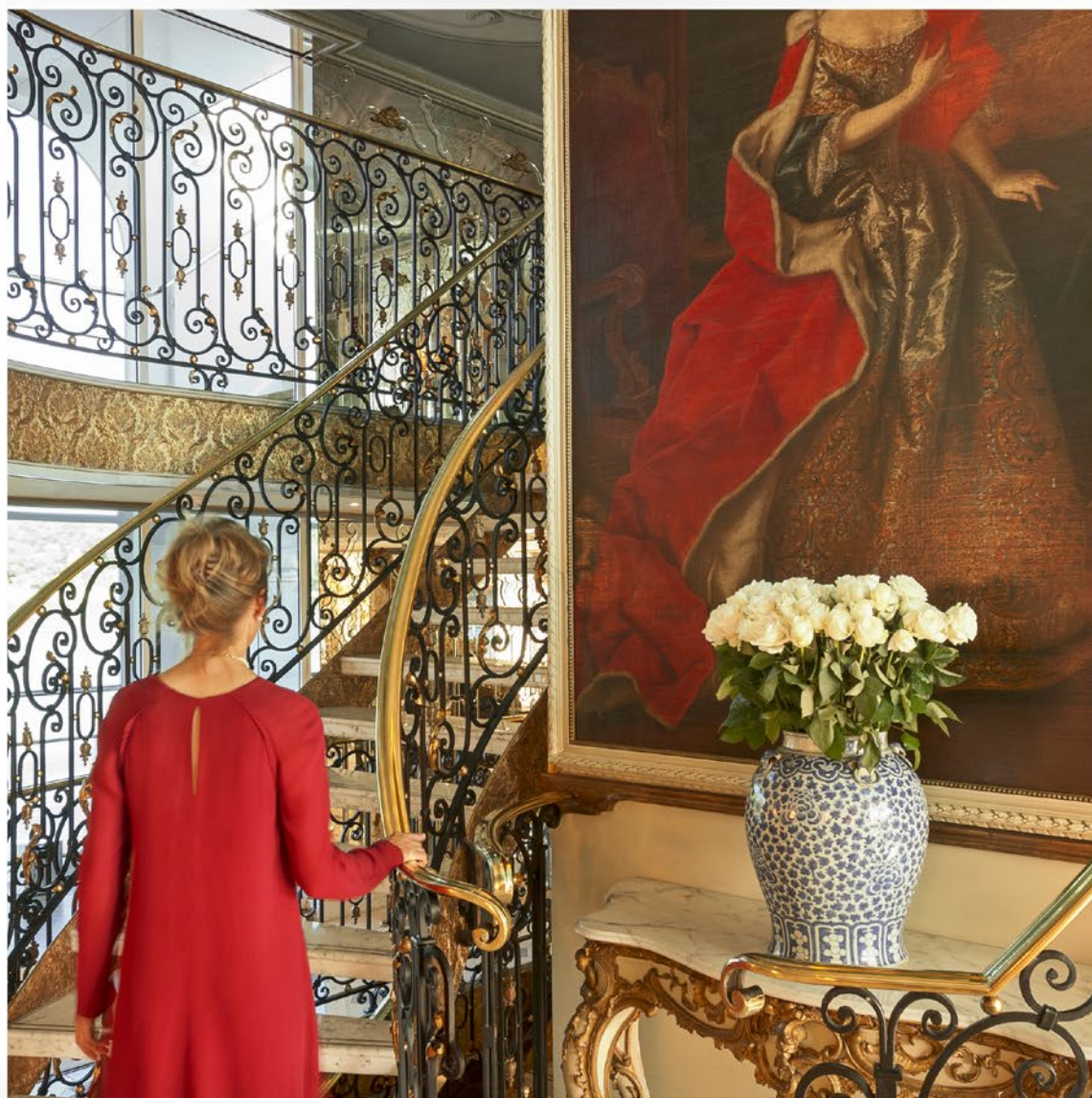


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SYD appoints CFO

SYDNEY Airport has named former Qantas exec Greg Botham as its next chief financial officer.

He will start in May, replacing Hugh Wehby who has become chief operating officer.

Spicers moves on Sydney

SPICERS Retreats is preparing to open its first venture in Sydney with a heritage property in inner-city Potts Point to debut in May.

The boutique hotel on leafy Victoria Street is the latest venture by owner Jude Turner, the wife of Flight Centre chief Graham Turner, and will contrast with the brand's other

rural-based properties in NSW including Spicers Sangoma Retreat in the foothills of the Blue Mountains and Spicers Vineyards Estate in the Hunter Valley.

"The property is set in three Victorian terrace houses that date back to 1873," Mrs Turner said.

"The vision is to ultimately create a unique, relaxed luxury experience amidst the buzz of Sydney's best cafes, restaurants and bars," she said.

Offering just 20 rooms, the property will open as Spicers Potts Point with rates from \$350 including breakfast.

Its soft opening in May will be followed by a launch in Jun.

Essendon crash

THE crash of a light plane at Essendon this morning has reportedly killed up to five people and forced closures on the Tullamarine Freeway, disrupting traffic from Melbourne Airport.



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Uniworld France

UNIWORLD Boutique River Cruise Collection is having no problems filling ships in France, Ellen Bettridge, president and ceo of Uniworld told *Travel Daily* during her inaugural visit to Australia in the role.

Bettridge said France was exceeding expectations, with the line's newest vessel, *S.S. Joie de Vivre* set to launch on the Seine next month "selling beautifully, absolutely beautifully".

Out of Uniworld's own vessels, *Joie de Vivre* is booked to have the highest level of occupancy for the company for 2017.

Admitting sales were slow to start amidst the current climate, Bettridge said all of a sudden bookings boomed.

"Customers are very anxious to get back to this city and we continue to see significant demand for groups and charters in France," she said, noting cruises in Bordeaux & the South of France were also selling well.

Air performance up

AUSTRALIA'S domestic airlines increased their on-time arrivals performance to 87.6% in Jan, up from 84.4% in the same month of last year.

Qantas led at 91.7% followed by Virgin Australia (91.6%), Jetstar (81.2%) and Tigerair (79%), the latest BITRE figures show.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has seven pages of news and photos, including a front cover page for **Uniworld** plus full pages from:

- inPlace Recruitment
- CLIA
- Asiana Airlines product page

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EY, JU alliance draft nod

ETIHAD Airways' plan to forge a 10 year joint alliance with Air Serbia on flights to Australia has received tentative approval from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

The ACCC gave the Abu Dhabi-based carrier and Air Serbia (in which it has a 49% stake) interim approval for a proposed Co-operation Agreement for an initial 10 year period, saying it is likely to result in a net public benefit.

The competition watchdog said it believed, to some degree, that the Co-operation Agreement could trigger a competitive

response from other airlines, with other positives including enhanced products and services as well as operational efficiencies.

No submissions relating to EY & JU's application were received.

However, the ACCC is now inviting further input on the draft decision, while at the same time granting interim authorisation for the alliance.

Submissions must be lodged by 03 Mar 2017 via email to adjudication@acc.gov.au.

Airbnb confirms deal

AIRBNB has confirmed the acquisition of Montreal-based Luxury Retreats (**TD** 14 Feb), with the deal said to add 4,000 upmarket properties to the Airbnb portfolio worldwide.

Airbnb said in the short term Luxury Retreats would continue to operate as an independent business, with Luxury Retreats ceo Joe Poulin staying with the firm to lead Airbnb's luxury rentals division.

Silversea Antarctica

SILVERSEA Cruises today revealed new all-inclusive expedition packages for 2017 and 2018 voyages aboard *Silver Explorer* and the newly converted ice-class vessel *Silver Cloud*.

Prices lead in at \$16,350 per person twin share including charter flights to and from Ushuaia, a pre-cruise hotel night and all transfers.

Bookings made by 30 Apr also come with special \$899 return economy or \$4,950 Business class flights to South America.

Sichuan plots AKL

SICHUAN Airlines this morning announced plans to commence direct flights from China to New Zealand, with a thrice weekly service between Chengdu and Auckland set to debut on 13 Jun.

The carrier will operate a two-class A330-200 aircraft on the services which will take around 13 hours of flying time.

The addition boosts non-stop flights between China and NZ to up to 75 weekly.

Vitruvian buys OAG

PRIVATE equity firm Vitruvian has purchased aviation data specialist OAG for about US\$215 million, as part of a management buyout from previous owner Axio.

OAG has a wide range of travel industry clients, and is a major provider of flight information to GDS with its database including future and historical flight details for over 900 airlines and 4,000 airports.

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THL half year profit up 38%

KIWI Tourism company thl has recorded a pleasing first half result, this week revealing a net profit after tax (NPAT) of \$11.3 million - a 38% increase on the same period prior.

Chairman Rob Campbell said in a shareholder's report "the vehicle sales market is very strong in all markets".

"Overall we see ongoing growth in the rentals business demand as the experience seeker market continues to grow."

Total revenue for thl has increased by \$12.3 million or 9%, with operating earnings before interest and tax (EBIT) up 25%.

Campbell attributed the positive leap in figures to the Dec acquisition of El Monte RV, the second largest RV rental business in the US and the expansion of the Highway platform into the North American market.

"We continue to deliver profit, ROFE and dividend growth

through executing our plan effectively in a position trading environment," Campbell said.

The company forecasts that the full year NPAT is expected to exceed the \$27 million target.

Virgin wildlife pledge

VIRGIN Holidays in the UK is one of the latest companies to axe the sale and promotion of attractions featuring captive whales or dolphins for entertainment purposes.

The company has also agreed to partner with at least one animal welfare organisation to explore options for animals currently living in captivity.

"We believe the way tourists interact with captive whales and dolphins needs to change and we want to play an active role in supporting the transition," said David Geer, managing director of Virgin Holidays.

Gender pay gap

THE pay gap between men and women in the travel, tourism and hospitality industry sectors does not appear to be narrowing according to the latest research by ACI HR Solutions.

The report saw male respondents earning an average of 55% more than their female counterparts.

"While the gap appears large, drilled down the 55% isn't a position vs position gap - the 55% represented our overall survey which actually highlights the disparity in the number of women holding senior positions," said Andrew Chan, chief executive officer and founder of ACI HR Solutions.

"This ultimately shows us, irrespective of the salary component, there are far less females holding senior positions across these sectors in roles such as general managers and ceos".

For details or to access the full report, [CLICK HERE](#).



Window Seat

THOUSANDS of visitors made their way to the rural Australian town of Western Downs in Queensland over the weekend to partake in a festival devoted to destroying more than 20 tonnes of watermelon all in the name of fun and games.

Activities included melon big bash cricket, a melon rodeo, a street parade and a contest for the largest melon.

The festival's organiser estimated the event brought in around \$3.5 million of economic benefit to the town.



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AIME's Travel Partners



LAST night AIME 2017 kicked off in Melbourne's Albert Park Formula 1 precinct, with a lavish function at Carousel by food&desire.

The drinks flowed along with a cornucopia of canapes, while Melbourne's creative scene was celebrated with a live artwork being created by renowned painter David Bromley, elegant dancers and a poetry recitation alongside a funky band.

Some of the Travel Partners team including ceo Jeff Hakim are **pictured** above enjoying the night - more pics from AIME online at [facebook.com/BusEvNews](https://www.facebook.com/BusEvNews).

Novotel InBalance

NOVOTEL Hotels today debuted InBalance Meetings, an initiative which "places health and wellbeing front and centre for conference and event guests".

The program includes a virtual 30-minute work-out session led by Novotel Wellness Ambassador, pro surfer Sally Fitzgibbons.

Also included is a Nurture Yourself food menu curated by nutritionist Michele Chevalley-Hedge, with InBalance Meetings now on offer at seven properties and continuing to roll out nationally.

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P&O targets events

P&O Cruises today announced it will offer an "unprecedented number of short break cruises" in 2018, with more itineraries out of Sydney and Brisbane in response to strong demand for its two to four night Sea Breaks.

The company said the growth gave event organisers more reasons to hold a meeting at sea, with the trips available right across the P&O five-ship fleet, including the *Pacific Explorer* which will offer venues for up to 530 conference guests when it debuts in Sydney this coming Jun.

More details in today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

Easier TryBooking

EVENT ticketing platform TryBooking has unveiled an enhancement which allows event organisers to accept ticket returns on free events.

Claimed as Australia's first "hand back" ticket feature, the change aims to help improve expectations of guest numbers.

It's been developed in response to feedback from clients of the self-service ticketing platform - see www.trybooking.com.

Travel Daily

on location at
AIME in Melbourne

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of the Melbourne Convention Bureau at the 25th annual Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Expo (AIME).

AIME takes off in earnest today, with the show floor open at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Key features this year include a Community Hub where visitors can recharge their devices, snap a picture in a photo booth and view live footage from around the show floor.

Weary delegates are also being encouraged to head to the InterContinental Hotels stand, which features a revitalising oxygen bar.

There are opportunities to engage and interact with technology, while Be Challenged is showcasing activities and programs such as the latest gamification initiatives and interactive team building.

For more details on AIME see www.aime.com.au.

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Sell your way to USA

DELTA Air Lines, Virgin Australia and USA destination partners have launched a new 'sell your way to the USA' incentive program for Aussie agents.

Travel professionals will receive one point for each Delta or Virgin flight booked to the USA from 28 Feb to 15 Jun.

The top 12 agents at the end of the sale period will win a place on one of four self-guided famils.

The trip includes an Economy class airfare with Delta Air Lines and Virgin from Sydney to either Las Vegas, Anchorage, Boston or Salt Lake City.

Agents must register to participate by 31 Mar by emailing trade manager Karen McCardle at karen@canuckiwi.com.

Chinese visas online

THE Tourism & Transport Forum Australia (TTF) is welcoming new online visa applications for Chinese nationals as a reform that will "help Australia remain competitive in attracting more visitors" from the key market.

The news was announced yesterday by Tourism Minister Stephen Ciobo and Immigration Minister Peter Dutton.

TTF ceo Margy Osmond said any steps the government could take to make it easier for Chinese visitors to choose Australia was "warmly welcomed".

"Chinese visitors are a gold-mine for Australia's visitor economy – they stay longer and spend more than other nationalities," Osmond said.

Norwegian US focus

CEO of Norwegian Bjorn Kjos has announced the low cost carrier is planning to launch transatlantic services from Europe to several mid-sized cities in the United States.

Kjos confirmed that the carriers' two new bases in the US would be located in Providence, Rhode Island, and Stewart International Airport, New York State.

The airline will confirm the routes later this week.

Free India SIM card

INDIA'S Ministry of Tourism along with telco company BSNL have launched free, pre-loaded sim cards for tourists landing in Delhi on an e-visa.

The sim cards are soon to be rolled out to 15 airports across the country where the e-visa facility is available.

eRevMax 2016 rev

EREVMAX generated \$US2.1 billion worth of online bookings in 2016, an increase of 11% on the previous year.

The figures are based on the revenue generated by hotel clients using the company's reservation delivery services through RateTiger, RTConnect and LIVE OS solutions.

Chief technology officer of eRevMax Udai Singh Solanki put the success down to "pro-actively integrating new channel and technology partners" to the company's ecosystem.

Plum buys CTN team

TRAVEL wholesaler Plum Accommodation has acquired Group Department of Consortium Tours of North America (CTN).

It comes after CTN was forced to cease operations last week due to loss of business (**TD** 17 Feb).

Group service consultants previously employed by CNT will be moved over to the Plum team.

Any new group requests can be made at plumaccommodation.com.



White Night success

AROUND 600,000 people took to the streets of Melbourne on Sat night for the fifth instalment of White Night Melbourne.

Visitors took part in more than 120 free events including live music marathons at Federation Square and the Bourke Street Mall, a pop up cinema on Lonsdale St, ballroom dancing on Collins St and world music at Birrarung Marr, while projections enlivened city buildings.

Melbourne hotels reported a surge in bookings.

Overall White Night injected a whopping \$16 million in the Victorian capital's economy.



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Position Summary:

This position is customer service and sales focussed selling snow holidays & general travel – with a focus on affluent travellers to premium ski resorts Aspen, Whistler, Niseko and Club Med resorts. This role is the face of the organisation with organising clients travel from start to finish with detailed service, itineraries & professional service. Looking for a natural leader with the potential for this role to move into a supervisory position for the direct selling team at Snowscene and to further support the General Manager.

To be short listed for this role it is a requirement to have:

- 5+ years' experience in international travel
- Experienced in GDS
- Passion for snow and a strong sales history
- Understanding budgets and individual targets

A rewarding wage, above industry standards will be offered to the suitable candidate with commission/bonus incentives in place.

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For expression of interest & applications please contact General Manager Emily Warbrick on 0733921722 or email emily@snowscene.com.au



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This week, Travel Daily and Sonoma County are giving travel agents the chance to win a \$50 Williams-Sonoma e-gift card. With more than 425 wineries, miles of rugged Pacific coastline, towering redwood forests, and its close proximity to San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, Sonoma Wine Country is a dream holiday spot, representing the best of Northern California — premium wine, farm-to-table dining, unique resorts and spas, and over 50 state and regional parks.

Sonoma County is easily accessible from San Francisco, located just 45 minutes north of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Visit www.sonomacounty.com.

To win, be the first agent to send the correct answer to the following question to sonoma@traveldaily.com.au

How many different AVA's (Appellations of distinct growing areas) can be found within Sonoma Wine Country?

NEED A HINT? CLICK HERE.



ALL is not as it seems in the UK when it comes to the various schemes of protection that are in place and a recent visit to London has confirmed many myths are wrong.

There are two schemes in the UK. First is the Air Travel Organiser's Licence (ATOL) scheme. By law, every UK travel company which sells holidays in which air

transport is connected to the booking directly by that operator must hold an ATOL.

Fundamentally, ATOL is a protection scheme which assists consumers where they may get stranded abroad or lose money as a result of a ATOL travel company collapsing.

The key, and most important aspect, to an ATOL operator is that the flight must originate in the UK. Non-UK residents are able to make a claim against ATOL, but only where the company in question (an ATOL holder) arranged flights as a part of the booking.

Not all UK travel agents hold an ATOL. While in London, ATOL brought to my attention that there were many Australian travel companies who hold an ATOL and some included; Australian Pacific Touring (UK) Ltd, Scenic Tours (UK) Ltd, Flight Centre UK, Wendy Wu Tours and Intrepid Travel Pty Limited as examples. For a more forensic search you can access the full list [CLICK HERE](#).

Secondly, there is the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) scheme which provides a level of protection for consumers for travel agents who choose to be a member of the association.

ABTA is a little like AFTA except it does offer a compensation scheme when a travel agent collapses. As a general rule ABTA cover provides compensation when a holiday is booked via an ABTA agent and there is NO air transport involved in the booking made by the ABTA member.

Like AFTA, ABTA provides an accreditation scheme upon which ABTA members must comply with rules and in so far as the cover provided by ABTA, the protection is afforded to UK and non UK citizens provided the ABTA member has identified the sales to the non UK citizens.

Complex as it may seem, my recent visit to London has enabled me to fully immerse myself into the workings of the various UK schemes and understand far more the rights and wrongs, failings and success of the system in the UK.

Curiously, my visit did identify that there is a degree of confusion outside of the UK and there is also very little effort made to pursue company directors as a result of a collapse.

All this is very relevant as it relates to the recent collapse (which is very large) of the All Leisure Group in the UK where many hundreds of Australians and a good number of Australian travel agents have been caught in the middle.

AFTA is working with the travel agents who have been impacted by the collapse and we hope to be able to resolve in a positive way an outcome that will be satisfactory to all in the end.

If you are a travel agent who has been impacted by the ALG collapse and you have not been in contact with AFTA, I would suggest you make contact via afta@afta.com.au this week.

BA adds seasonal leisure routes

BRITISH Airways has opened reservations for a number of new northern summer routes, utilising its CityFlyer Embraer E190 jets.

The additions include one weekly flight between Dublin and Ibiza (operating 19 May-01 Oct 2017), a weekly Edinburgh-Palma Mallorca service (02 Jun-22 Sep) and a thrice weekly flight between London Stansted and the Aegean island of Skiathos (flying from 26 Jun-06 Sep).

BB8 rolling out

VISITORS to Walt Disney World Resort in Florida will be able to meet BB8, the droid first introduced in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* at the Disney's Hollywood Studios theme park.

BB8 will appear alongside regulars Chewbacca and Kylo Ren at the Star Wars Launch Bay area.

The precinct also features movie memorabilia and of course plenty of Star Wars merchandise.



Visit USA meets Brisbane agents



AROUND 150 agents packed out a spacious city hall in Brisbane last night for the Visit USA Travel Week.

Guests participated in an interactive quiz with Visit USA exhibitors, while mc Richard Reid entertained agents during breaks.

The Visit USA expo will head to Melbourne tonight before moving to Sydney on 22 Feb, Adelaide on 21 Mar, Perth on 22 Mar, Newcastle on 02 May and the Gold Coast on 03 May.

Pictured above are some of last night's guests.

St Patricks landmarks

A HOST of iconic landmarks all around the world will go green for St Patricks day this year (17 Mar), as part of an initiative introduced by Tourism Ireland.

Participating attractions set to be illuminated for the Irish holiday include the One World Trade Centre in New York, Sydney's Town Hall and State Library of NSW, The Bell Tower in Perth, the Performing Arts Centre of Victoria in Melbourne.



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Jump into Ireland

This month Travel Daily, Tempo Holidays and Tourism Ireland are giving agents the chance to win a trip for two to Ireland.

The winner will travel on a luxury coach around Ireland for a week, and the prize includes return flights.



To win, show your Irish spirit by dressing up in your best St Patrick's Day outfit and send a photo through. Best photo wins! Get your whole office involved! Send entries to tempo@traveldaily.com.au

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AccorHotels sale

ACCORHOTELS has brought back its Asia Pacific Super Sale, offering a discount of 40% off more than 560 hotels and resorts throughout the region.

Specials are available at brands including Fairmont, Sofitel, MGallery by Sofitel, Pullman, Swissôtel, Grand Mercure, The Sebel, Novotel, Mercure, ibis, ibis Styles, ibis budget and Hotel Formule 1.

AccorPlus members enjoy an increased discount of 50% off.

The deals are offered in time for Easter and are on sale from today to 26 Feb 2017, for stays from 01 Apr 2017 to 31 Mar 2018.

Sir Adam Amsterdam

DESIGN Hotels has opened a new property in Amsterdam, the 108-room Sir Adam in the city's landmark A'DAM building.

The hotel is fitted out in a contemporary style by New York-based design studio ICRAVE.

HA, TK Narita c'share

HAWAIIAN Airlines has sought approval from the US transport regulator to enable Turkish Airlines to codeshare on services from Tokyo Narita to Honolulu.

The carriers seek to initiate the new codeshare city pairs from "about" 01 Mar.

Travel Daily

First with the news

Tuesday 21st February 2017

Queen Mary 2 arrival

KANGAROO Island today welcomes the biggest cruise ship to ever visit its shores as *Queen Mary 2* anchors off Penneshaw.

South Australian Tourism Minister Leon Bignell said the ship's arrival would almost double the island's population of 4,500.

Cunard's flagship visited Adelaide last week and is one of 17 cruise vessels scheduled to call at Kangaroo Island this summer.

A record 50 cruise ships are scheduled to visit South Australia over the 2016/17 season.

HK Disneyland record

HONG Kong Disneyland (HKDL) achieved its highest ever level of per capita spending during the past year, marking seven consecutive years of growth.

The park welcomed 6.1 million visitors during the year, its second highest annual visitation level.

Around 39% of guests were locals, while people from mainland China accounted for 36% of ticketholders and overseas visitors the remaining 25%.

"HKDL continued to drive visitation with exciting new offerings and seasonal events during the year amid a soft tourism and leisure market," said exec vp and md Samuel Lau.



Money

WELCOME to Money, TD's Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

\$1AUD = US0.765

THE Australian dollar crept 0.2% against the green back, with US markets closed for the Presidents' Day holiday.

Against the Euro, the AUD was up 0.3% and 0.4% against the Japanese Yen.

Despite an increase in NZ producer prices, the Aussie dollar was still stronger versus the NZD, but fell against the British pound as the UK currency rebounded from Fri's selling.

Western Union strategist Steven Dooley predicted the AUD could increase slightly following the release of minutes by the Reserve Bank of Australia.

Wholesale rates this morning:

US	\$0.765
UK	£0.614
NZ	\$1.060
Euro	€0.721
Japan	¥86.64
Thailand	฿26.71
China	¥5.245
South Africa	R9.937
Canada	\$0.999
Crude oil	US\$53.40



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Publisher/Editor in Chief: Bruce Piper **Managing Editor:** Jon Murrie **Editor:** Guy Dundas

Contributors: Jasmine O'Donoghue, Bonnie Tai, Nathalie Craig, Jenny Piper - info@traveldaily.com.au

Advertising and Marketing: Sean Harrigan and Lisa Martin - advertising@traveldaily.com.au

Business Manager: Jenny Piper - accounts@traveldaily.com.au

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Sydney CBD

Salary from \$60K + super

Brilliant opportunity with a Sales & Marketing company who represent the largest portfolio of international destination management brands to Australia & New Zealand. This role involves meeting with high end leisure travel agents and wholesalers. You will promote these various destinations to gain new business opportunities for the individual brands. Proven sales conversion exp. required.

- Diverse products
- Part-timers considered

Call Ben or [click here](#)

Global Airline Sales

Sydney

Salary to \$70K + super + paid health care

A great opportunity for a Senior Retail or Corporate Travel Consultant with some sales experience & good airfares knowledge. Covering operations across nearly 20 countries this brand will do wonders for your resume! Call on retail & corporate agents, supporting them with sales & product information. Negotiate PSA's, represent the airline at trade shows & industry events & host famils!

- Stable carrier
- Great benefits!

Call Susan or [click here](#)

Team Leader - Customer Relations

Sydney

Salary from \$60K + super

A pivotal role in this successful business. You will ensure optimum customer satisfaction and repeat business is achieved throughout departments under your leadership. Your teams will handle customer service, documentation & the online client information portal. Previous experience managing staff, preferably in a complaint/ compensation capacity will be ideal. Prestigious high-end touring co.

- Social environment
- Excellent company benefits

Call Ben or [click here](#)

1st Level Help Desk

Sydney, Monday to Friday only!

Work life balance with no weekend work in this investigative role. Support travel agents with system enquiries & provide effective solutions. Must have GDS experience and back office systems exposure. Excellent problem solving skills req.

Call Susan or [click here](#)

Air Desk Consultant

Sydney, Competitive salary + benefits

A brand with a solid reputation offering set tour departures and the ability to custom design itineraries. Oversee all air product negotiation & distribution as well as quality control & provide training on fare information for the sales staff.

Call Ben or [click here](#)

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- Exclusive use of the **CLIA logo** identifying you as a cruise specialist
- Exclusive member discount on tickets for **Cruise360**, the industry conference that provides a truly panoramic view of the cruise industry
- Exclusive members only access to participate in CLIA's Global **Plan a Cruise Month** promotion and other member events
- Included on CLIA's **travel agent search function** at www.cruising.org.au and other leading cruise sites

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