



Viator sacks Sydney staff



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# **TD** partners with TIE

THE Travel Daily Group was today confirmed as the official media partner for this year's Travel Industry Exhibition, which for the first time in 2016 will take place in both Melbourne and Svdnev.

The Melbourne show will be held at Peninsula, Docklands on Mon and Tue 11-12 Jul, with the Sydney event a week later at Luna Park on 18-19 Jul.

"The show is going from strength to strength, and we are so pleased to be the official media partner, with our publications including Travel Daily, travelBulletin, Cruise Weekly and Business Events News all well-placed to provide up-to-the minute coverage for exhibitors and participants," said Travel Daily publisher Bruce Piper.

The Travel Industry Exhibition 2016 will also include the Travel Daily Christmas in July networking function - for more information see travelindustryexpo.com.au.

THE jobs of as many as 40 Sydney-based employees of online tour and activity platform Viator are under a cloud, after a review of the company's customer service operations. Viator, which was founded in Australia in 1995, later

became headquartered in San Francisco and 18 months ago was acquired by online reviews giant TripAdvisor (TD 28 Jul 2014).

The company confirmed the restructure this morning, with a spokesperson telling **TD** "as a global and growing company Viator is constantly evaluating the company's business operations to ensure readiness for the future".

The staff redundancies are due to "the difficult decision to consolidate...English-language email and phone support functions to Viator's main Contact Center in Las Vegas," the spokesperson said.

"Unfortunately, Sydney-based

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roles dedicated to these functions are impacted by this isolated relocation of services".

The company wasn't able to confirm the number of employees affected, but it's understood that the customer service division in Sydney comprises around 40 staff.

However, Viator will continue to maintain some operations in Sydney, including the company's core engineering team.

"The company remains committed to its roots in Sydney, and these teams will continue to grow locally in Sydney as the organisation grows globally," the spokesperson promised.

# Virtuoso additions

LUXURY travel agency network Virtuoso has announced the addition of several new partner suppliers, including APT offshoot Captain's Choice, Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours, Scandinavian operator 50 Degrees North, COMO The Treasury in Perth and Vomo Island Resort Fiji.

Captain's Choice md Dan Kotzmann said he believes the operator's luxury cruise, rail and land journeys "will prove to be highly sought after with Virtuoso clientele".

Today's issue of TD Travel Daily today has five pages of news and photos, plus a full page from: (*click*) AA Appointments jobs

# Helloworld NZ launch

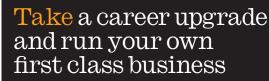
**HELLOWORLD** today formally debuted its new branding in New Zealand, with the operation there no longer trading under the Stella Travel Services brand.

The first rebranded stores are expected to be in place by the end of the week.



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**AIR** New Zealand announced on Fri afternoon it was suspending services to Port Vila Bauerfield International Airport due to "on-going concerns about the condition of the runway".

According to Air New Zealand gm flight operations Stephen Hunt the state of the runway at Port Vila has been gradually deteriorating.

"We have taken the difficult decision to suspend services before the situation becomes unsafe," Hunt commented.

Air NZ operates a weekly flight on the Auckland-Port Vila route and codeshares on NF's twice weekly service on the city pairing.

The move impacts the Kiwi carrier's codeshare services.

Qantas has also suspended its codeshare service with Air Vanuatu on routes between Sydney and Brisbane to VLI, issuing a waiver for departures up until 04 Feb - details **HERE**.

On Sat, Air Vanuatu's ceo, senior management and pilots met with Airports Vanuatu Limited and Civil Aviation Authority Vanuatu to implement a plan to continue jet operations at Baurfield Airport.

Several extra safety precautions are now in place until permanent repair at the aerodrome begins, Air Vanuatu said in a statement.

Those measures include daily 'sweeping' of the runway plus regular inspections prior to and after take-off.

ATR turbo-prop services are not affected, Air Vanuatu added.

Vanuatu Tourism Office said a concerted effort is underway to ensure any issues are addressed as soon as possible so Air New Zealand can resume services and to minimise the effect on tourism. **AFTA** has formally lodged a complaint of "misleading conduct" with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission over the controversial Webjet TV commercial which provoked massive outrage from agents this month (*TD* 05 Jan).

AFTA ceo Jayson Westbury wrote to ACCC chairman Rod Sims last week, with a copy of the letter obtained by **Travel Daily** claiming "the TVC provides an incorrect and misleading comparative representation of the services offered by webjet. com.au to those of a travel agent.

"This results in consumers being potentially misled to believe that webjet.com.au has access to more airfares and services than travel agents," Westbury wrote.

AFTA says it is of the opinion that the Webjet commercial is in breach of Schedule 2, Chapter 3, Part 3, Sub-Section 34 of the Competition and Consumer Act, and is seeking ACCC intervention to have the ad removed from all online platforms and TV networks. Further confusing the issue,

AFTA has noted that while

## NZ Ho Chi Minh fares

AIR New Zealand has released introductory Economy class fares of \$599 (one-way) on its new thrice weekly service between Auckland and Ho Chi Minh City. Subject to regulatory approval, the seasonal service operates

from 04 Jun to 29 Oct using Boeing 767-300 aircraft. Business class fares are priced

from \$1,999 one-way. Discounted fares are on sale until 09 Feb. criticising travel agents Webjet Limited in fact describes itself as a travel agent and highlights on its website that it complies with the Travel Agents Act 1986 - which was repealed nationally in 2013. Westbury confirmed he has

Travel Daily

Monday 25th January 2016

**AFTA refers Webjet to ACCC** 

First with the news

written to Webjet md John Guscic seeking a dialogue in relation to the commercial "but has only received a response indicating unwillingness to engage".

"As AFTA is unable to negotiate further with Webjet Limited, AFTA believes the ACCC must act to ensure consumers are not misled and the incorrect characterisation of travel agents does not continue," the letter says.

Webjet ceo John Guscic was quoted in the *Australian* as saying "AFTA is not a commercial organisation, nor a customer of Webjet, so it seems perverse that they are making comments about our ad.

"Furthermore our customers are delighted with the ad and have responded very positively since we launched it," Guscic said.

The ACCC isn't commenting on the complaint.

sunlover





CANADA <u>& ALA</u>SKA

**MOST** passengers wouldn't expect to see Messi, Suarez, Neymar, Pique and Rakitic relaying safety information before takeoff, but that's exactly what Qatar Airways has done.

The airline's new safety video featuring the FC Barcelona players has proven the most popular airline safety video to date, with nearly 40 million views since its release in Dec.

The video depicts Suarez taking to the pitch in a life vest, flustered fans using oxygen masks after an encounter with Pique and passengers being red carded for smoking in the bathroom.

CLICK HERE to view the video.





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# **Evergreen Oz Day Celebrations** helloworld



**EVERGREEN** Tours is celebrating Australia Day by hand delivering lamingtons to top agents Australia-wide along with the hotoff-the-press new 2017 Europe River Cruising Preview brochure.

The guide features preview pricing and deals on its 2017 program, including new France & Portugal river cruising on custombuilt 'Star Ships', along with offers on the last available 2016 cabins.

Evergreen Tours will be hand delivering several thousand more of these mouthwatering treats over the next few days so keep an eye out for your local sales rep.

Pictured above showing off the **Evergreen River Cruising Preview** brochure and their lamingtons are



staff from helloworld Camberwell and (inset) Destination HQ, Beaumaris, both in Victoria.



ABOVE: Perry Morcombe and his team at Seniors Holiday Travel.

# **MSC chops Turkey**

PORT calls at Istanbul and Izmir in Turkey will be suspended from 29 Mar until further notice by MSC Cruises.

The move impacts voyages on MSC Magnifica which will be based out of Venice as of 26 Mar.

Previously scheduled weekly calls in Turkey will now be replaced by visits to the Greek capital of Athens as well as Mykonos in the Greek Isles.

The decision to axe Turkish ports from its operation follows "recent tragic events in Istanbul", the cruise company said.

# **ACTE/CAPA forum**

**REGISTRATIONS** have opened for the ACTE/CAPA Brisbane Education Forum at Pullman Brisbane King George Square on 12 Feb - more details HERE.

# **US blizzard flt chaos**

MANY East Coast airports were brought to a standstill over the weekend by the massive blizzard. Winter Storm Jonas which blanketed the region in snow.

Over 1,140 flights within, into or out of the US were cancelled yesterday, with Washington, New York and Philadelphia bearing the brunt of the cancellations, according to FlightAware.

According to data at TD's time of publication, Newark Liberty had cancelled 224 flights, followed by Washington Dulles Intl at 125, there were 117 cancellations at New York LaGuardia, 98 at Reagan National and Philadelphia Int'l has cancelled 47 flights.

American Airlines, United Airlines and other carriers have issued waivers allowing pax to reschedule flights at no cost.







Monday 25th January 2016

#### SilkAir CNS roundtrip

**SINGAPORE** Airlines' regional offshoot SilkAir will convert its weekly Singapore-Darwin-Cairns-Singapore service to a non-stop Cairns route, effective 30 May.

According to GDS displays and the carrier's website, SilkAir will bypass the Northern Territory capital, dramatically decreasing the journey time between the two cities from its current option.

For passengers, the de-linking of Darwin on the inbound journey will reduce the flight time to Cairns by some 19 hours.

Currently, SilkAir flight MI811 has an 18hr layover in Darwin, for a journey time of 25hrs 25 mins.

The revised schedule will see MI811 depart SIN at 0140 and arrive in CNS at 1025 for a journey time of 6hrs 45mins.

# Go West \$100 voucher

ASIA Pacific Travel Marketing Services is offering a \$100 voucher for every two passengers booked on any guaranteed Go West Tours' departures booked before 28 Feb.

The Go West promo applies to the Eastern Highlights, Forever West, National Parks Explorer and The Southern Highlights tours.

#### **QR** adds Yerevan

THE global footprint of Qatar Airways is set for expansion into Armenia for the first time. QR will commence a new four times weekly service between Doha and the Armenian capital, Yerevan, effective 15 May. Services will be operated using dual close Airbus A220 aircraft

dual-class Airbus A320 aircraft.



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- demonstrated ability to develop and maintain quality client relationships via email, face-to-face and phone.
- a sound knowledge of travel booking systems essential (Galileo preferred) and proficiency operating computers; Travelog an advantage.
- preferably, an existing client base and experience uploading to social media but not essential.

On offer is a competitive base salary depending on experience, along with incentives and travel concessions. Must be able to work a rotating Saturday roster.

For further information, please contact Margaret Goody on 0418 794 479 or just submit your resume and a cover letter addressing the above criteria to margaret.goody@akyra.com.au by Friday 29 January 2016.





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# Choice Quality into Wagga



### **ROCK Around Japan**

**CONTIKI** today revealed the destination for its ROCK Around the World 2016 incentive will be Japan's Fuji Rock Festival.

More than 1,000 travel agents took part in a quiz on Contiki's agent Facebook group (*TD* Wed). The youth holiday specialist

has teamed with Japan National Tourism Office (JNTO) to ensure agents experience the very best of the country.

"Those lucky enough to win a place on the trip will discover that Japan has so much to offer young adventurers including excellent nightlife, great cuisine, authentic experiences and amazing festivals like Fuji Rock," JNTO Sydney exec director Mariko Tatsumi said.

#### Ashby exits oneworld

**ONEWORLD** chief executive of more than five years Bruce Ashby has announced his departure from the global airline group.

Ashby was previously the ceo of Indian carrier IndiGo for a three year period and also led as ceo of Saudi Arabian start-up SAMA Airlines.

He will remain with **one**world until Jun to ensure a smooth hand over to his successor. **CHOICE** Hotels Asia-Pacific has been named as hotel partner for the \$15m redevelopment of Rules Club Wagga and club conference centre.

Due to open in Jul, the 4-star Quality Hotel Rules Club Wagga is using an offsite modular construction procedure to fast-track its

development and delivery. Quality Hotel Rules Club Wagga will feature 80 rooms spread across three levels (**pictured**).

Inset - at the Glenfield site in Wagga from left are Trent Fraser, Choice Hotels Asia-Pac ceo; Paul Sutton, Rules Club Wagga president; Cr. Rod Kendall, Wagga Wagga Mayor and Jack Jolley, Rules Club Wagga gm.

# **Skydive over Rottie**

VISITORS to Rottnest Island in Western Australia have a new way to view the destination from 15,000 feet overhead.

Skydive Geronimo has launched its tandem skydiving operation over Rottnest Island this month, offering unrivalled views of the island and beaches of Salmon and Bickley Bay.

See skydivegeronimo.com.au.

# EY, not EK marketing

**THANKS** to the attentive **TD** readers who noticed our typo in the heading of Fri's story on Etihad Airways' new marketing partnership with Lowe Open.

Of course, the designator code of the UAE's national airline is 'EY', not 'EK'.

Apologies for any confusion.



# **Grand Hyatt SFO**

HYATT Hotels Corporation has announced plans to develop the 350-room Grand Hyatt San Francisco International Airport, slated to open in mid-2019.



IN LATE Dec, these CWT agents explored San Francisco, Chicago and Seattle on an educational.

The group experienced United Airlines' Dreamliner and visited the airline's head office, participated in Santacon and visited Blues clubs in Chicago.

Pictured at the Boeing factory in Seattle from left are CWT agents: Claudia Stamiris; Salvator La Mantia; Sam Smith; Brian Douglas; Alex Jackson; Verena Billett; Phoenix Marshall and Sarah Harnett with Nils Weissange, Marriott Inc.



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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.



#### Skimax - Southern Hemisphere 2016

This brochure includes earlybird offers, accommodation, lift passes, car hire and adventure activities for Australian, New Zealand and South American ski trips. In New Zealand, choose between Queenstown, Wanaka, Methven and Mt Ruapehu, while the Australian program offers adventures in Thredbo, Perisher, Jindabyne, Mt Buller, Falls Creek and Hotham. Mountain facts and accommodation in

Portillo and Valle Nevado, South America are also on offer.



InterAsia Tours - Vietnam & Beyond 2016-2017 Holiday options in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei and the Philippines are featured in InterAsia's new brochure. There are eight new tours including the 18day Vietnam Explorer, which incorporates overnight cruises on Halong Bay and the Mekong, train journeys to Sapa and treks through terraced fields and villages. An expanded selection of river cruises are available

on the Mekong and in Myanmar.



#### Tempo Holidays - France & Spain 2016

Tempo Holiday's trips to France, Spain, Portugal, Morocco and Benelux are designed to explore the region's undiscovered treasures and off-the-beatenpath. Family Breakaway trips are aimed at families with older teens and university-age children, offering a blend of time together and independent activities. The program features a new range of mini breaks,

walking trips and river cruise trips which focus on the culture, gastronomy and history of the regions visited.

#### African Wildlife Safaris - Africa 2016



This 148-page brochure features safari lodges and camps in east and southern Africa, along with luxury rail journeys, city hotels, and beach resorts. New additions include a three-day and four-day safari in Botswana, the nine-night Ultimate Namibia Safari and a newly-opened safari camp in Zimbabwe -Linkwasha Camp. Also new is a two page spread

featuring beach resorts in Mauritius, such as the Paradis Hotel & Golf Club and Shandrani Resort & Spa.



#### Infinity Holidays - Bali 2016/17

Infinity Holidays has added escape packages to its latest Bali brochure. Also new are a range of tours and experiences based on experiences - from foodie to adventure and cruise. Three new Local Life Tours are on offer through Buffalo Tours, along with new destinations of The Komodo Islands and Kalimantan. Nusa Lembongan and Gili Islands now have their own sections and the section for Yogyakarta and

Borobudur has been expanded to features a larger map and new tours and experiences. The sections for Nusa Dua, Jimbaran Bay, Sanur and Ubud have been upgraded to feature a half page map and hotel list. A range of new hotels are scattered throughout the brochure.

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