Paris in a 2CV



EXPLORE Holidays recently hosted a group of Flight Centre agents for a fam in Paris and into some iconic 2CVs for a city sightseeing tour.

"Hooning around Paris in a 2CV car and experiencing plenty of close shaves as you negotiate the roundabout surrounding the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, is a fabulous experience and is not something anybody is going to forget in a hurry," said Explore Holidays marketing co-ordinator, Carmen Maver.

The group flew with Air Austral from Sydney, via Reunion Island to France and stayed at two of the Waldorf properties.

Pictured above getting ready for some hooning in a classic 2CV, Paris-style, is Carmen Maver.

New codesharing

SPANAIR and Brussels Airlines (SN) will begin a codeshare agreement on flights between Belgium and Spain from this Thu.

Spanair will place its "JK" code on SN services between Brussels and the Spanish cities of Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, Malaga, Palma and Seville.

MEANWHILE, Asiana and Air Astana are planning to launch codesharing on each others flights operating between Seoul and Almaty from Mon 18 Jan.

Starwood sells Bliss

STARWOOD Hotels & Resorts Worldwide has sold off its Bliss spa and product company for US\$100m to Steiner Leisure Ltd. Under the deal, the Bliss and Remede spas and amenities will remain exclusive to Starwood's W Hotels and St. Regis Hotels brands. President and ceo of Starwood Frits van Paasschen said the sale "demonstrates that despite today's tough economic conditions we're able to sell assets at strong multiples."

Berjaya changes

MALAYSIAN hotelier Berjaya Hotels & Resorts has today said it will now carry three core brands - Berjaya Hotel, Berjaya Resort and Colmar Tropicale, Berjaya Hills.

The group has also launched a new domain - berjahotel.com.

Money

WELCOME to *Money Talk*, *TD's* feature on the Australian dollar.

THE Aussie dollar has broken back through the US\$0.90 mark overnight after the US Dollar value slumped against 15 of the 16 major currencies.

Wholesale rates this morning were:

US	\$0.9114
UK	£0.5655
NZ	\$1.2363
Euro	€0.6318
Japan	¥84.05
Thailand	฿30.3040
China	¥6.1426
South Africa	R6.5480
Canada	\$0.9433
Crude oil	US\$81.54

Hang in there... just one day left!

Last Thursday was the final day for *TD* readers to submit their Christmas celebration snaps for our Fraser Suites Sydney photo comp. We've received an overwhelming number of entries and today we feature a final selection submissions, whilst our judges file through all of the photos and select a winner.

Tomorrow, we'll publish the judges favourite photo in *TD*, and the person who submitted the Christmas Party snap will win a nights accommodation package at Fraser Suites Sydney in a one bedroom deluxe suite, sparkling wine & a fruit bowl upon arrival and complimentary car parking - all valued at \$600.



Amadeus Sydney enjoy a summer Christmas party. Pictured left is Deborah Binder, Kim Staughton, Kay Lester, Glenda Prudius and Michael Shaw - submitted by Melissa Blanch.

Pictured right celebrating Christmas are the party people from the Australian Tourist Park Management - submitted by Karen Naylor.



HRG

HRG Australia - A leading global travel management company currently has an opportunity for an experienced Account Manager to join our Business Management Team in Sydney.

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Applications close Monday 11 January 2010

We would also welcome expressions of interest for future roles in the account management and business development teams for all HRG locations within Australia.

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