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Thursday 15th January 2015

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## Kuoni pulls out of touring

**SWISS** company Kuoni Travel Group has confirmed plans to offload its 50-yr UK business and touring operations in five other regions, with the jobs of 3,800 staff worldwide to be affected.

The firm said it was seeking new ownership for Kuoni Travel UK following a review of its global business operations.

On the market also was Kuoni Travel Group's tour operating interests in its home country, as well as Benelux, Hong Kong, China, India and Scandinavia.

Kuoni Travel UK sells holidays to more than 80 countries from its 35 branded offices and has other specialist businesses in Carrier, Kirker, Voyage Jules Verne, CV Villas and Journeys of Distinction.

MD of Kuoni Travel UK Derek Jones will retain his role, as well as that of the UK leadership team, to oversee the process & forge "ambitious" growth plans.

Jones sought to assure booked customers that the day-to-day operation of the London-based arm would not be impacted.

"It's very much business as usual right now for all our staff

and customers," he said.

"This is the busiest time for holiday bookings and right now our focus is on continuing to deliver brilliant holidays and service for all customers."

"We firmly believe that the outbound business can be better developed under new ownership and we'll be working closely with our colleagues in Switzerland to make sure we find the right buyers," Jones commented.

His remarks echo those of the parent firm, which also said "Kuoni will seek assurance about the continuation of the existing business locations and the continued employment of staff".

Kuoni said it expects "significant interest" from possible buyers and hopes to exit 2015 under a new ownership.

### Five pages of news!

*Travel Daily* today has five pages of news & photos, a cover page from **Hawaii Tourism** and full pages from:

- AA Appointments jobs
- Travel Trade Recruitment

## Brand USA mega-fam

**BRAND USA** is encouraging agents to get certified as an official expert to qualify for its 2015 Aloha USA MegaFam.

In partnership with Hawaiian Airlines, Brand USA will escort up to 55 agents from Australia & NZ between 15-24 Mar, visiting San Diego & Los Angeles, Sacramento & San Francisco, Portland & Seattle, New York & Washington DC and Las Vegas & surrounds.

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## New Oaks for Mackay

OAKS Hotels & Resorts has revealed plans to open a second new-build hotel in the Capricorn Coast town of Mackay, Qld.

The six-storey Oaks Carlyle will feature 59 rooms and is slated to debut in Mar, joining sister-property Oaks Rivermarque.



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## Star Ratings B2B dashboard

A NEW consumer ratings model for accommodation providers will add a "21<sup>st</sup> century dimension" to the country's 52-year-old national ratings scheme.

Unveiled today by Star Ratings Australia, the model is promoted as one of the first independent rating programs in the world to incorporate consumer opinions.

About 5,000 licensees will be able to view comments made by consumers about properties on hundreds of travel websites and in multiple languages, Star Ratings Australia (STA) said.

Through a strategic partnership with ReviewPro, STA will be able

to gain access to the industry-standard Global Review Index (GDI), a score used for online reputation management.

Stage 1 sees the launch of an exclusive B2B online dashboard solution which provides feedback on "key indicators" such as cleanliness, service, value for money, rooms & location and a snapshot of guest satisfaction.

The second stage will compare consumer responses alongside Star Ratings, "delivering a powerful and reliable information source for travellers wanting to shortlist and book accommodation in Australia".

Plans are afoot to recognise and reward licensees who excel in the Star Ratings scheme and consumer ratings model.

## ICC Sydney progress

BUSINESS Events groups have praised the NSW Government and developers of the new International Convention Centre at Darling Harbour for reassurance the facilities will be open on time.

Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia boss Joyce DiMascio said she could see there was clear evidence the new structures were "rising out of the ground".

"With a redevelopment of this scale it's good to know that construction by Lend Lease is progressing well and according to the timetable shared with industry," she said.

Business Events Sydney ceo Lyn Lewis-Smith said her firm had secured 19 events for the centre with an estimated economic benefit to NSW of \$150 million.

## Emirates extension

NETWORK-WIDE discounted Economy and Business class fares with Emirates have been extended for sale until 21 Jan.

EK's New Year's Global Sale is valid for departures between 16 Jan and 30 Nov, with fares to Europe priced from \$1,575.

## QF ADL bike advisory

QANTAS is advising agents with customers travelling to Adelaide with a bicycle from today until 27 Jan to forewarn them of delays for their two-wheeled friend.

QF said it is expecting a large volume of bikes for pax heading to the Santos Tour Down Under, with bikes possibly transported on the next available flight.

## Tourism Ireland

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## Sheraton Aggie Grey

**THE** rebrand of Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Resort is complete, with the refurbished property making its official debut today. Sheraton will open its second property in Samoa, Sheraton Aggie Grey's Hotel & Bungalow, in the second quarter of 2015.

## Jhappi Time TVCs

**DESTINATION NSW** says the success of an online tourism campaign showcasing Sydney and NSW in India last year will be rolled out onto television screens. NSW Premier Mike Baird said the 'Jhappi Time' web-based promotion had helped contribute to a 21% boost in Indian visitor arrivals to the state for the year ending Aug 2014.

"More than 86,500 visitors from India arrived in NSW in the year ending Sep 2014. "Those who travelled on Jhappi Time packages added \$6.3 million in visitor expenditure to the NSW economy," Baird said this week in Mumbai on a trade mission.

The next phase of Jhappi Time will provide special airfares to Sydney and NSW with Singapore Airlines from Fri to Nov. Regional destinations that will be promoted in the TVCs incl the Blue Mountains & Hunter Valley.

## Rex postpones Cape

**REGIONAL** Express gm network strategy & sales Warwick Lodge has confirmed the carrier is postponing its planned flights to Cape York communities in Northern Queensland (TD Mon). Lodge said local councils had indicated they were not yet ready to receive Rex's services as yet. "Rex remains willing to continue discussions with all interested Cape communities and we will be open to commencing air services once the communities have made firm decisions," he said yesterday.

## Tigerair & Scoot get closer

**FURTHER** collaboration is in the wings for Tigerair Singapore and Scoot as the two airlines continue to deploy elements of the approved cooperation pact. Now on the drawing board for enactment later in 2015 are plans for dual flight booking capabilities on both carrier's websites. Capacity will also be maximised, with Scoot to increase services to Perth to daily from next month, at the same time as Tigerair's suspension of the WA route goes into effect (TD 13 Oct). Scoot and Tigerair have also worked to improve schedules on high-traffic business routes such as SIN-HKG and SIN-BKK by flying services in parallel. The anti-trust immunity tie-up approved by the Competition

Commission of Singapore in Aug last year has seen the carriers able to double passenger numbers. This has come on the back of more competitive airfares, joint promotions and exclusively combinable itineraries.

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## Hyatt Regency Atakoy

HYATT Hotels Corp has opened its third property in Istanbul, this week unveiling the brand new five-star 284 room Hyatt Regency Istanbul Atakoy.

## New Short Break brox

AAT Kings has released its second Short Breaks brochure after relaunching the travel style last year (*TD* 17 Jan 2014), packed with breaks of two to nine days.

Six new itineraries have been added to the program, including the seven-day Tropical Trails, taking pax through the highlights of far North Queensland.

## TA/EY Aust campaign

A CO-OPERATIVE 'Restaurant Australia' campaign involving Tourism Australia and Etihad Airways has been rolled out in the UK to lure Brits down under.

Tourism Australia says the campaign showcases Australia's premium food & wine offering, at the same time raising awareness of the nation's coastal and natural experiences.

A tactical campaign covering TV, digital and traditional channels will run throughout Jan.

## QR non-stop to Sofia

QATAR Airways has announced the launch of new non-stop flights from Doha to Sofia from Mar.

The oneworld carrier currently operates to the Bulgarian capital via Bucharest, Romania.

QR is also beefing up frequencies to Ankara (moving from five to six weekly) and Zagreb (from four to five), effective 01 Mar.

## Backyard to Borneo

BANGKOK-BASED online travel company Backyard Travel has introduced Borneo to its stable of destinations, offering a selection of itineraries including a nine-day wildlife trip and a four-day expedition for families.

See [www.backyardtravel.com](http://www.backyardtravel.com).

## Spirit of Tas for kids

DAY sailing departures aboard the *Spirit of Tasmania I* and *II* are featuring a range of Tasmanian themed arts and entertainment through until 13 Apr.

"The summer program is all about showcasing Tasmania's local heritage and history with local Tasmanian artists that entertain passengers," Spirit of Tasmania ceo Bernard Dwyer said.

The complimentary activities include face-painting, badge-making, speed-painting, disco bingo and trivia.

## Window Seat



AUSTRALIA Day is synonymous with getting outside and firing up the BBQ, and *Travel Daily* is now well equipped to do so thanks to AAT Kings.

A copy of the touring firm's new Australia and New Zealand Short Breaks 2015-16 brochure arrived in the mail yesterday, wrapped in this handy BBQ bib, ably modelled by our own Louise Wallace (pictured).

Although not quite Paul Hogan's famous line, our bet is that "Slip another shrimp on the barbie" is sure to catch on.

The short breaks range is just a year old following its relaunch last year & like most newborns, has grown a lot in its first year.



## Sichuan celebrates a year in SYD



GREETED by Santa Claus and a giant panda, 60 industry guests in Sydney attended a celebration

hosted by Sichuan Airlines to mark the carrier's first year flying between Chongqing and Sydney.

Party attendees included travel agents, wholesalers, consolidators and guests from Sydney Airport, CNTO and the Chinese Consulate.

The carrier told attendees it valued support received from the local trade and was "dedicated in growing the Australia market".

Pictured above from left is Jonathan Cheong, Sichuan Airlines; Tony Qu, Sichuan Airlines; Peng Gang, Chinese Consulate General; Betty Bai, Sichuan Airlines; Cui Wenlong, Chinese Consulate and Kevin Wen, Sichuan Airlines.

## Town House sold

STARWOOD Capital Group is set to expand its presence in the United Kingdom after agreeing to purchase independent Scottish group, the Town House Collection for an undisclosed amount.

The group operates two hotels - Blythswood Square in Glasgow and The Bonham in Edinburgh.

MEANWHILE, Starwood has also purchased four extended-stay apartment properties made up of 650 units in the Tower Bridge and Earls Court region of London for £206 million (AUD\$386 million).

## Air China CTU/CMB

STAR Alliance carrier Air China will introduce services between Chengdu and Colombo on 10 Feb.

Air China will operate the Sri Lanka route - its fourth gateway in Southeast Asia - using Airbus A330 aircraft on a four weekly basis.

## Selective opens south

SMALL group tour operator Selective Tours has expanded its range to include Southwest China, launching a new itinerary to the naturally picturesque region.

The maiden product is a 14-day Scenic China tours taking guests to Guilin, Kunming, Dali, Xian & more, priced from \$3,778ppts.

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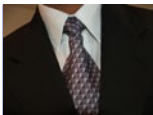
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## Industry Appointments

**WELCOME** to Industry Appointments, *Travel Daily's* Thursday feature which has the latest job appointments from across the industry. If you have just appointed someone to a new position and would like to update the industry, send us an email at [appointments@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:appointments@traveldaily.com.au).

**Jessi Greer** has returned to the travel industry after a few months away travelling the world, starting next week as a new Business Development Manager for **Topdeck**, based in Melbourne.

Recently appointed local representatives for NYC & Company, **The Walshe Group** has hired **Cindy Gilbert** as the account's rep in Australia.

China Southern Airlines' representation in the Australian market will be handled by **Anna Denby**, who has been hired by **Buchan PR** and tasked with the account. Denby has formerly represented Finnair and Tigerair.

Global travel technology firm **Travelport** has strengthened its executive team with the recruitment of **Thomas Murphy** as its General Counsel.

**Broome & The Kimberley Holidays** has added two new senior members to its team with **Nerreda Hillier** coming onboard as its new General Manager. Additionally, **Fiona Axford** has joined as the wholesaler's National Sales Manager. Both commenced in their new roles this week.

**Helloworld.com.au** has recruited experienced online marketing guru **Jeff Garton** as its new Head of Online Marketing. Garton has previously worked with Webjet and also with group buying platform Living Social.

Joining the team at **Cape York Peninsula Lodge** is **Nikki Allison**, who comes across from Cicada Lodge to become the new General Manager.

## Solomon & Fiji friends

**AN IMPASSE** between the airlines of the Solomon Islands and Fiji has been resolved & lifted by the countries' governments.

As a result, both carriers will resume flights to the other, with Fiji Airways resuming services to Honiara on 03 Feb and Solomon Airlines back to Nadi from 24 Jan.

The resolution was welcomed by Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau ceo Jo Tuamoto, who said the impasse had compounded an already tough year for the nation.

"The impasse resolution in tandem with the new government announcing its intention to push the tourism agenda even harder bodes well as we move into 2015."

## MH cooking with Poh

**A NEW** video series highlighting the culinary inspirations of former MasterChef runner-up Poh Ling Yeow has been launched by Malaysia Airlines - **CLICK HERE**.

Guests flying with MH outbound from Australia can enjoy a dish onboard designed by Poh.

## Ctrip signs Amadeus

**CHINESE** travel giant Ctrip.com has engaged Amadeus on a multi-year agreement to handle the provision of air content to points of sale outside mainland China.

The company is currently on a major expansion drive into Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and the USA.

## QR eye 6E investment

**QATAR** Airways has expressed interest in purchasing a 49% stake in Indian low-cost carrier IndiGo as part of a plan to increase its presence in the subcontinent.

The carrier is aiming to take advantage of Indian legislation introduced in 2012 allowing up to 49% foreign ownership in an Indian airline (**TD** 17 Sep 2012).

QR ceo Akbar Al-Baker said it "would be able to deliver what they want faster than all the new entrants in the Indian market".

He ruled out investment in SpiceJet - which has this week finalised a government bailout - saying IndiGo was the only efficient carrier in India.

## Ryanair to upgrade

**INFLIGHT** entertainment and wi-fi will be trialled by European low-cost carrier Ryanair this year as the carrier continues its pledge to improve customer service.

## Newsoms attend lodge birthday



## Tourists culture lovers

**AUSTRALIANS** are keen to learn about the local culture of their destination through visiting museums, according to new data from Roy Morgan Research.

A study of 18,068 Australians aged 14 and over found that 75% of those who visited France, Greece, Germany, Holland, Spain and Portugal visited one of the country's museums or galleries.

Overall across all destinations, the figure dropped to 36%.

Aussies are also keen on their own history, with as many as half of visitors to Darwin, Hobart and the Katherine region saying they had visited a museum or gallery.

**ABOVE:** Adventure World founder Peter Newsom and his wife Jane has just returned from the 20th anniversary celebration for Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, held recently in Zimbabwe.

The lodge has been a cornerstone of Adventure World product in the African continent for many years and continues to play its part in creating lifelong memories for the region's visitors.

Lately, Newsom has been busy as a director of AAT, which keeps him closely involved with Africa through the company's interests.

The pair are **pictured** above with the lodge's operator Dave Glynn (right), also chairman of Africa Albida Tourism.



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### Leisure Travel Consultant - Central Coast

Sydney, up to \$41K DOE ref: 16854SZ1

Work close to home! No more commuting to the CBD, Monday to Friday only! This is the dream job for anyone living in the Central Coast. Work, life balance and working for a company that cares about their consultants, not to mention rewarding educational trips and attending specialised events. This is the perfect opportunity for an experienced travel consultant with strong fares knowledge along with a great customer service focus to really be apart of a fantastic independent travel agency.

For more information please call Serena on (02) 9113 7272 or click [APPLY](#) now.

### Groups Travel Consultant

Melbourne, \$Competitive, Ref: 1450DVA

A fantastic opportunity has arisen to join an established market leader as a Groups Travel Consultant. If you love leisure travel and have experience in booking groups or you are an experienced retail consultant looking for a change then this could be your dream role! Ideally you will have at least two years experience and GDS. My client is looking for someone to join their team ASAP so don't delay! Offering excellent company benefits and working hours in return for your dedicated hard work!

For more information please call Dave on (02) 9113 7272 or click [APPLY](#) now.

### Retail Travel Consultant

Adelaide, \$45-55K DOE Ref: 1493LB2

Rare vacancy to join a great team within a well known travel brand in Adelaide. Fantastic opportunity for an experienced Travel Consultant with at least 1-2 years' experience in a similar role, looking to expand on their knowledge and grow their career with this well respected company. You will be a part of a fun and dynamic store, working with both domestic and international product. Ideally you will have solid GDS experience (Galileo preferred) and love hitting sales targets!

For more information please call Lauren on (02) 9113 7272 or click [APPLY](#) now.



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