

EXP GBRH sale

EXPERIENCE Co yesterday completed its sale of Great Barrier Reef Helicopters (GBRH) to the Morris Group (**TD** 20 Dec 2019).

The sale follows on from a strategic review completed by the company (**TD** 07 Nov 2019), which will see it offload a number of assets in order to improve return on invested capital.

The company last month also completed the sale of its canyoning business and assets to Cairns Canyoning, netting it proceeds of "approximately \$17.5 million".

Virgin's CBR charter

VIRGIN Australia has filed a one-time, one-way Adelaide-Canberra charter in late Apr, utilising an Airbus A330-200 aircraft, GDS displays show.

The flight will leave Adelaide at 6.00am on 25 Apr (ANZAC Day), landing in Canberra at 8.05am.

Tourists ordered to leave

VISITORS are being directed to leave fire-affected tourist areas as blazes continue to rage across the country.

The South Coast, Shoalhaven and Snowy Monaro, which includes Kosciuszko National Park and Jindabyne, have been declared tourist leave zones ahead of widespread extreme fire danger forecast for the regions tomorrow.

The NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) has ordered holidaymakers to leave these areas before Sat, warning of "dangerous conditions, the same or worse than New Year's Eve".

Tourists must leave who are in the general area from Batemans Bay to the Victorian border on the South Coast, from Burrill Lake north to Nowra in Shoalhaven and in Jindabyne, Adaminaby, Berridale, Delegate, Providence Portal, Anglers Reach and Old

Adaminaby in Snowy Monaro.

Batlow/Wondalga and Khancoban are also leave zones.

MEANWHILE, Regional Express (Rex) scheduled additional services to the NSW South Coast from New Year's Day to today to assist with the evacuation.

This has included extra flights between Merimbula & Melbourne, Merimbula & Sydney, and Moruya & Sydney, but thick smoke has prevented some services from operating.

Rex said it was committed to providing additional services, however, operations are subject to Merimbula and Moruya airports having the necessary regulatory visibility.

The thick smoke is also impacting services to the Snowy Mountains (Cooma) with no flights currently able to land at Snowy Mountains Airport.

For more updates, **CLICK HERE**.

Travelex hit by cyber attack

CURRENCY exchange operator Travelex is experiencing significant IT issues after suffering an attack by a software virus.

The company is not currently allowing online purchase of foreign currency, with the assault discovered on New Year's Eve.

"As a precautionary measure, in order to protect data and prevent the spread of the virus, we immediately took all our systems offline...our investigation to date shows no indication that any personal or customer data has been compromised," according to a formal statement from Travelex.

Teams are working to restore affected systems, and branches continue to provide foreign exchange services manually.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has three pages of news.

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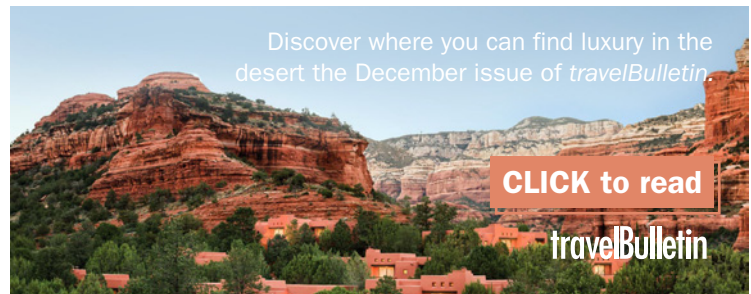
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TNZ expands push

TOURISM New Zealand (TNZ) is expanding its campaign encouraging tourists to enjoy “responsible camping across the country” (**TD** 17 May 2019).

Launched in partnership with the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, Tourism New Zealand Chief Executive Stephen England-Hall said last year’s campaign reached over two million people.

Part of the government’s NZ\$17 million investment in the NZ camping system, the campaign encourages people to stay at campsites and campgrounds with facilities, and guides those who choose to camp on public land on how to do so responsibly.

Launched yesterday and running until the end of Mar, the campaign includes social media advertising and wi-fi at camping spots across the country, accessible after watching a “how to camp responsibly” video.

Bedsonline records spike

GLOBAL accommodation provider Bedsonline has revealed the number of room nights sold by the company has increased by 40% in the Australian market over the last 12 months.

Bedsonline attributed the strong growth to a new value proposition recently implemented by the business, which included the integration of GTA and Tourico Holidays into its parent group, and TravelCube’s customers migrating onto Bedsonline’s booking platform.

The result of the restructure has seen its platform equipped with improved technology, agent support, as well as an increased volume of hotel properties from 55,000 to 180,000.

The company’s platform has also boosted its available activities to 18,000 and cars available for hire to 140,000.

“I am very proud to see the

outstanding sales growth in Australia this year, the result has been driven by our new and enhanced platform but is also a reflection of our hard work and persistence in the Pacific region and...of course, all our travel agent clients for their loyalty,” Bedsonline Regional Sales Manager, Pacific Peter Jones said.

“We are committed to being the ultimate partner for travel businesses and in 2020 will be working harder than ever.”

To complement the growth trajectory, the company has also announced it will offer a famil trip for 20 top agents from a selection of its clients in 2020.

“We want to give them a first-hand experience of the portfolio of accommodation, activities, and transfers that we work with in the destination,” Jones said.

Further details of the famil will be published soon.



Window Seat

TOURISTS have a constant craving for the newest and best locations to travel to.

One day, that may not only be where, but when.

Or at least, that’s according to theoretical physicist and all-round braniac Ronald Mallett, who believes he has gazumped all those who have come before by figuring out time travel.

Mallett believes he has come up with the scientific equations and principles upon which a time machine could be created, going as far as to create a prototype of his machine, which he says demonstrates lasers could be used to create a circulating beam of light that twists time and space.

However, the 74-year-old does admit his designs are unlikely to allow for the principle to become a reality in his lifetime.

Last Christmas, I gave you...



BALGOWNIE World Travel in Wollongong gave us its heart, so we couldn’t resist running one more Christmas photo.

Pictured is the team celebrating another year of success inside a giant bauble.

Stay tuned for the winner of **Travel Daily’s** Christmas party photo comp which will be revealed Mon, giving away a double movie pass (**TD** 17 Dec 2019).

Delta LATAM stake

DELTA Air Lines has completed its tender offer and acquired a 20% equity stake in LATAM Airlines Group for approximately US\$1.9 billion (**TD** 27 Sep 2019).

The purchase will see Delta make a significant cash injection into its new partner airline, including US\$350m to support the “establishment” of the deal.

South Sea update

SOUTH Sea Cruises’ day cruises within the Mamanuca Islands resumed normal operations on Tue following enforced closures due to Tropical Cyclone Sarai.

The operator’s Seaspray and Ultimate Encounter products remain closed, with further advisories to be issued once they are able to resume full operation.

Fiji Airways also advised most of its services had resumed by Tue, with flights to Kadavu and Koro, as well as to and from Tonga remaining cancelled due to the effects of the cyclone.

BA carbon neutral

BRITISH Airways has declared that all of its flights within the United Kingdom are now 100% carbon neutral.

The initiative begun on 01 Jan, and is part of a commitment from the airline’s parent company, International Airlines Group, to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 (**TD** 14 Oct 2019).

HNA turning point

CHINA-HEADQUARTERED HNA Group, part owner in travel brands Hilton Worldwide and Grand China Air, has hailed 2020 as a “decisive year” in its ongoing fight against liquidity problems.

Speaking via the company’s official WeChat account last week, HNA Group Chairman Chen Feng struck a stoic tone in his forecast for the year ahead.

“We have no choice but to make utmost efforts with one heart and one mind to greet the challenges head-on,” he said.

Chen also noted the company recently held a conference in Zunyi to outline its future turnaround strategy.

Speculation has been rife that continued cash flow issues might lead HNA Group to sell off its 19% stake in Virgin Australia (**TD** 03 Sep 2018).

The company has also been forced to sell off its majority stake in West Air Co (**TD** 09 Dec 2019).

Aeroflot punctual

RUSSIAN carrier Aeroflot has been named the world's most on-time mainline airline in Cirium's annual On-Time Performance (OTP) Review, with 86.7% of its flights operating on time in 2019.

All Nippon Airways followed close behind in second place in the same category, while LATAM Airlines was named the most on-time global network airline and Japan's StarFlyer the most punctual low-cost carrier.

The report also measured the timeliness of airports around the world, with Moscow's Sheremetyevo International Airport coming in as number one, with 95% of flights of departing on schedule.

The report, which can be read **HERE**, ranks the top 10 most on-time airlines and airports globally, by size and region.

GC cableway plan

CITY of Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate has announced he would allocate more than \$1 million to funding a study into building a cableway in the Gold Coast hinterland by 2023, if he wins the election on 28 Mar.

"It's the start of a new decade and now is the time to get this ready because it will act as a magnet for tourists and open up the hinterland to other sectors of the community who may not be able to enjoy it otherwise, such as seniors and those with mobility issues," Tate said.

Tate promised the study would include a community consultation to determine public support before it is submitted to the Queensland Government in mid-late 2021, as well as assessing the feasibility and environmental impact of the project.



THE Blue Mountains tourism community has come together to donate \$19,500 to local Rural Fire Service Brigades after holding a fundraising campaign just before Christmas (**TD** 18 Dec 2019).

The donation, raised by Scenic World, Blue Mountains Explorer Bus and a number of hotels including The Carrington, will be divvied up between the South Katoomba and Katoomba/Leura Rural Fire Service Brigades.

"We all wanted to do something to give back, so this fundraising

campaign was one way of saying 'thank you' and furthermore, providing support for the ongoing firefighting efforts in our region," said Scenic World Managing Director Anthea Hammon.

Pictured: Cameron Jones; Peter Bennett; Jacki Jones of Katoomba/Leura RFS Brigade; Anthea Hammon of Scenic World; Jason Cronshaw of Explorer Bus; Scott Colefax and Caroline Jose of South Katoomba RFS Brigade.

TRAVEL SPECIALS

WELCOME to Travel Specials, *Travel Daily's* Friday feature. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of, send the details to specials@traveldaily.com.au

Royal Caribbean International has announced a range of deals for travellers looking to set sail this year. The nine-night South Pacific cruise on *Voyager of the Seas* is now priced from \$1,099ppts for an Interior Room. The cruise, which departs Sydney on 22 Jan, will call into Mare Island, Isle of Pines and Lifou in New Caledonia, Port Vila in Vanuatu. Call 1800 754 500 to book.

Guests can fly direct with **Aircalin** to Noumea, New Caledonia from Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane from \$499 return for the travel period of 01 May to 31 Oct, or from \$599 return between 20 Feb to 30 Apr. Must be booked by 24 Jan. Visit www.aircalin.com for more info.

Cruisers can enjoy savings on a number of **Celebrity Cruises'** itineraries, including the 15-night Best of India & South East Asia Voyager, now just \$1,999 per person, which is due to set sail on 17 Jan aboard *Celebrity Constellation*. **CLICK HERE** for more.

ecruising is offering free flights and accommodation upgrades on its 21-night Singapore Sling, Raffles & the Kimberley cruise package for a limited time only - call 1300 369 848 for more information.

Aden Airport plans

THE Saudi Development and Reconstruction Program for Yemen (SDRPY) has launched the first phase of a project to "rehabilitate and upgrade" Aden International Airport.

The three-phase project will include a redesign of the external main gates and roads, provision of passenger transport buses, reconstructing vital service systems, runway and taxi areas, gates, and tunnels, and more.

The project aims to "bring Aden Airport up to International Civil Aviation Organization standards as quickly as possible, connect Aden directly to the countries in the region, and increase the airport's capacity to handle much greater numbers," said SDRPY Projects and Studies Director Eng Hassan Alattas.

Thai tourism target

THE Tourism Authority of Thailand has revealed it is expecting 3.18 trillion Baht (AU\$151 billion) in overall tourism revenue for Thailand in 2020.

This represents a 4% year-on-year increase and the prediction is based on factors such as government stimulus measures and new air routes.

Indonesia disruption

SMARTTRAVELLER has issued a notice advising travellers to Indonesia to anticipate transport disruptions due to heavy rain and flooding in several areas, including Jakarta, since 31 Dec, resulting in injuries and deaths.

The Smartraveller advice level of "exercise a high degree of caution" in Indonesia overall remains the same.

Australians are advised to follow the advice of local authorities.