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VA has considered privatisation

VIRGIN Australia's board has held discussions about delisting the company from the ASX, according to an update delivered by chairman Elizabeth Bryan at the carrier's agm (**TD** yesterday).

Bryan noted that there had been ongoing speculation over the last year about VA's status as a publicly listed company.

"The group has a small free float and many have asked the question of whether it is appropriate to remain listed, or to become a privately held company," Bryan said.

The free float amounts to around 7%, alongside major shareholders including Etihad, Virgin Group, NHA, Nanshan Group and Singapore Airlines.

Bryan said the discussions had not resulted in any outcome to report to the market at this stage.

However the update, along with stronger first quarter sales and load factor figures for the carrier, saw VA's shares lift in price to record a gain of more than 12% (around 3c) on the day.

Flight Centre contraction

FLIGHT Centre expects to close underperforming stores in Australia and reduce employee numbers by not replacing any departing leisure travel staff during the current half, as it beds down some "important system changes within the business".

CEO Graham Turner revealed the moves at this morning's Flight Centre annual general meeting, saying the changes "will inevitably lead to some distraction and disruption for our people in-store," particularly as systems are upgraded.

He said the company was expecting its first half profit to be down slightly as a result, but "improvement is expected during the second half when the new systems will be fully deployed,

productivity will start to improve and as we start to grow our sales force again".

Across the year sales team numbers are likely to end up "reasonably flat" Turner said, with closures offset by expansion in some channels, particularly larger flagship stores and in some specialist sectors.

"Flagships and specialist teams are expected to drive shop-based TTV growth in the short to medium term, with profit improvement rather than physical expansion the primary focus within the community shop network," he said.

"We are also working to develop closer relationships with major landlords with a view to getting access to better sites, which will strengthen our network, and [result in] a more effective spend".

Turner also confirmed a number of changes in the company's overseas operations, including the closure of some of its leisure businesses in Singapore, the UAE, Canada and the USA.

A key focus is Flight Centre's recent investment in independent contractor models in Australia and New Zealand, as well as organic growth in Canada which has delivered "stronger platforms in an emerging sector" which also has a lower cost base than traditional shops.

More from the Flight Centre agm on **page three**.

Qatar appointment

QATAR Airways has appointed Cassandra Kerr as Manager Global Corporate Key Accounts.

Kerr joins QR after more than a decade with Virgin Atlantic including four years as VS corporate sales manager Australia - more appointments on **page 5**.

Venice diverts ships

THE Italian Government has announced a ban on large-scale cruise ships in the heart of Venice, opting to send them instead to the industrial port of Marghera on the mainland.

New rules affect ships of 100,000 tonnes or more and follow a temporary limit imposed three years ago.

The move comes after a long-running campaign to reduce the impact of cruise ships - see more in today's **Cruise Weekly**.

Bali arrivals dip

THE number of Australians visiting Bali dipped slightly during Sep, although the full impact of volcanic activity at Mt Agung has still yet to be revealed.

New govt figures show 104,106 Aussies arrived in Bali in Sep, down 4% from 108,374 in the same month of last year.

Hoteliers and tourism officials have reported a decline of 10-15% in subsequent weeks, after Mt Agung rumbled to life in the last days of Sep (**TD** 18 Oct).

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has seven pages of news, including a photo page for the **Department of Culture & Tourism, Abu Dhabi**, a front cover wrap for **Qantas** plus full pages from:

- One&Only Reethi Rah
- AA Appointments jobs

QF global sale

QANTAS is continuing its Global Sale, with special fares on offer to Africa, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Europe, North America, New Zealand, South America and the South Pacific.

See the **cover page** for details.

One&Only Maldives

ONE&ONLY Reethi Rah in the Maldives is offering a stay four, pay three deal, including daily half board and transfers to and from Male International Airport.

More info on **page eight**.



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AF/KLM to add GDS levy

AIR France KLM is set to join the "surcharge club," with the carriers confirming they will impose an €11 fee for bookings made via the GDS effective from 01 Apr 2018.

The surcharge will not apply to Air France and KLM direct sales channels, and direct connections to the airlines' IATA New Distribution Capability (NDC) will also be exempt.

"In order to best serve customers Air France KLM is embracing NDC, an enriched IATA messaging standard allowing the distribution of rich content and personalised offers, and investing in options for travel partners to access, book and sell it," the

airlines said last week.

Other carriers which are imposing a surcharge for GDS bookings include Lufthansa and British Airways, with the levies strongly opposed by travel agency groups and GDS providers.

TIE on the move

THE Travel Industry Exhibition (TIE) has announced a complete revamp for next year's show, including a change of venue to Dockside Darling Harbour.

Event director David Paterson, of Exhibitions and Trade Fairs said extensive research had led to a complete reinvention of the Sydney event, which will be held on 21-22 Aug.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

Qantas, Fiji Airways boost partnership

QANTAS has expanded its codeshare partnership with Fiji Airways, with the FJ code to be added to a range of QF domestic destinations allowing through connections to and from Nadi to Perth, Hobart, Canberra, Darwin, Townsville and Rockhampton via Brisbane or Sydney.

FJ ceo Andre Viljoen said the pact "offers the best connections to Fiji via Sydney and Brisbane, giving more Australians the option to say 'Bula' to Fiji sooner".

Fiji Airways and Qantas customers will be able to book flights and check through bags when purchasing flights from FJ sales channels, while Qantas travellers will also be able to redeem frequent flyer points in order to book the sectors.

Travel Daily

on location in the
Emirates Marquee

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from Melbourne's Flemington Racecourse, where Emirates is hosting key industry partners in its landmark marquee for Oaks Day.

UNLIKE previous years where Emirates themed its marquee in keeping with some of its many global destinations, in 2017 the carrier has stayed closer to home, with the venue decked out in a manner reminiscent of the sky-high bar at the rear of the business class cabin in its Airbus A380 superjumbo.


Today is Ladies' Day at the races and travel industry females certainly haven't disappointed, with some fabulous frocks and fascinators on show alongside the dashing debonair suits of their male colleagues.

TD will be capturing all the action from the marquee - see **page four** and watch our social media channels through the day.

EK adds 16 ports

EMIRATES and flydubai have announced 16 additional destinations under their codeshare partnership, with EK passengers now able to travel on a single ticket to ports such as Bratislava (Slovakia), Kathmandu (Nepal), Kilimanjaro (Tanzania), Zanzibar (Tanzania), Ufa (Russia) and Podgorica (Montenegro).

EK president Tim Clark said since the agreement commenced operation a week ago, almost 14,000 sectors had been ticketed, "surpassing our expectations".




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bambu CLUB
By Wendy Wu Tours

New era for Renaissance Tours

SYDNEY-BASED Renaissance Tours has changed hands, with founder Hugh Hallard set to retire at the end of the year.

The business is being taken over by Evan Petrelis, who joined the company last year with a minority stake before acquiring the business from Hallard last month.

Hallard established Renaissance Tours 21 years ago, after an early career in hotel sales in Sydney, Seoul, Moscow and St Petersburg.

He returned to Australia in 1994 and founded Eastern European travel specialist Russia and Beyond, selling his stake in 1996 when he set up Renaissance.

Renaissance Tours specialises in tours and cruises offering a curated emphasis on opera, music, ballet, art, architecture and gardens, with Petrelis telling **TD** the company "prides itself on offering Australia's finest collection of unique, meticulously designed and operated expert-led cultural experiences for the discerning traveller".

Renaissance Tours has a long-term association with Opera Australia, with more than 120 opera tours arranged to date.

Where's Aunt Betty?

FLIGHT Centre's much-touted 'Aunt Betty' online booking portal didn't even rate a mention at the Flight Centre annual general meeting this morning.

CEO Graham Turner said online leisure sales represent a small percentage of FLT's overall business but are increasing.

"Brands are typically flight-focused and include StudentUniverse, flightcentre.com.au and BYOJet, which is now in Australia, NZ, Singapore and the UK," he said.

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Tough H1 16 for FLT

FLIGHT Centre ceo Graham Turner this morning confirmed the company had experienced a difficult first half of last financial year, saying pre-tax profit during the six months to 31 Dec 2016 was down a whopping 22.4% - despite TTV being up 1.8%.

Things recovered in the second half, with profit up 4.7% on a 6.4% uplift in TTV for the period.

He said the improvement was continuing, with the business "generally performing well" and expectations of a solid full year result of up to \$380 million in underlying profit, which would be up 15.6% on last year.

Turner outlined a key "7-2-100" management target going forward - comprising 7% average annual TTV growth over the next three years; a return to a 2% net profit margin as a percentage of TTV; and cost growth this year of less than \$100m.

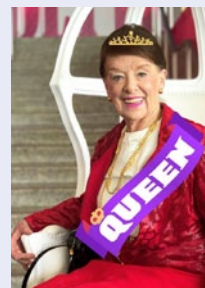
He noted that international airfare prices appeared to have stabilised and were comparable in price to those available 12 months ago, with the better conditions following "across-the-board discounting" experienced last year.



Window Seat

AMERICAN Airlines last week celebrated the "queen of the skies" - Bette Nash, a woman who has worked as a flight attendant for over 60 years.

Nash (pictured) was honoured at a party celebrating her "diamond jubilee" at Reagan Washington National Airport.



Her entire career has seen her fly the same shuttle service between Boston and Washington, with the routine helping her juggle life as a single mother.

Despite staying on the same route, Nash has flown with several carriers including Eastern Airlines, US Airways, AA and the short-lived Trump Shuttle, owned by the current US president, which defaulted on its debt and ran out of cash in 1990.

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Gold Coast lounge

GOLD Coast Airport is preparing for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games by revealing plans to construct a purpose-built lounge for use by athletes and games officials.

The Lounge will feature performances from local artists, Australian wildlife presentations and food and beverage options.

"We want to make sure the Games Family have a warm and efficient welcome and goodbye," said Gold Coast Airport Chief coo Marion Charlton.

Camino web talks

CAMINOWAYS.COM has launched free online talks aimed at educating travellers to plan their trips effectively in Camino de Santiago, Spain.

Spaces for the online forum are limited and interested participants can book their place by **CLICKING HERE**.

Freycinet pavilions

FREYCINET Lodge in Tasmania has announced it is now taking bookings to stay at its new Coastal Pavilions development, with stays available from 15 Mar at a price of \$799 a night.

The rate includes breakfast for two, a bottle of local sparkling wine and light refreshments.

The new environmentally sensitive development was designed by a local team and led by well-known tourism identity in the state, Brett Toros.

Uruguay strikes

TRAVELLERS currently in Uruguay have been advised by DFAT to expect disruptions and flight delays from local airports between 08-16 Nov due to ongoing industrial disputes.

Any visitors who think they might be affected are advised to call their airline or travel agent to reconfirm bookings.

Download Croatia 2018 Brochure



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It's definitely Ladies Day in Melbourne!



TRAVEL Daily spotted this fabulous foursome in their raceday finery on the balcony of the Emirates Marquee at Melbourne's Flemington Racecourse this morning.

They were among scores of industry guests invited to share the festivities and enjoy EK hospitality - including its

trademark sky high business class lounge (**above**).

Pictured under the EK umbrella are, from left: Lisa Wright, Travel Associates; Deb Fox and Susan Haberle, APT; and Sue Johnson from Cruiseabout.

oneworld

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Helloworld takes a challenge



HELLOWORLD staff have taken part in the annual JP Morgan Corporate Challenge in Sydney's Centennial Park, with proceeds from the charity running event donated to the Indigenous Marathon Foundation.

More than 8,000 runners and walkers from over 390 companies took time out to participate in the 5.6km challenge, with competitors from Helloworld performing strongly.

Pictured, back row from left, are

Benn Hartung, Colin Dunne, Mark Brownlee and Retief Lampen.

Front row: Atina Vertzonis, Maia Cohen, Amanda Doonan and Kathryn Feist.

Visa wearable tech

THE Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang next year has formed a partnership with Visa which will see both fans and athletes have access to payment-enabled gloves, stickers and commemorative Olympic pins.

Starting 09 Nov, the stickers and pins can be purchased from Lotte Card's customer centres in Korea and the Lotte Card website.

QR to Thessaloniki

QATAR Airways has announced it will operate four weekly flights to Thessaloniki in Greece from 27 Mar next year.

The new service between Doha and Thessaloniki will use an Airbus A320 aircraft, featuring 12 seats in Business class and 132 in Economy class.

Poland's new airport

THE Polish Government has back-flipped on a plan to invest in expanding small regional airports and will instead spend US\$9.6m (A\$12.48m) on a new central airport *Bloomberg* reports.

The proposed facility will likely be located between Warsaw and Lodz and will aim to service more than 100 million pax annually.

Travellers flying into Poland have increased by 11% in the past 12 months, with air traffic projected to reach 94m by 2035.



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 email appointments@traveldaily.com.au.

Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) has announced the appointments of **Premala Danapakiam** to the role of senior manager, business events and **Tuty Elyanie Medali** to the position of assistant manager, event support. Danapakiam will report directly to Ho Yoke Ping, general manager, business events.

Janet Lamkin has taken on the role of president, California for **United Airlines**. Lamkin will be responsible for the promotion of United's brand within California and will work closely with marketing, sales and government affairs, as well as with local airport authorities.

Iconic food and entertainment brand **Hard Rock International** has appointed **Michael Coury** as its new corporate executive chef. He boasts more than 25 years' experience in the restaurant industry.

Major hotel brand **Hilton** has revealed **Jane Lyons** as its new general manager for West Hotel Sydney. The 182-room property will be located at 65 Sussex Street and is expected to open next month.

Four Points by **Sheraton Auckland** has asked **Richard Dodds** to head up the role of director of sales & marketing. The 255-room hotel is still in development and anticipated to open its doors from Mar next year.

Minor plan for Qatar

MINOR Hotels will add three new hotels in Qatar under the Tivoli and Oaks brands from Apr.

The major push into the Qatari market will see the 151-room Tivoli Al Najada Doha Hotel, the 100-suite Oaks Al Najada Doha and the 101-room Souq Al Wakra Hotel Qatar by Tivoli all open their doors next year.

Minor Hotels has made clear it views the Middle-East as a major growth market moving forward.

The trio of resorts are owned & operated by Katara Hospitality.

Beyond Croatia '18

TRAVEL specialist Beyond Travel has released its new brochure for the Croatian market in 2018 - Croatia and Beyond.

The latest program features a 16-page section on escorted touring, self-drive tours and island-hopping ferry programs.

New to the offering in 2018 is a Venice to Split package which departs Venice every Wednesday from April to October priced at \$1,030pp twin share.

Hemsworth to party

MADAME Tussauds Sydney has unveiled its latest wax figure attraction - Chris Hemsworth.

The Aussie actor's likeness has joined the all-new interactive PARTY Experience in the Darling Harbour attraction.

"Chris is an exciting addition to the all-new interactive PARTY experience," said Mark Connolly, general manager at Madame Tussauds Sydney.

Sri Lanka biker deal

EXTREME Bike Tours is offering travellers the chance to see Sri Lanka via motorcycle with a luxury 13-day, round-trip package called Hidden Sri Lanka.

The tour, which starts off in Galle in south-eastern Sri Lanka on 03 Feb, features a 1,450km ride for licensed riders seeking a more adrenalin-infused way of seeing the sights of Sri Lanka.

Travellers who book by 15 Dec will receive a discount of US\$500 off flights to the country.

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Agents enjoy the sights of Abu Dhabi

TRAVEL agents were in the box seat when it came to deciding their itinerary on the most recent Department of Culture & Tourism Abu Dhabi (DCT) and Etihad Airways 'First Time Abu Dhabi Famil', held last week. The agents got to pick from three diverse famil itineraries which reflected the breadth of Abu Dhabi's world class experiences and natural landscapes, with a choice of Romance and Relaxation, Family Fun or Action and Adventure.

Thu 9th Nov 2017



ACTION and adventure - ready to hit the track: Liah Morley, Escape Travel; Alexis Guthrie, Flight Centre; Christine Sewell, Flight Centre; Clare Johnstone, Travel Counsellors Hoppers Crossing; Daniel Nisbet; Egencia Sydney; Andrea Videot, Flight Centre; Doychin Donchex, Hala Abu Dhabi; Melissa Pain, Emerald Travel; and Sekha Walsh, itravel.



FAMILY fun family climbing Jabel Hafeet: Michelle Woodsford, TravelManagers; Jeff Taylor, QBT; Graeme McGilvray, GP Touring; Felicity Davis, Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism; Hayley Gibson, Student Flights; Kayla Owens, Mariner Travel; Tanya Patterson, TravelManagers; Belinda McDonnell, Flight Centre; Liz Hutson, Escape Travel; and Jackie Capuano, Helloworld.



THE Action and Adventure group kayaking through Abu Dhabi's scenic mangroves.



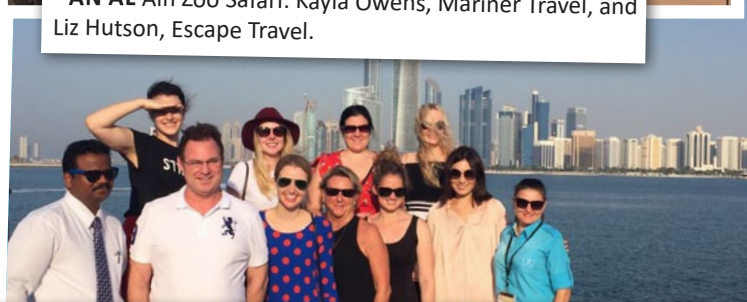
AT SHEIKH Zayed Grand Mosque: Belinda McDonnell, Flight Centre; Hayley Gibson, Student Flights; Kayla Owens, Mariner Travel; Michelle Woodsford, TravelManagers; and Felicity Davis, Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism.



FEEDING time at the Falcon Hospital: Lauren Dalaras, Flight Centre.



AN AL Ain Zoo Safari: Kayla Owens, Mariner Travel, and Liz Hutson, Escape Travel.



ROMANCE and relaxation exploring the city. Lauren Dalaras, Flight Centre; Rebecca Grant, Flight Centre; Sarita Eberbach, Escape Travel; Brianne Shaw, Student Flights; Keith Lindsey, Impulse Travel; Natalie Campbell, Flight Centre; Janice Walklate, Ulladulla Travel; Clarissa Pruden, Total Travel WA; and Cassandra Saghabi, Etihad.



SANDBOARDING time for action and adventure.

Thursday 9th November 2017

Olympic rail pass

KOREA is offering a rail pass for travellers visiting for the 2018 Winter Olympics.

The Pyeongchang Korail Pass is available to foreign visitors between 01 Feb and 25 Mar, in five-day and seven-day options.

Details are available online at www.letskorail.com/pyeongchang.

World revival plan

A **US** investment firm has announced plans to revive World Airways, the defunct carrier that operated trans-Atlantic and trans-continental flights in the 1980s.

The firm, 777 Partners, says it will relaunch World Airways as a low-cost, long-haul airline with Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft.

Planning to serve Asia and Latin America, the company will reveal branding in coming weeks under the direction of aviation entrepreneur Freddie Laker.

Peru touts its riches

PERU'S tourism body Promperu has unveiled plans for its latest international marketing campaign under the slogan "Peru, the richest country in the world".

Presented in the form of a documentary-style film, it will follow Peru's "trail of riches" to showcase the country's history, adventure, nature and culture.

The promotional film will be rolled out via digital and social media advertising, with teaser trailers to entice viewers to watch the full video - **CLICK HERE**.

Tempo Turkey deal

TEMPO Holidays is offering a 25% discount on three of its most popular packages in Turkey, for sales until 20 Jan.

The offer covers 2018 departures of the Glories of Turkey, Classics of Turkey and Turkish Experience itineraries.

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Win an Aurora Expeditions cruise

This week, Aurora Expeditions, is giving readers the chance to win a free trip for 2 onboard a 2018 expedition worth up to **US\$21,200** per person. You can choose from one of the below expeditions:

- 18 day "In Shackleton's Footsteps" 7-24 March 2018 - Weddell Sea, South Georgia & Falklands
- 15 day "Sub-Antarctic Safari" 24 March-7 April 2018 - Falkland Islands & South Georgia

To enter, tell us in 25 words or less why Aurora Expeditions is the perfect choice for your clients wanting an authentic, small ship expedition cruise to the Polar regions. The winner will have the most creative entry. Send your entry to auroraexpeditions@traveldaily.com.au

To improve your entry, here are some helpful research tools:

- Visit the website - auroraexpeditions.com.au
- Order your copy of the 18/19 expedition guide from Tifs - tifs.com.au



Movenpick Thailand

MOVENPICK Hotels & Resorts has made its debut in northern Thailand with the opening of a property in Chiang Mai.

The 266-room Movenpick Suriwongse Hotel Chiang Mai overlooks the night bazaar district and is close to attractions including the old city wall.

The hotel offers seven room categories and an all-day dining venue, Feung Fah Restaurant.

It is the sixth Movenpick property in Thailand.

GOL revenues up

BRAZILIAN airline GOL has revealed a 13% growth in revenues in the third quarter of 2017, compared to the same period last year.

The carrier's net revenue reached R2.7 billion (A\$130 million) during the month and was the fifth consecutive quarter of positive operating results.

GOL said the result was despite a challenging environment.

Europe recovery

EUROPE'S hotel sector has achieved record occupancy levels this year, putting its performance above that shown before the global financial crisis.

In the nine months to Sep, Europe's overall occupancy rate hit 72.6%, more than 2% above the same period of 2016 and 9% above that of pre-GFC 2008, STR figures show.

Most European cities have posted growth in revenue per available room this year, STR says.

Shell to fuel cruises

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has announced an agreement with Shell to provide fuel for its first LNG-powered cruise ships.

The deal covers two new LNG ships to debut in 2020 and 2022 which Carnival says will represent an environmental breakthrough with improved air quality and cleaner emissions.

The ships will be the largest in the Carnival fleet at 180,000 tons.

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Maldives



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Offer is applicable for new bookings only with a minimum four-night consecutive stay required for travel until 16 December 2017. Reservations are subject to availability, seasonality and blackout dates apply. Inclusions are set, cannot be substituted, offer is not combinable with any other promotion, discount or program and cannot be applied retrospectively. Other terms and conditions may apply.

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NEW YEAR NEW ROLE

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Thinking about a new role for the New Year? Or ready to move now? An opportunity has opened up at one of Australia's most successful travel companies. You will need to have experience in a previous BDM role to be considered for this premium position. Work for one of the best representing an amazing product that practically sells itself. A great salary, car allowance and bonus on offer. Please call for a confidential chat.

RELATIONSHIP MANAGER

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As a global Corporate Account Manager you will be responsible for the regional program with the objective of building relationships, growing revenues, increasing margins and retaining the business. To do this, you will have a thorough knowledge of corporate travel as well as the professional communication & negotiation skills to deal with people at all levels up to executives. Interviews to commence this week.

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Are you an innovative General Manager looking for a new challenge? Come join this growing hotel brand & be responsible for overseeing all hotel operations, lead the team with a focus on providing an exceptional guest experience & growing the bottom line. Experience as a GM in 4-5 star hotel is essential along with exceptional leadership, communication & interpersonal skills. Strong salary package on offer for the right candidate.

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BE STRATEGIC

ACCOUNT MANAGER

BRISBANE – PKG DOE

Can you build & develop client relationships? We are looking for a switched on Account Manager with sales & travel management experience to join their growing team. You will be responsible for managing existing clients, developing opportunities to grow revenues & retain business. Strong salary package on offer. Previous account management experience in a TMC environment required along with strong strategic, presentation & communication skills.

EARN THE BIG BUCKS

SENIOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

SYD- BIG BASE \$100K PLUS BIG BONUSES

Join this unique corporate Travel Management Company in Sydney where you will be solely responsible for your region with a lot of potential to win new business. My client is looking for an experienced Business Development Manager who has come from a TMC with a strong track record in sales. Career growth is huge for the right candidate. This company offer a great base salary of \$100k and one of the best commission schemes out there.

AUSTRALIA'S ONLY DEDICATED EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT TEAM

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