

Ula Vanuatu red alert

TROPICAL Cyclone Ula which struck Tonga last weekend (**TD** 04 Jan) and touched remote parts of Fiji's southern islands is now tracking a path towards Vanuatu.

The Vanuatu Meteorological Services reports wind speeds close to the centre are estimated at 165km/hr.

A 'red alert' has been declared by the Vanuatu Government for Anietyum Island in Tafea province in the nation's south, with the storm upgraded to a Category 4 cyclone yesterday.

The eye of the storm is not expected to pass over any of Vanuatu's islands, however the ring has the potential to cause damage, CARE Australia's John Bolitho told *Reuters*.

Cyclone Ula is likely to remain in the region until Wed, with speeds dipping slightly to 150 km/hr.

The Vanuatu Tourism Office reported this morning that early indications "have been largely positive with no damage or injuries currently reported".

A VTO spokesperson told *Travel Daily* all international flights to Vanuatu are operating as normal, though some flights to Tanna did experience minor disruptions.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news and photos, plus full pages from: (**click**)

- Corporate Traveller job ads
- AA Appointments jobs

Excite enters Singapore

EXCITE Holidays has expanded further into Asia by setting up shop in Singapore.

The B2B wholesaler says the move comes after "strong interest" and bookings from Singaporean agents following a presentation introducing Excite Holidays' booking platform and product range.

Managing director and co-founder of Excite Holidays, Nic Stavropoulos says Excite's technology will "empower Singaporean travel agents with cutting-edge tools," enabling them to compete on a global

scale and maximise the earning potential of each booking.

Excite Holidays currently has a presence in Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Greece & the United Kingdom and previously outlined plans to launch in the UAE (**TD** 09 May 14), where it can now be booked online.

AFTA, Webjet talks

AFTA chief Jayson Westbury has commenced dialogue with online travel company Webjet following its controversial ad campaign mocking travel agents, exclusively revealed to the trade by *Travel Daily* last week (**TD** 05 Jan).

He said the competition for the industry is not agent versus agent but rather supplier direct sales, noting that Webjet is itself an agent and "that is the point we should all be making rather than fighting with each other".

Westbury confirmed to *Travel Daily* that AFTA was continuing to push the agency distribution channel via more advertising for ATAS in the New Year.

Hefty United fine

UNITED Airlines has been fined US\$750,000 for failing to adhere to contingency plans for lengthy tarmac delays, including a flight from Chicago to Paris Charles de Gaulle which prevented pax from deplaning for 270mins, surpassing the 4 hour limit.

Largest OZ Ibis Styles

THE largest Ibis branded hotel in Australasia is on track to open by the end of Q1 2016.

Ibis Styles Brisbane Elizabeth Street will offer 368 rooms and is the first newly built Ibis Styles for AccorHotels in Australia.

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Travel Daily

First with the news

Monday 11th January 2016



Vale Bob Oatley

TOURISM icon and renowned businessman, wine maker and yachtsman Bob Oatley has died from illness aged 87.

Oatley, who purchased Queensland tourist haven Hamilton Island for \$200 million in 2001, established the Whitsundays award-winning resort which was named 'The Best Resort in the World' in the *Condé Nast* Traveler Readers' Choice Awards.

He was also the owner of yacht *Wild Oats XI* which won the iconic Sydney-to-Hobart race for the eighth time in 10 years in 2014.

In addition, he established Rosemount Estate Winery.

Oatley is survived by his wife Valerie and three children Sandy, Ian and Ros.

People's Choice voting open

TRAVEL agents across Australia are being urged to encourage their clients to lodge votes in the new "People's Choice - Best Retail Travel Agency" category in the 2016 National Travel Industry Awards (**TD** breaking news).

Voting opened this morning in the new category, which is being accompanied by significant consumer-facing marketing for ATAS through the *International Traveller* magazine produced by Australian Traveller Media.

The January edition of the

publication includes a hard copy voting form, and there's also an online option, with the new NTIA category forming part of the annual People's Choice awards conducted by the publisher.

ATAS is supporting the People's Choice awards, with the very first question in the poll asking respondents to "name your favourite travel agent (store name and location)".

The survey also asks for information on consumers' favourite hotels, resorts, airlines, rail journeys, tours and destinations, with entrants placed into a draw to win an APT Mekong river cruise.

Voting will remain open until 23 Mar, with state finalists in the new NTIA category to be announced in Apr and the overall winner revealed at the NTIA gala dinner on 16 Jul in Sydney.

CLICK HERE to view the online voting form.

P&O ships slow start

PACIFIC Pearl arrived late into Sydney on Fri morning due to poor weather conditions caused by a low pressure trough (**TD** Fri).

The cruise line said *Pacific Pearl* was required "to travel at a reduced speed to ensure the comfort of all guests and crew."

As a result, the ship's departure on Fri night on a three-night food and wine cruise was delayed.

Tramada shortlist

AUSTRALIAN travel tech firm Tramada has been shortlisted in the 2015/16 Cloud Awards, in the Best SaaS (outside US) category.

The annual cloud computing awards are now in their fifth year, with the winners to be revealed later this month.

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Shenzhen year-round

WITH the route yet to launch, China Southern is showing huge faith in its new Shenzhen-Sydney route, moving the thrice weekly service to a year-round operation.

CZ is launching the new route on 27 Jan, and GDS displays now the SZX-SYD city pairing will move to daily two months later.

Further, the Chinese airline has revised its 'Canton Route' ops between Guangzhou and Sydney over the Northern summer from an initial thrice daily service to 14 weekly, effective 27 Mar.

Dodgy VN dealer

MORE than 300 Vietnamese students in Sydney, Melbourne and Victoria have been tricked into buying fictitious Vietnam Airlines tickets sold via Facebook.

Fares on the pages were sold for \$300 to \$700 cheaper than what was available via travel agents.

Collectively, students paid about half a million Australian dollars to a woman called 'Vi Tran', *Vietnam News Agency* reported last week.

NSW investigators are working with Vietnam Airlines' local office, the Vietnamese Dynamic Students in New South Wales and some of the students targeted by the fraud.

Jan is usually a peak time to buy air tickets to return to Vietnam with traditional Lunar New Year celebrations approaching.

Biosecurity talks

THE Federal Government is calling for public submissions on subordinate legislation supporting the new Biosecurity Act 2015, aiming to reduce the risk of dangerous communicable diseases from entering Australia.

"With borders as large, vast and busy as Australia's, it's important we are vigilant in protecting our population against the spread of pests and diseases that risk harming human health," commented health minister Sussan Ley.

She said the Biosecurity Act, due to come into effect Jun 2016, would help enhance Australia's preparedness for foreign diseases.

SQ/VX up US c'sharing

SINGAPORE Airlines is planning to expand its codeshare alliance with Virgin America to cover any point in the USA serviced by VX, a new request to the Department of Transportation indicates.

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Aviation set for disruption too

A **START-UP** firm has proposed the concept of unlimited flights between Sydney and Melbourne with no airport queues.

Co-founders of Airly, Luke Hampshire & Alexander Robinson, are hoping to launch a private air service aimed at frequent flyers between the two capital cities.

The business model is shaped on the successful Canadian start-up known as Surf Air, according to *Fairfax* reports today.

Under the model members would pay a joining fee of \$1000 and a monthly fee of \$2550 for unlimited flights between Sydney (Bankstown Airport), Melbourne (Essendon Airport) and Canberra on an eight-seater King Air 350 turboprop.

The company would offer 54 flights per week between the destinations with plans to eventually add Adelaide and Brisbane to the network.

Co-founder Luke Hampshire

said the company is targeting several hundred members who are "keen as mustard to save time".

The operation will launch once sufficient members show interest, with the first of three aircraft already ordered via an aircraft management company.

Airly won't own the aircraft but the planes will be added to the AOC of an unnamed Australian company already licensed for regular public transport, and then dry leased to the start-up.

ATAB survey closing

THE latest Australian Travel Agent Barometer (ATAB) Business Builders survey closes tomorrow at midnight, with participants urged to express their opinion on current industry developments.

Prizes on offer include Myer vouchers, Qantas flights and free admission to ATAB events - for details see www.atab.net.au.

G Adv UMI returns

G ADVENTURES' Über Massive Incentive has returned for the fifth year, with the major prize of a trip to Antarctica for an agent and one friend, including flights with Air New Zealand.

Weekly and monthly prizes will be given away, including trips to Colombia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan & nine days in Japan.

Agents must be registered with Sherpa and will receive an entry for each confirmed tour booking between 28 Dec and 31 Mar.

Winners will be announced each week from last Fri until 08 Apr, with the first winner Shannon Hansen from STA Travel Subiaco.

AF ends 747 services

AIR France has operated its final Boeing 747 commercial service yesterday between Mexico City and Paris Charles de Gaulle after more than 40 years of operation.

Two tribute flights for 747 fans are scheduled to be held on Thu.



Window Seat

HAVE you heard? Those cute, native marsupials on Western Australia's Rottne Island known as quokkas love posing for a selfie! In fact, many of the happy snaps have gone viral.

Even *Wolverine* actor Hugh Jackman (**pictured**) has jumped on board the trend, posting this quokka selfie on Instagram.



Several news outlets are drawing a connection between the new craze and Rottne Island, recording its highest ever visitor numbers between Jul and Dec last year.

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China Southern rocks out in Syd



CHINA Southern Airlines were out in force on Sat night, celebrating their fifth sponsorship of the Sydney Festival.

Managing director Australia & New Zealand Louis Lu said the

SB new year promo

AIRFARES between Australia and Noumea are on sale priced from \$549 return, including taxes.

The 'New Year Sale' is available until 01 Feb and is valid for travel between 18 Feb-30 Aug inclusive (surcharges may apply over the Easter & school holiday periods).

Return fares ex SYD & BNE lead in at \$549, or \$599 ex MEL.

festival is an opportunity to build greater cultural and tourism links between China and Australia.

"Australia is one of the most important strategic markets for China Southern Airlines, and the 2016 China Southern Airlines sponsored Sydney Festival program is a wonderful blend of culture and art," Lu said.

The 2016 Summer Sounds in the Domain kicked off with a performance from DJ Misbehaviour, followed by Hermigervill, Royal Headache, FM Belfast and psychedelic rockers, The Flaming Lips.

The China Southern Airline reps present are **pictured** above.

Travel Daily

First with the news

Monday 11th Jan 2016

R&C local Taste guide

THE Oceania delegation of Relais & Châteaux has unveiled a new guide to showcase members' hospitality and fine food & wine in this region.

The *Taste of Australia, New Zealand & South Pacific* guide is focused on Tetsuya, Guillaume, Jonah's Restaurant & Boutique Hotel, Hentley Farm & The Louise Barossa Valley and Appellation, as well as options in New Zealand, Fiji and Tahiti.

CLICK HERE for a soft copy.

Le Club Elite offering

ACCORHOTELS has added a new 'Elite Experience' benefit to the Le Club AccorHotels loyalty program.

Members will be able to secure room upgrades at participating hotels, savings up to 10% on stays when booking directly at accorhotels.com & obtain preview of international sales offers.

Le Club AccorHotels boasts 23 million members and has almost 3,800 properties globally.

VA Newcastle boost

VIRGIN Australia will increase its services between Newcastle and Brisbane from 21 Feb.

Adding almost 20,000 extra seats per year on the route, the carrier will operate 21 return flights between the destinations.

In a first for Virgin Australia, it will overnight aircraft at Newcastle Airport.

The services will arrive into Newcastle at 2130 and leave at 0700 the next morning.

MEANWHILE, VA is introducing new in-flight entertainment in the form of educational courses.

On trial since Dec, Virgin Aust has added business and lifestyle short courses for international and domestic routes.

The 1hr courses are offered through Open2Study and are available through VA's wireless in-flight entertainment system.

FURTHER, VA has introduced a new charcoal coloured senior cabin uniform for its cabin crews.



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For more information visit Travelport's [Careers Page](#) or contact Human Resources on (02) 9391 4000.

To apply, send your cover letter and resume to PacificHR@travelport.com with the position title in the subject line.

Please note that only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

Monday 11th Jan 2016

MH selling 777-200 jet

MALAYSIA Airlines is reportedly selling its Boeing 777-200 fleet having decided to suspend flights to Amsterdam & Paris this month.

MH plans to operate the aircraft until 26 Mar, GDS displays show.

The 777 is the same jet type which operated as MH17 and was shot down in the Ukraine in Jul 2014 enroute to Amsterdam.

The oneworld carrier is planning to access Europe for customers through an agreement with Emirates (TD 03 Dec).

Melb hotel rates jump

ACCOMMODATION occupancy in Melbourne jumped 6.3% to 82.4% during Dec, as average daily rates rose 3.3% to \$186, STR Global reported this morning.

Demand was up 6.8% on the year prior, driven by mid-month events including the Taylor Swift and Elton John concerts.

Kansas City Curio

HILTON Worldwide has announced Kansas City's Hotel Phillips will join the independent & unique Curio By Hilton - A Collection by Hilton brand.

Following an extensive refit, the 217-room property will reopen as Hotel Phillips Kansas City, Curio Collection by Hilton next year.

Ramada Kuta opens

WYNDHAM Hotel Group has opened a third hotel in Bali, Ramada Bali Sunset Road Kuta.

Formerly Best Western Premier Sunset Road, the 271-room property is located in the Kuta district, close to Jalan Legian and Seminyak Beach.

F9 adds 42 routes

FRONTIER Airlines is adding 42 new regional routes in the United States from Apr.

They include four routes from Cincinnati and Cleveland, three from Kansas City, Milwaukee, Nashville, New Orleans, Portland, Raleigh/Durham, two from St. Augustine, Austin, Charlotte and one from Indianapolis, Memphis and St. Louis.

Most of the routes will connect to Philadelphia, Orlando, Chicago O'Hare, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas-Fort Worth, Phoenix, Atlanta and Houston Bush Intercontinental.

Introductory fares booked by 17 Jan will start at \$39 one-way.

Brazil DFAT update

THE Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has warned Brazil is experiencing an outbreak of the Zika virus.

Smarttraveller has advised pregnant woman to exercise particular caution as infection may cause babies to be born with cognitive impairment.

The level of advice remains at "exercise a high degree of caution" in Brazil.



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Brochures

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.



G Adventures - Earth 2016

G Adventures has launched two new brochures - Earth and Marine. Earth trips are designed to deliver a balance of must-see highlights, cultural exchange, insider access, value and spontaneous memorable moments. With diverse transport, character-rich accommodation and regional cuisine the program includes rail adventures across India's sprawling rail system, treks through Nepal and Tibet and active trips through New Zealand's South and North Islands and safaris in Africa.



Infinity - South Pacific 2016/17

The new Infinity South Pacific brochure covers Tahiti, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Niue. New product is scattered throughout, including new accommodation at Muri Beach Resort, Rarotonga and Crystal Blue Lagoon Villas, Rarotonga. New to 2016 is a Storytellers Eco Cycle Tour in Rarotonga and a swim with the dolphins experience at Moorea Dolphin Centre. For a list of the top tours and hotels, as well as four packages, see page four.



Abercrombie & Kent - Latin America 2016

Colombia & Costa Rica have been added to this year's program and the Galapagos offering has been expanded with new vessels, plus a luxury land-based lodge experience. New journeys in Mainland Ecuador include Mashpi Lodge in the cloud forest, a hacienda stay in Otavalo and an Amazon adventure at Napo Wildlife Centre Eco Lodge. Also new is a hosted small group journey in Peru and Argentina with the option to extend the experience in Chile.



Tempo Holiday - Central Europe 2016

Tempo Holidays has this year given Central Europe its own brochure, featuring new product and travel to the lesser known areas in Switzerland such as Rigi Kaltbad, Stoons and Davos. Also new for Switzerland is the Grand Train Tour. In Germany, new wine packages, rail packages and self-drives are available, as well as a special "In the footsteps of Luther" tour, which follows the life of the famous protestant. A dedicated

winter section has been included which focusses on skiing, private tours, igloo stays, winter self-drives and Christmas markets.



Adventure World - South America 2016/17

The 2016 program includes the new destinations of Uruguay and Suriname, a range of multi-country and in-depth itineraries and mix and match product. In Uruguay, there's a range of options including a wine focused experience travelling with a sommelier to some of the country's top wineries, a comprehensive Montevideo discovery and a classic Uruguay route. In Suriname, travellers will be guided by author and adventurer Richard Bangs. Highlights include the 21-day Wonders of South America, which ventures from Rio de Janeiro to Puno, and visits to Lake Titicaca, Machu Picchu and the Argentine Falls.

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