



Easter Island by Steve McCurry

Steve McCurry

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Middle East update

SMARTTRAVELLER has warned that the security situation in the Middle East remains volatile and could change at any time.

Australians who are travelling in the affected regions are advised to remain vigilant and monitor developments via the media and Smartraveller website.

The warning comes after a US airstrike near the Baghdad International Airport on 03 Jan, which killed an Iranian senior commander and Iraqi paramilitary leaders.

The level of advice for the following regions remains the same: Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen at "do not travel"; Bahrain, Israel and the Palestinian Territories, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Kuwait at "exercise a high degree of caution", and Saudi Arabia at "reconsider the need to travel".

Qatar, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates remain at the normal safety precaution level.

Impact of fires "significant"

TOURISM Australia has paused parts of its Kylie Minogue "Matesong" campaign in the UK, amid massive international coverage of Australia's ongoing bushfire crisis.

The tourism body said it was focused on developing an approach to minimise any impact on tourism, and to protect and build Australia's reputation as an international tourism destination.

"Whilst bushfires continue to impact parts of Australia, many areas are unaffected and most tourism businesses are still open," MD Phillipa Harrison said.

"It is more important than ever that we rally around our communities and the tourism sector who may have been impacted."

Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) Executive Director Simon Westaway told **TD** the impact of the fires on the industry had been very significant, with

ATIC's network of around 9,000 businesses having "to some great degree been impacted".

"It is too early to estimate what the full impact is going to be," Westaway said.

"It will run into the tens of millions, possibly hundreds of millions of dollars in terms of financial impact, over and beyond the personal, community and social impacts."

Westaway urged the industry to be resilient as it moves forward & works collaboratively on a rebuild.

"The tragedy is many fold – the deaths, impact to communities, to our nature and fauna and perhaps over the medium to longer term our reputation as a safe and accessible place to visit," the ATIC chief said.

"Of course Australia has experienced lots of bushfires but the enormity of the coverage is going to require great resilience by our industry as we move forward," he added.

Meanwhile, the iconic Southern Ocean Lodge on South Australia's Kangaroo Island has closed until further notice, after sustaining massive structural damage from bushfires on Fri.

Baillie Lodges founders and co-creators of Southern Ocean Lodge James and Hayley Baillie have pledged to work to rebuild the island's tourism industry.

Initial plans are already at-hand to rebuild the luxury property, with no reopening date so far.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has four pages of news and photos, a front cover wrap for **Silversea** plus a full page from:

• CLIA

Silversea savings

SILVERSEA is inviting travellers to "discover authentic beauty", with bonus savings days offering up to \$1,000 of savings when booked by 28 Feb.

The promotion can also be combined with other limited time promotions, but availability is limited - see the **front page**.

CLIA finalists named

FINALISTS have been named for the 19th annual Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia Cruise Industry Awards (**TD** breaking news).

The winners will be presented at a sold-out ceremony on 15 Feb at The Star Sydney.

There are 71 finalists from Australia and New Zealand in the running, with the more than 560 entries received for this year's awards, the most in the event's 18-year history.

Winners will be selected from 11 different categories, such as Agency of the Year; Cruise Consultant of the Year; Home-Based Cruise Agent/Broker of the Year; Rising Star; Cruise Champion; Promotion of the Year and a Media Award.

For more information, see the **back page**.



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Industry rallies

THE travel industry has moved to help those affected by bush fires raging across the country.

Carnival Australia has pledged \$350,000 to support the Australian Red Cross Disaster Relief and Recovery Fund on behalf of its guests.

Intrepid's not-for-profit entity, The Intrepid Foundation has launched an appeal to support the Red Cross, with Intrepid pledging to match funds donated by travellers and industry dollar-for-dollar up to \$200,000.

All money raised will go to the Red Cross Bushfire Emergency Appeal, for more, [CLICK HERE](#).

MEANWHILE, a number of industry leaders have come together to raise funds for victims of the fires.

A dedicated Australian Travel Industry fundraiser targeting \$250,000 in support for the Australian Red Cross has already garnered over \$10,000 in donations, [CLICK HERE](#).

Air India dumps Sabre

AIR India has exited the Sabre global distribution system, following a 20-year relationship.

The carrier ceased distributing its content through the technology on Fri, having last year also removed its content from Amadeus (**TD** 23 Nov 2018).

"We are very disappointed that Air India decided to withdraw from Sabre," said Sabre VP Global Communications Kristin Hays.

She said the GDS firm had worked with Air India for almost a year to reach a new deal, after receiving a termination notice from the carrier.

"After extensive negotiations,

we have been unable to come to a new agreement," she said.

Air India has faced mounting financial problems of late, with Indian oil suppliers in Aug suspending the sale of jet fuel to the airline after months of non-payment (**TD** 27 Aug 2019).

MEANWHILE Sabre-connected agents in Australia are still unable to book Finnair flights, due to the ongoing dispute between the carrier and the GDS platform.

Sabre removed AY content after failing to reach a deal over a replacement of the former Full Content Agreement (**TD** 27 Nov 2019).

In an update issued 24 Dec, Finnair country manager Arnaud Michelin said the airline was still able to process bookings via its help desk, but is unable to pass on commission because the Sabre dispute meant agents cannot claim ownership of bookings prior to ticketing.

Excite "exciting deal in the works"

EXCITE Holidays has confirmed it is in talks to potentially sell part of the business, amid ongoing concern from agents about clients arriving at their destinations with unpaid bookings (**TD** 02 Jan).

Unconfirmed sources have also cited recent senior staff changes within the organisation, as well as layoffs and unpaid wages at its offices in Bangkok and Athens.

MD Nic Stavropoulos has downplayed the impact of several key suppliers not accepting Excite bookings, telling **TD** "we are still working hard with our global team to rectify" the problems.

He noted total live inventory of 490,000 hotels including 19,700 direct contracts, adding: "we have never been dependent on any one supplier".

Stavropoulos also confirmed a possible sale, saying "there is an exciting deal in the works".

Excite Holidays withdrew from the ATAS scheme 12 months ago.

Solomon vax ID

DFAT is advising Australian travellers they need to show proof of vaccination against measles to enter Solomon Islands, to prevent the spread of a measles outbreak (**TD** 19 Dec 2019).

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UK	\$1,319*	\$7,219*
Europe	\$1,329*	\$7,249*
Africa	\$1,389*	\$7,249*
Mexico	\$1,849*	\$8,999*
North America	\$1,999*	\$8,999*

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*Advertised fares are for Business and Economy Class return travel departing from Melbourne inclusive of taxes and surcharges, correct as of 12 December 2019, subject to currency fluctuation and availability. Offer ends 20 January 2020. Business Class fares are for travel commencing 20 January to 30 November 2020. Economy Class fares are for travel commencing 20 January to 20 March, 30 March to 31 May, 1 September to 10 September and 20 September to 30 November 2020. Higher levels apply for other travel periods. Flight restrictions, day-of-week surcharges, inbound blackout periods, amendment and cancellation fees apply. Additional destinations and fares are available from Adelaide, Brisbane, Sydney and Perth. Further terms and conditions apply. For full terms and conditions, please visit emiratesagents.com/au, see your GDS or call Emirates on 1300 303 777. Offer subject to change.

And the winner is...



IT'S a merry (belated) Christmas to the Railbookers and Amtrak Vacations team, who have taken out **Travel Daily's** Christmas party photo competition.

The team's snap with the big

man himself (pictured) was too good to pass by.

For their efforts, they have won an Event double movie pass.

Thank you to everyone for their submissions!



HURTIGRUTEN

Expedition Specialist

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Hurtigruten is growing and we now have an opportunity for two Expedition Specialists to join our Head Office team in Melbourne.

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22 April 2020

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Travel Daily



Uber, Careem deal

UBER last week closed its previously announced \$3.1 billion acquisition of transportation network Careem Networks (**TD** 27 Mar 2019).

Careem will become a wholly owned subsidiary of Uber, preserving its brand, with its leader Mudassir Sheikha now reporting to a board made up of three Uber representatives and two Careem reps.

The ride-hailing platform serves customers across the Middle East, and is Uber's largest purchase.

MSC appointments

MSC Cruises has named Patrizia Iantorno as Marketing Manager for Australia and New Zealand.

She steps into the role today, tasked with the brand positioning of the cruise line in the region, plus its multi-channel marketing strategies and campaigns.

The line has also made Leisa Chell its PR and Comms Manager for Australasia, a newly created position, after two years leading its regional marketing team.

Chell will be responsible for all the company's Public Relations activities in the region, media relations and event management.

Explorer countdown

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises is today celebrating the 12-month countdown until *Seven Seas Explorer* arrives in Sydney for the first time as part of her 2020/21 Australia and NZ season.

Sanctuary Retreats

SANCTUARY Retreats is bringing back its Stay Longer, Pay Less offer for 2020.

Guests who stay at one of the collection's 12 boutique safari camps and lodges for four to six nights can save up to 30%, while those staying seven nights or longer can save up to 40%.

Discounts depend on season of travel, call +61 431 976 125.



Window Seat

PEOPLE leave behind belongings in hotels all the time, but we're not sure how guests managed to forget some of the "possessions" left behind at Travelodge hotels in 2019.

Headlining some of the hotel chain's most notable instances of lost property include an urn of ashes, a unicorn made out of flowers and even two alpacas.

In a release, the hotel brand noted a rise in the misplacing of wedding fare and paraphernalia, saying, "this included a five-foot floral unicorn, a huge full moon, a flower wall, palm trees, a Tiffany engagement ring and even a best man".

As for the alpacas, although they were left unattended in Travelodge Stratford Upon Avon, they did not take anything from the mini bar.

PR to SEA & LAX

PHILIPPINE Airlines will add a Manila to Seattle service from May, according to GDS displays.

Flying three times weekly on an Airbus A350-900XWB, the route opens on 03 May, but is not yet available for booking.

The carrier will also revive its Cebu City to Los Angeles service from 02 May, which it ceased in May 2017 (**TD** 09 May 2017).

The route will be flown three times weekly, as before, but will now operate with a Boeing 777-300ER, having previously flown an Airbus A340.

Viking Explorer

VIKING Cruises is currently hosting its Viking Explorer sale, offering couples discounts of up to \$4,000.

Also available as part of the promotion are free flights and city-stay extensions on a large range of the cruise line's ocean and river itineraries - call 138 747.

Monday 6th January 2020

Anantara Malaysia

ANANTARA Hotels, Resorts & Spas has announced the opening of its first property in Malaysia, Anantara Desaru Coast Resort & Villas, located on a stretch of beachfront in Johor Darul Ta'zim.

The resort is a 45-minute drive from Senai International Airport and is made up of 90 ensuite rooms, 13 one- and two-bedroom pool villas and five family-sized residences.

Rates start from \$222 per room per night, inclusive of breakfast - email desaru@anantara.com for more information.

Saudi visa change

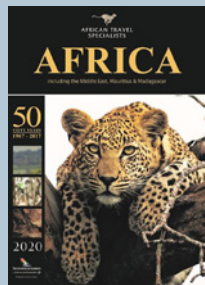
THE Saudi Commission for Tourism & National Heritage has announced that visitors with existing UK, US, and Schengen area country visas can now obtain Saudi Arabia visitor visas at airport arrivals regardless of their citizenship.

To take advantage of the new regulation, visitors must have previously used the visa to travel to any one of those countries before entering Saudi Arabia.

The change is part of the kingdom's new tourist visa scheme (**TD** 30 Sep 2019).

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.



Africa Travel Specialists - Africa 2020
Africa Travel Specialists has unveiled its 2020 collection of itineraries in a brand-new brochure, encompassing Africa, the Middle East, Mauritius and Madagascar. A range of new products are featured, including a Taste of Southern Africa tour, a gorilla fly-in safari tour, a photography safari in Botswana, a self-drive safari in Namibia, an exploration of Sossusvlei by road, and a tour that promises to deliver a taste of West Africa.



Viva Holidays - Pacific Islands 2020
Viva Holidays has released a brochure showcasing its 2020 itineraries for travellers looking to experience the Pacific Islands, including destinations in Samoa, Tahiti, Vanuatu, Tonga, Niue, and New Caledonia. The program features new accommodation, including Fatumara Lodge and Barrier Beach Resort, both in Vanuatu, as well as a number of new itineraries, including a wine and cheese tasting experience and zip lining tour in New Caledonia. Travellers can also experience an eight-day kayak tour in Tonga; Black Magic Cultural Village, Santo Island, and Tanna experiences in Vanuatu; a half-day tour of Apia Township and a one-day exploration of Manono Island in Samoa.

URBNSURF makes a splash



URBNSURF Melbourne officially opened its doors to the public today, with surf sessions, surf lessons and spectator passes now available for purchase.

Located in Tullamarine, 16km from the Melbourne CBD, URBNSURF said it generates "safe, convenient and reliable" waves for surfers, from beginners to professionals (**TD** 15 Nov 2019).

Hollywood stars Chris and Liam Hemsworth visited the park before Christmas to hit the waves, with Chris Hemsworth saying he "had the funnest day with a small crew of family and friends at @urbnsurf in Melbourne" in an Instagram post.

URBNSURF offers pay-by-the-month memberships, one-hour beginner, intermediate and advanced lessons starting from \$25 for adults and \$15 for children, a range of discounted multi-packs, and all-day spectator passes for \$5.

Visit urbnsurf.com for more.

Pictured: Australian actor Chris Hemsworth testing the waters at URBNSURF Melbourne.



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Ben is the top tipper for R13 of *Travel Daily's* A-League footy tipping competition. He's won a \$100 travel voucher from Breakaway Travel Club.



A-League tipping competition is sponsored by Etihad Airways and ReadyRooms, with the top tipper for the season winning a trip to Manchester to see Manchester City play.



NSW permit LTPS/19/38955 ACT permit TP 19/04408

Victory discount

VICTORY Cruise Lines & Cruise Traveller are offering savings of up to US\$800 per couple on the new 10-night Splendour of the Great Lakes cruise package, departing 04 Jul on the *Victory I*.

Priced from US\$5,907ppts if booked by 31 Mar, the package includes onboard meals, drinks, shore excursions and more, and will take sail from Toronto to Chicago - **CLICK HERE** for more.

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19TH ANNUAL CRUISE INDUSTRY AWARDS

CONGRATULATIONS

CLIA Australasia congratulates
all finalists and wishes everyone
the best of luck at this year's
Cruise Industry Awards.

[CLICK HERE](#) to see the full list
of finalists and sponsors

**We look forward to celebrating
a great year of cruising with you.**

