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Travel Daily

First with the news

Monday 5th January 2015

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Antarctica flt bargain

ANTARCTICA Flights is offering a unique opportunity for travel agents to take advantage of a special rate on its upcoming flights from Brisbane and Perth.

Available exclusively through **Travel Daily**, the firm has released a promo fare of \$500pp upgradeable to the best available seat on the day.

The deal represents a saving of \$699 on the regular fare for an Economy Class Centre seat.

Flights operate from Brisbane on Sun 18 Jan and Perth on Mon 26 Jan (Australia Day).

Both flights depart early morning and return mid evening.

The special offer applies to consultants and two companions.

To book, phone 1800 633 449 & quote 'Travel Daily' - more info at www.antarcticaflights.com.au.

Skytrans ceases operation

QUEENSLAND regional carrier Skytrans has ended operations, citing tough market conditions and an "inevitable price war" with Regional Express Airlines.

Based in Cairns, Skytrans Pty Ltd marked 25 years of operation in North Queensland on 01 Jan, but the airline concluded services last Fri, saying "the straw that broke the camel's back" has been the fall in the Australian dollar.

Skytrans md Simon Wild said on Fri he was seeking legal advice "regarding options for the business moving forward, but to be clear, it does not include the recommencement of flights in the short to medium term".

Wild confirmed 121 staff were made redundant in late Nov and early Dec after the carrier lost a large contract, while a further 67 staff were let go last week - all of which were paid out entitlements of over \$4 million.

He said a recently revised "viable albeit smaller business"

model for 2015 following the loss of the large TMR government contract has been impacted by the slide of the US dollar in recent weeks and predictions of dropping further, meaning it was no longer feasible.

Wild added that with other airlines entering its long-standing monopoly market, a contraction of the charter market and an escalation in airport & landing fees in remote ports coupled with the fall of the AUD\$, had created a "perfect storm".

"As at 2nd Jan 2015 Skytrans is fortunate to be in a position such that it can conduct an orderly wind down of the business.

"To continue to operate the airline would only deteriorate this position and put at risk payments to employees, creditors and ticket holders," Wild said in a statement.

Skytrans Airline is advising pax that have flights booked with the airline to contact travel insurance providers or seek a charge-back through their credit card company.

CLICK HERE to view Wild's five page statement.

Cook Islands promo

COOK Islands Tourism & Travel Associates has released a range of land-only packages available to book throughout Jan and Feb and valid for travel from 01 May.

The 'Indulgent Escapes' are priced from \$2,419pp staying at Rarotonga's Crown Beach Resort & Spa which includes one free night, daily brekkie and a resort credit of NZ\$350.

Innstant Travel pact

FESTIVALTRAVEL.COM.AU has forged a new partnership with B2B worldwide travel services provider Innstant Travel.

The deal boosts the WA-based firm's product inventory beyond tickets to events, shows and tours to 230,000 hotels worldwide.

Five pages of news

Travel Daily has five pages of the latest travel industry news and photos today.

Cruise Trends report

THE South Pacific has scraped into the top 10 cruise destinations in Cruise Holidays International's 2015 Cruise Trends report.

The study is based on bookings made by travel agents in the US & Canada, with the Caribbean the most popular destination (50.5%), followed by Europe Ocean cruises (12%) and Alaska (7.8%).

European river cruise booking jumped 2.7 percentage points to 6.7%, with the most popular voyages on the Rhine, Main and Danube Rivers.

The South Pacific (incl Australia and NZ) was 10th at just 1.7%.

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CTM sales completed

CORPORATE Travel Management today confirmed it has completed the purchase of US-based Diplomat Travel and Europe-based Chambers Travel, as revealed recently (**TD** 03 Dec). “The acquisition of these blue chip companies has opened up a window of opportunity for CTM and allows us to further expand and strengthen our presence globally,” managing director Jamie Pherous commented.

TD Mauritius winner

CONGRATS to Kathy Thomaidis of Jetset Travel Moonee Ponds who was the major prize winner of **TD**'s Nov monthly competition. Kathy has won return flights to Mauritius with Air Mauritius and four nights at Long Beach Resort.

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Govt backs QF/MU p'ship

THE Australian Government has pledged support for a proposed alliance between Qantas and China Eastern, telling the ACCC the venture would benefit the country's tourism industry.

Stephen Borthwick, gm Aviation Industry Policy Branch at the Dept of Infrastructure and Regional Development acknowledged the importance of airline partnerships beyond traditional group alliances such as oneworld & Star Alliance.

“These partnerships are important for the sustainability of Australian based airlines,” he said “Whilst Qantas has been able to maintain a consistent level of overall origin/destination traffic in the Australia-China market, the growth of other carriers in the market has meant its market share has fallen from 18.9% in 2010 to 12.4% in 2014,” Borthwick said.

Currently, five carriers operate non-stop on the Australia-China route - China Southern Airlines, China Eastern Airlines, Air China, Qantas and Sichuan Airlines.

For the 12 months ending Sep,

the bulk of capacity (44.4%) was handled by China Southern, in contrast to Qantas and China Eastern's joint share of 25.6%.

Borthwick said the Department expected the pact would have a “limited impact” on competition.

“Clearly, there are significant competitive forces in the Australia-China market and we would expect these forces would be able to negate the potential of any anti-competitive conduct by any airlines in the market,” Borthwick added.

As well as providing improved access and connections to destinations in China from MU's Shanghai hub, the Joint Coordination Agreement with QF would increase the ability for both airlines to market and sell tickets to Australian destinations, Borthwick highlighted.

MEANWHILE, Austrade voiced its support for the arrangement, but flagged potential “risks”.

Austrade's Bruce Gosper told the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission that pacts can “significantly reduce competition” on routes where the airlines were direct competitors.

Gosper focused on the Sydney-Shanghai route where collectively they operate 34 weekly services.

He suggested the proposed partnership may decrease services or increase fares.

“Austrade recommends that any approval of the arrangement by the ACCC stipulate that no reduction in services on the Sydney-Shanghai route can occur by the two airlines,” Gosper said.

Advantage Plus comp

PRIZES ranging from Samsonite luggage, Nikon cameras, dining vouchers and a major prize of 20 nights accom at Accor Asia-Pacific hotels can be won in a new Accor Advantage Plus competition.

To enter, share your favourite travel photos on social media by 20 Feb - **CLICK HERE** for details.

Qantas Turkey flight

A SPECIAL return service from Sydney to Istanbul has today been released by Qantas for travellers visiting the region for the 2015 ANZAC Centenary memorials.

The flight, to operate under the special designator of QF100, will be operated by a reconfigured 364-seat Boeing 747-400 aircraft, subject to regulatory approval.

QF100 will depart Sydney on 21 Apr at 2130, bound for Sabiha Gökçen International Airport and arriving the next day at 1230, with a brief two-hour stop in PER.

The return service will depart SAW on 28 Apr at 1400, again stopping in Perth and arriving in Sydney on 29 Apr at 1715.

Qantas said that as the national carrier, it was proud to offer the opportunity to travel to Gallipoli as part of the array of special commemorative events planned to recognise & mark the sacrifices of Australia's war heroes.

Fourth A330 for FJ

FORMAL acquisition processes have been completed by Fiji Airways for an A330-300 wide-body aircraft, scheduled to join its fleet in Dec this year.

Outgoing ceo Stefan Pichler said the carrier is in the process of selecting a new route from Nadi into Asia, which will eventually be serviced by the aircraft.

FJ's new plane will be configured with 24 Business Class lie-flat seats & 289 Economy class seats.

SB promotes Walsh

AIRCALIN has appointed Brett Walsh as its new country manager Australia, replacing Ken Triffitt who departed last year.

Walsh has served the carrier for the last four years as sales manager and brings more than 20 years industry experience.

“I plan to continue the growth of tourism to beautiful New Caledonia flying Aircalin, now with twelve flights per week departing Australia from Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne,” he said.



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Asian Cup's tourism goals

SQUADS participating in the 2015 AFC Asian Cup football tournament are beginning to arrive in Australia and with it, the tens of thousands of supporters here to experience Australia.

Tourism Australia managing director John O'Sullivan says the event, which runs from 09-31 Jan, will cement Australia's reputation as "a top class, welcoming host for major sporting events".

With Australia's Socceroos in firm focus throughout the event, O'Sullivan added the nation had a unique platform to showcase its visitor qualities to many of its key overseas tourism markets.

"Hosting AFC Asian Cup 2015 will undoubtedly provide significant tourism benefits - additional international visitors, increased domestic travel and also as a platform to promote Australia across Asia, our fastest growing and most valuable international inbound tourism

region," O'Sullivan said. "Let's not forget [also] the additional 800 million football fans from more than 120 countries who are expected to watch the tournament on television."

Financial and business analyst firm PricewaterhouseCoopers estimate the impact to Australia's GDP through hosting the event could be as much as \$23 million.

More than 500,000 spectators are expected to attend matches - including 30,000 from overseas - in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra and Newcastle.

Follow-on benefits including post-tournament visitation is also expected to materialise from significant marketing campaigns leading up to the tournament.

"Combine this with our enduring destination appeal and you have a powerful winning formula," O'Sullivan added.

Australia will also host the 2015 Cricket World Cup starting in Feb.

USA Discovery signup

BRAND USA is celebrating after surpassing 1,000 travel agents in Australia and New Zealand signing up to the USA Discovery Program online training program.

The program offers a variety of quizzes broken down by regions and holiday experiences.

Nine modules have currently been released for the syllabus, with new modules expected soon.

Regional NSW funds

FOUR major events in regional NSW have been approved for funds from the NSW Government under its Regional Flagship Events Program under Destination NSW.

The Murrumbateman Moving Feast, Boggabri Drivers Campfire, Coonamble Rodeo and the Dubbo Stampede were all identified as potential drawcards for tourists from interstate and overseas.

Inland NSW ceo Graham Perry said the funding for each event will help lure big visitor numbers.



Window Seat

SOME good advice for the hopeless romantics out there - make sure she's the one before booking a holiday together.

Lovestruck Canadian man Jordan Axani and his girlfriend (at the time) Elizabeth Gallagher were all set for a three week trip to Italy before things turned sour and the couple split up.

Stuck with an expensive name change situation, Axani instead turned to online social portal Reddit to find another Canadian with the same name as his ex.

Axani received thousands of responses, including people willing to change their name.

The quest garnered national media coverage, with Axani selecting Nova Scotia homeless shelter volunteer and student Elizabeth "Quinn" Gallagher to join him for a "platonic" trip.

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South Africa	\$1,676*	\$6,137*
United Kingdom	\$1,757*	\$7,422*
The Middle East	\$1,879*	\$7,662*
South America	\$2,017*	\$8,589*
Africa	\$2,033*	\$7,993*

*Terms & Conditions: Advertised airfares are for return travel in low season from Perth on Sunday through to Thursday. Offer ends 11:59pm (AEDT) 13th January 2015 unless sold out prior. Travel periods are for selected dates between 16th January until 30th November 2015. Peak season surcharges apply. Other travel dates are available at higher fares. Prices are correct as at 12th December 2014. Small variations in prices may occur as a result of differences in airport taxes and charges. Offer subject to availability and flight restrictions apply. Bookings can only be made up to 11 months in advance. Cancellation and change fees apply. For full Terms and Conditions, please see your GDS or call Emirates on 1300 303 777. Other conditions apply.



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Emirates boosts BHX

BIRMINGHAM will be serviced by three daily flights from Dubai as of 01 Aug after Emirates added a third service to the British city, boosting capacity by 42 per cent.

Bunnik group living on the edge



BUNNIK Tours rounded out 2014 for a group of its incentive winners with an awe-inspiring trip to South and Central America.

Over 13 exciting days, the group embarked on a packed schedule which saw them visit Lima, Cusco, Machu Picchu, the Sacred Valley, Puno, Lake Titicaca, the Colca Canyon and Arequipa before a stop in Santiago on the way home.

According to the group upon its return, one of the highlights went with them everywhere, that

being the abundance of space on offer onboard the Bunnik coach.

The quality hotels & personable, friendly local guides added to the enjoyable experience.

Pictured above from left at Colca Canyon in the back row is Kate Arnold, HWT Sylvania; Sandy Vescio, Northern Beaches Travel; Remko Stikkelbroeck, Travel Just 4U; Emma Edge, helloworld Ocean Grove; Paul Cook, Bunnik Tours; Elle Poyzer, Summerland Travel; Julie Major, Epping Travel & Anne Mullins, The Travel Studio.

Front row: Margaret Sibraa, Bunnik Tours; Margarette, tour guide and Stacey Dudley from Riche Travel Thirroul.

Anantara flag resort

MINOR Hotel Group will create a new flagship property for its Anantara brand in Thailand, with the current Four Seasons Bangkok set to make way for the change.

The 354-key property will be open for guests from 01 Mar.

TFE brands Thunder

TRAVELODGE Hotels has signed on as an official sponsor of the Sydney Thunder T20 Big Bash cricket side, becoming the team's Official Accommodation Partner.

Hahn online booking

E-TICKETING firm Hahn Air has launched its e-direct HR Booking Portal for agents via its website.

The online tool opens up dozens of low-cost carriers and web fares FOC to participating agencies.

Brochures of the Week

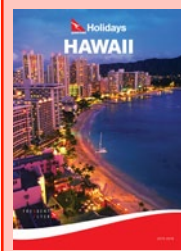


WELCOME to Brochures of the Week, *Travel Daily's* Monday feature. If your firm is releasing a new brochure you'd like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description summarising its features and itineraries, including a PDF of the front cover, and contact details to brochures@traveldaily.com.au.



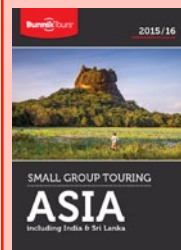
Travelmarvel - Festive Journeys 2015

If next Christmas cannot come soon enough for you, flip open Travelmarvel's newest Festive Journeys guide and check out the vast range of end-of-year getaways around the world. The 44-page guide includes nine itineraries ranging from 8-25 days. Adventures on offer take guests on pristine 'White Christmas' style river cruises in Europe, with the Canadian Rockies adding to the winter offerings. For warmer weather, try New Zealand or Tasmania or an adventure in South America or the Mekong.



Qantas Holidays - Hawaii 2015/16

The Islands of Aloha offer some of the world's most peaceful and idyllic landscapes as well as some of the most exciting nightlife and thrill-seeking attractions. The latest Qantas Holidays brochure includes an expanded range of properties, this year including the Volcano House in Hilo on the Big Island - offering a great base to explore the active volcano and nearby National Parks. On Oahu, Hilton Hawaiian Village, Westin Moana Surfrider & Sheraton Waikiki make up the "Our Pick" list.



Bunnik Tours - Asia 2015/16

To see Asia in the intimate style only a small group can provide, consider Bunnik Tours' newest guide, released late last year. Group sizes have been reduced further on some tours in Asia to improve the hands-on interaction between guides and guests - in some cases numbers are capped at 12. Thirteen group tours make up the range, three of which are brand new for the season. Additions include Borneo, Myanmar and India, while Taiwan, Laos, Japan, South Korea and Vietnam are also available.



G Adventures - Earth 2015

Watch the world go by - quite literally - with a number of itineraries in the new G Adventures Earth brochure now featuring some of the world's most fascinating railway journeys around the world. Guests can tour the Alps in Europe, the Himalayas and the Siberian Peninsula from the comfort of a well-appointed rail carriage, while India, Africa and North America is also covered. The rail journeys complement an already promising range of tours designed for inquisitive travellers of all ages.



Rosie Holidays - Fiji 2015/16

With the experience growing rapidly in popularity, weddings in Fiji now occupy their own dedicated section of the new Rosie Holidays guide to the island nation. The section details the range of resorts set up to cater to a couple's most special day, facilities on offer and packages tailored to suit groups of all sizes. Several new resorts have also been added for the first time, with more features packed with emotive images.



Infinity Holidays - New Zealand 2015/16

The Land of the Long White Cloud offers some of the world's most jaw-dropping scenery, which is now more accessible than ever with new self-drive itineraries designed and appearing in a new Infinity Holidays guide dedicated to self-drive touring in the country. For those keen to be chauffeured, escorted touring also appears in the guide, with product from AAT Kings and Haka Tours appealing to different market segments, while those keen to set out on foot will enjoy guided walks from Pacific Destinationz.

WIN A KID'S TRAVEL BOOK

Everyday this week *Travel Daily* is giving readers a chance to win *The Itchee Feet Traveller's Activity Book*.

Going somewhere? Travelling by train, by plane, by car... by camelback? It doesn't have to be dull. Make the journey as exciting as the destination. *The Itchee Feet Traveller's Activity Book* contains dozen of fun and inspiring activities to keep young travellers boredom-free. Whether you're travelling across town or across the world, this entertaining book is a must-have for kids on the move.

- Fun facts about travel and the world.
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- Unique games designed to entertain while you're travelling.

To win, be the first person to send the correct answer to the question to kidsbook@traveldaily.com.au

How many family members in the cartoon Feet family?
Hint: www.itcheefeet.com

Itchee Feet for kids who travel

New China Starwoods

STARWOOD Hotels & Resorts has expanded its Chinese footprint over the Christmas and New Year break, introducing new brands in different provinces. The hotel giant has opened the first of its flagship Sheraton brand properties in the Yunnan province in the form of the 326 room Sheraton Xishuangbanna Hotel. Elsewhere, the group's midscale Four Points by Sheraton brand has opened for the first time in the Southern Guangxi province. The Four Points by Sheraton Guilin, Lingui is the region's first internationally branded property and offers 242 rooms and suites. Starwood has earmarked secondary and tertiary Chinese cities for its entire pipeline of Four Points by Sheraton brand openings over coming years.

Fog havoc for AUH

FLIGHTS across Etihad Airways' global network were thrown into disarray last weekend as a result of heavy fog at its home port. "Severe weather conditions" on Sat night and the early hours of Sun morning forced the closure of the operating runway at Abu Dhabi International Airport. A number of inbound flights were diverted to other airports in the UAE, including Dubai World Central, Al Ain and Al Bateen while others were delayed. EY used social media to advise passengers of likely delays over coming days as flights were rescheduled and stranded pax rebooked onto alternative flights. The carrier confirmed on Twitter "20 return flights have been cancelled with a number of flights subject to revised times". "Guests who are able to defer their travel to, or through Abu Dhabi, up to and including Tue 06 Jan, are being encouraged to rebook flights," Etihad Airways said on Facebook, with normal cancellation & refund fees waived.

Infinity crowds out South Africa



FIFTY top-selling agents from Infinity Holidays dispersed across South Africa recently as part of the wholesaler's annual Incrowd MEGA incentive trip for 2014. Places on the company's annual flagship mega famil are always highly sought, with the latest edition proving no exception. Agents from across Australia congregated in Johannesburg for their first night together before heading out in separate groups. Early in the trip, the group were treated to a taste of next year's mega famil, which will take place in the Greek Islands.

One of the groups, **pictured** above enjoying a tippie of fine local wine in Kruger National Park enjoyed an experience packed with game viewing opportunities. Arriving to the Sabi Sabi Private Game Bush Lodge by private aircraft, the group explored their luxury surroundings before venturing out into the plains to hunt for photos of the 'big five'. Cape Town was next, with the group staying at the Cape Royale Luxury Hotel & Spa, touring Robben Island and letting their hair down with a hilarious party at a club known as "Beefcakes".

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