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ROYAL Caribbean International is offering up to 45% off cruise fares for 2018-2019 in the South Pacific, NZ and Australia.

The "Seek & Save" offer includes seven nights from \$899, with cruises available on *Ovation of the Seas*, *Radiance of the Seas*, *Explorer of the Seas* and *Voyager of the Seas*.

For details see the **cover page** of today's *Travel Daily*.

MEANWHILE RCCL has also confirmed that increased recommended gratuities for Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruises announced in the US earlier this week (*Cruise Weekly* Tue 02 Jan) do not apply to cruise fares sold in Australia.

Since Dec 2016 RCCL's service charges have been included in the fare for all Australian bookings, meaning local passengers are unaffected by the gratuity amendment.

Australian RCI guests cruising worldwide continue to pay a single inclusive cruise fare incorporating accommodation, main meals, kids club, activities, entertainment and more.

Magellan faces new rival

EXCLUSIVE

EXPRESS Travel Group ceo Tom Manwaring has moved swiftly to capitalise on unrest within the Magellan Travel Group (MTG), issuing an open letter to disaffected members of the soon-to-be Helloworld subsidiary offering them a "new home".

Travel Daily has obtained a copy of the pitch which was distributed on Mon afternoon, with Express Travel Group offering a new Trust Deed which would be "jointly and majority owned by members" in partnership with Manwaring's "Australian, family-owned, fully integrated travel company, operating in Australia for over 32 years with a remunerated TTV of over \$1 billion, over 100 staff and support from five divisions nationally".

The move follows the bombshell announcement of the sale of Magellan to Helloworld (*TD* 19 Dec), which Manwaring describes in the letter as "one of the top five shocks in my 45 years in travel...that surprise, I am sure would have stunned you, the members to the core".

Manwaring said he believes the purchase by Helloworld drives a reduction in distribution competition, and "more importantly, removes independent choice for MTG members and agents across Australia".

The Trust Deed for ex-MTG members proposed by Express "will be set out to ensure any change or sale cannot occur without an ALL member majority vote...restrictions and conditions of joining will be determined with the membership," he wrote, with all other existing conditions remaining in place along with the addition of some "further exclusive benefits".

Manwaring has invited MTG members interested in exploring the new option to contact him or his senior executive team personally.

The Express offer is the latest twist in the Magellan takeover saga, which has also seen agents representing about a third of the group co-sign a letter to the MTG board (*TD* yesterday) as a "strong united approach" expressing their displeasure at the proposed sale.

Magellan chairman Andrew Jones has acknowledged concerns by a "minority of members" around a lack of consultation, committing to providing full details of the deal at a series of roadshows later this month.

Just before Christmas Helloworld confirmed formal transaction documentation had been executed, with the Magellan acquisition "expected to complete in early Jan 2018".

EY network shrinks

ETIHAD is withdrawing services to Entebbe in Uganda and Tehran in Iran, with the flight suspensions coming after a review of route performance.

The cuts join previously announced destinations to be dropped by EY this year, including Dallas Fort Worth and Jaipur.

Qantas in top five

QANTAS has been named the world's fifth best airline for on-time performance, achieving a punctuality rating of 86.18%.

The latest OAG Punctuality League report based on 2017 data ranks the Flying Kangaroo behind only airBaltic (90.01%), Hong Kong Airlines (88.83%), Hawaiian Airlines (87.24%) and Copa Airlines (86.39%).

Virgin Australia was ranked 18th at 81.06%, behind Air New Zealand in 17th place at 81.33%.

The report was compiled from 57 million flight records and also ranked airports and major airline routes and city pairs.

Japan Airlines was named best "mega airline" at 85.27%, ahead of rival ANA and Delta Air Lines.

Vueling was best low-cost carrier at 85.25%, beating Jetstar Asia and Skymark Airlines.

Hawaii tips record

HAWAII'S tourism industry is expecting to have achieved a record year in 2017, with new landmarks tipped in visitor spending and arrivals.

In a new year message, Hawaii Tourism Authority president George Szigeti said statistics to be released later this month would show new records in visitation and tourism revenue.

"We have good reason to believe tourism's momentum can be sustained in 2018," he said.

"Over the last half of 2017, we saw a steady rise in air seat capacity to Hawaii.

"This upward trend is continuing into 2018 in response to travel demand," he said, adding that first quarter schedules showed a further capacity boost of 10.9%.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has four pages of news and photos, including a cover page from **RCI**, plus a full page from:

- AA Appointments jobs



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2018 safest airlines

AUSTRALIAN aviation website AirlineRatings.com has released its 2018 list of the world's safest airlines, listing Qantas and Virgin Australia in the top 20.

Among others are some of the top carriers operating to Australia, including NZ, CX, EK, EY, SQ and BA.

The site's editor Geoffrey Thomas said the top airlines were at the forefront of safety, innovation and the introduction of new aircraft.

"For instance, Australia's Qantas has been recognised by the British Advertising Standards Association in a test case as the world's most experienced airline," he said.

"Qantas has been the lead airline in virtually every major operational safety advancement over the past 60 years and has not had a fatality in the jet era."

He said other long-established airlines such as Hawaiian and Finnair also had perfect records in the jet era.

Niki legal hitch

LEGAL action by an airline passenger advocate could threaten the sale of budget carrier Niki to IAG (TD Tue).

Reuters reports that Fairplane is seeking to recover more than €1 million and has moved to have insolvency proceedings shifted from Germany to Austria.

Liquidators have said the action could threatened the IAG sale.

Field of Light extended

ULURU'S acclaimed art installation Field of Light has been extended for a second time and will remain in place until the end of 2020, Voyages Indigenous Tourism has confirmed.

Having been viewed by more than 200,000 since its launch, the work, by artist Bruce Munro, will no longer be dismantled as scheduled at the end of Mar.

"With such incredible demand, and high occupancy experienced throughout the year at the resort, extending the Field of Light to 31 Dec, 2020, will allow even more guests to enjoy this extraordinary experience," said Voyages executive general manager of sales, marketing and distribution, Ray Stone.

"This further extension offers guests the opportunity to enjoy not only the spiritual nature of the destination, but experience it in a unique and mesmerising way," he said.

The solar-powered work is named Tili Wiru Tjuta Nyakutjaku or "looking at lots of beautiful lights" in the local Pitjantjatjara language, and has drawn international attention since its

Scenic 2018 sale

SCENIC has launched a series of cruise promotions to kick start 2018, with several deals available from 05 Jan to 31 Mar.

Discounted packages include sailings in France, Amsterdam, Cuba and Myanmar.

debut in Apr 2016.

It involves more than 50,000 stems crowned with illuminated frosted-glass spheres, spread over an area the size of nine football fields among the dunes at Uluru.

Tourism Australia managing director John O'Sullivan welcomed the extension.

"Field of Light has been a remarkable success and there's clearly still significant demand amongst people both here in Australia and overseas to make the journey to Uluru to see what is unquestionably one of world's most spectacular and immersive exhibitions," O'Sullivan said.

"People travel to experience difference and this is about as unique a way of connecting with one of our country's most spectacular natural wonders as you're ever likely to get," he said.

Sea Princess gastro

ABOUT 200 people have been hit by a stomach illness aboard Sea Princess ahead of its arrival in Brisbane this morning.

The ship was completing the final leg of a two-week round-trip to New Zealand when the outbreak occurred.

The ABC reports Queensland Health has confirmed norovirus as the cause of the illness and that sanitation measures are underway on board.

Princess Cruises said the ship would undergo additional disinfection in Brisbane.

Topdeck new trips

TOPDECK has marked the new year by unveiling 34 new additions to its 2018/19 program.

New journeys added to the schedule include a nine-day Alaskan Adventure and a 17-day Trans-Mongolian Railway trip.

New "in-depth trips" have also been added such as a seven-day Iceland Summer adventure, an eight-day Tales of Israel tour and a week-long journey to Morocco.

Airbus sets record

AIRBUS is believed to have set a new production record, delivering more than 700 aircraft during 2017 and meeting its targets for the year.

Reuters reports the manufacturer is preparing to announce a record number of jets handed over during Dec, allowing it to beat its previous best year achieved in 2016.

Storms hit UK flights

A POWERFUL winter storm has disrupted flights in the UK and other parts of Europe, with winds of up to 130 km/h and torrential rain hitting the region.

Dozens of short-haul and domestic services from London Heathrow were cancelled yesterday to allow air traffic controllers greater time between landing flights.

Other services were delayed at London Gatwick and in other parts of Europe including France.



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Hitting the Canadian peaks



CVFR Consolidation Services and Air Canada recently co-hosted a special seven-day famil to Canada.

The agents had the opportunity to experience the AC *Dreamliner*.

Once in Canada, the group was able to experience firsthand some of the country's major tourist

sites and meet various tourism bodies, suppliers & wholesalers.

The mid-Dec famil included a visit to Whistler Blackcomb for skiing and to enjoy the pristine sites of Vancouver.

Pictured at Blackcomb are Umaira Wassem, Airborne Travel; Amit Makkar, Sai World Travel; Anoop Karnik, CVFR Consolidated Services; Meharish Bawa, Gurkhas Travel; Justin Hill, Select World Travel; Steven Vella, Breakaway Blacktown; and Roger Atwal, Roger Travel.

MH A380 to HKG

MALAYSIA Airlines plans to increase capacity on its Kuala Lumpur–Hong Kong route during Chinese New Year, with a limited-time Airbus A380 operation.

From 16 Feb to 18 Feb, Malaysia Airlines will fly the A380 on its MH72/73 rotation.

The double-decker aircraft will replace the existing Airbus A330-300 on the route.

VN ups SGN-TPE

VIETNAM Airlines will increase the number of flights from Ho Chi Minh City to Taipei to 11 weekly from seven weekly starting 26 Mar for the summer season.



Discover what luxury in Japan looks like in the December issue of *travelBulletin*.

CLICK to read
travelBulletin

Tripadvisor trends

TRIPADVISOR has revealed that over 820,000 properties around the world received reviews on its website during 2017.

London received just over one million reviews in 2017, which was more than any other city in the world, while Hard Rock Hotel in Punta Cana recorded more reviews than any other hotel.

Sydney Opera House was the most reviewed attraction in Australia along with Melbourne as the most reviewed destination.

Australian reviewers submitted 17,881 reviews on 11 Jul, which was more than any other day.

The trends emerged after the platform reached 500 million reviews and opinions in Apr 2017.

N Qld airport sale

AUCKLAND Airport is pushing ahead with plans to sell its stake in North Queensland Airports.

The New Zealand company currently owns 24.55% of North Queensland Airports, confirming that while it is an attractive asset, it is not integral to the group's current business strategy.

Auckland Airport said it had seen a number of interested buyers and expected to provide a more detailed market update on or before its FY18 interim results announcement in Feb 2018.

The North Queensland Airports group has stakes in both Cairns and Mackay airports.

Accor takes counsel

ACCORHOTELS has appointed Rhonda Hare to the position of general counsel Asia Pacific.

Hare joins the group with over 22 years of experience as an in-house and private practice lawyer across the world.

In the role, Hare will work with the Asia Pacific team to provide legal support, develop and review deal structures and support hotel owner relations.

For more appointments, see **page four**.

Window Seat

THE global travel and tourism industry should today be thanking its collective lucky stars for the election of Donald Trump as US president - at least when it comes to air safety.

Just in case you missed it, there were no commercial aviation fatalities in the US last year - and Trump is claiming all of the credit.

After the release of the latest safety statistics (**TD** yesterday) Trump was quick to take to Twitter, sending a message "Since taking office I have been very strict on Commercial Aviation. Good News - it was just reported that there were Zero deaths in 2017, the best and safest year on record!"

A number of commentators have pointed out that there have in fact been no jet passenger deaths in the US since 2009.

Pledge for Palau

PALAU, an archipelago made up of some 200 islands in the western Pacific Ocean, has introduced a "passport pledge" that visitors must sign before entering the country.

The pledge commits visitors to help preserve the environment for generations to come.

Palau is the first nation to change its immigration laws in order to protect the environment, with the pledge drafted with the help of local children.

LATAM Costa Rica

LATAM Airlines Peru has commenced services from Lima to San Jose, Costa Rica.

The route marks the first time the airline has served the Central American country.

LATAM will fly the route thrice weekly using Airbus A319 aircraft on Tue, Fri and Sun.

Do you know who sells adventure tours to Cuba? 😞

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Celebrations across the states



TRAVELMANAGERS capped off 2017 with a series of celebratory state meetings in Dec visiting Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne.

The events provided the opportunity for personal travel managers, national partnership office representatives and partner suppliers to get together in a fun environment and chat about the challenges faced during the year and the best strategies needed for a successful year ahead.

"There was great interest in the announcement from marketing about our new PTM web pages," said TravelManagers executive general manager Michael Gazal.

"Everyone found the opportunity to learn more about the company vision and ask questions of the management team about plans for the future to be of great value."

Pictured: Ali Banks (left) & Suzanne Laister (right) congratulate Perth PTM Michelle Edmead on five years' service.

Ho Chi apartments

SEDONA Suites has announced it will open a 195-room serviced apartment property in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City in early 2018.

Sedona Suites Ho Chi Minh City's Grand Tower is located in the central District 1 and features modern decor influenced by Vietnamese cultural elements.

Other key attractions include room service, airport transfers and a Singaporean restaurant.

Iran protest warning

DFAT has advised Australian travellers to Iran to exercise a high degree of caution and ensure they do not travel to border areas with Afghanistan, Pakistan & Iraq amid growing political unrest.

Since 28 Dec, crowds demonstrating against government corruption have caused many injuries and deaths.



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.

Travel Partners has recently appointed **Arthur Vicario** to the new position of Business Development Partner Member Agencies. Vicario joins the company having had 20 years of experience in airline, GDS and consolidation segments of the industry.

The **Ramada Resort Shoal Bay** has promoted **Leah Besant** to the role of Executive Assistant Manager where she will be charged with looking after the hotel's operations, according to parent company Wyndham Vacation Resorts Asia Pacific. She will report to regional director of operations – NSW, TAS, WA and NZ, Nathan Hunt.

A new Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer is in place at **Royal Caribbean Cruises** with **Laura B Miller** recently taking up the position. She has previous experience with ADT Corporation, Coca-Cola and Raytheon Company.

Asian tour operator **Wendy Wu Tours** has appointed **Paola Bamonte** as its new Business Development Manager for NSW. In the position, Bamonte will look after the territory of Southern NSW.

Hospitality executive **Mikael Svensson** has recently joined hospitality management and building solutions company **Louis T Collection** as its new Senior Vice President. Hailing from Sweden, Svensson will oversee operation of the group's current hotel portfolio.

Malindo lifts Taipei

MALINDO Air is set to boost services on the Kuala Lumpur to Taipei Taoyuan route from seven to 10-11 weekly flights commencing 11 Jan.

The additional flights will be operated by 737-800 aircraft.

Vietnam expansion

MOVENPICK Hotels & Resorts has flagged the opening of the Movenpick Resort Lang Co located on Vietnam's mid coast.

Scheduled to be operational from Q4 this year, the new 144-room hotel notches up the company's sixth hotel in the pipeline for Vietnam and forms part of a significant expansion plan in Asia more broadly.

Located 40km from Danang and 60km from Hanoi, Movenpick Resort Lang Co will be close to beaches and an 18-hole golf course designed by Nick Faldo.

Family amenities include a swimming pool & kids' club.

Eurostar streams

HIGH-SPEED rail service Eurostar has announced it will soon be unveiling Amazon Prime Video content on board its fleet of e320 trains.

The programming can be accessed through the company's new Eurostar app and will feature more than 300 hours of TV shows and film options.

The service will be free for pax with the app also offering info on bookings, destination choices, ticketing and loyalty card storage.

Six senses yoga

SIX Senses Ninh Van Bay in Vietnam has introduced a new aerial yoga experience to its health and wellbeing offering.

Unlike conventional yoga, aerial yoga takes place on a silk hammock suspended in the air.

The hotel claims it's about "connecting the body and mind" and aligns with the over-arching ethos of the brand.



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This role will see you take ownership of your own department, lead this growing division to greater growth in 2018. You will be responsible for managing the P & L so experience in this area is essential. Look after the whole operation from Sales, Account Management to Consultants.

If you are looking for a step up and have worked across different areas in a TMC this could be your next step, please call for a confidential chat.

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SYDNEY-\$95-\$110K PLUS DOE

Rare opportunity to join a growing and exciting brand, with over 20 offices globally opportunities could be endless. We are searching for a strong marketer who is confident approaching partners to sell the value proposition for this organization and also work with a PR agency or if you have the PR contacts do this in-house. This company offers a great working culture with an inspiring management team. Please call for a confidential chat.

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LAST CHANCE

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