



Air NZ CPO resigns

AIR New Zealand Chief People Officer Jodie King will leave the airline by the end of the financial year to take up a role with Vodafone New Zealand.

King joined Air NZ in 2013 as a GM in the People function and was appointed as CPO in 2016.

Excite cash crisis since Nov

EXCLUSIVE

EXCITE Holidays had been taking advice about a possible company restructure since late Nov 2019, and had actually engaged accounting firm KPMG to provide "advisory assistance" about six weeks before it ceased trading last week (**TD** 10 Jan).

KPMG says it will undertake the administration "in an objective and impartial manner," saying the limited work taken up for Excite in the lead-up to the collapse does not result in a conflict of interest.

According to new information released by KPMG overnight, Morgan Kelly, now appointed as Excite's Administrator, met with the company's MD Nicholas Stavropoulos and CFO Theo Theodore as far back as 28 Nov.

That was followed by a formal engagement letter under which KPMG would undertake a "high level review of short-term cash flow," as well as a review of creditors and an "assessment of solvency" for Excite Holidays.

An initial retainer fee of \$22,000 was paid to KPMG Australia by Excite Holidays (Australia) Pty Limited, and from 02 Dec 2019 through to 08 Jan 2020, Kelly and another Administrator, Phil Quinlan, met with Excite's

Directors and Theodore, "however no deliverables were completed in respect of the engagement".

During this same period Excite continued to take new bookings, and Stavropoulos enthusiastically touted new features such as an air module (**TD** 02 Dec 2019) and then more recently an "exciting deal" in the works (**TD** 06 Jan).

Then last Thu, rather than continuing with the advisory work, KPMG met with Stavropoulos and his fellow Excite Director, George Papaioannou, to explain the "nature and consequences of an insolvency appointment".

The Administrators were appointed the following day, and are now seeking proofs of debt, in preparation for a meeting on Wed 22 Jan - see home.kpmg.

Anyone with further info on the Excite collapse can confidentially let us know via our special WhatsApp tip line - **CLICK HERE**.

Travel Daily

en route to
Los Angeles, USA

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you courtesy of **Viking Cruises**, which will later this week unveil full details of its new expedition cruise product in Los Angeles.

VIKING Cruises founder Torstein Hagen has pioneered river and ocean cruising, but until now has only hinted at the possibility of an expedition cruise product.

In Oct last year, sketchy details were revealed in an email campaign to past passengers, hinting at polar voyages on two 378-passenger newbuilds, but without providing any firm information.

That's all set to change at the Beverley Hilton on Wed night US west coast time - keep reading **Travel Daily** and **Cruise Weekly** for all the on-the-spot details as they come to hand.

MORE EGYPT



8 DAYS FROM ONLY
\$3,795*
PP TWIN SHARE

TRAVELMARVEL

Travel More

*Conditions Apply.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news and photos, plus a full page from:

- Express Travel Group



Book you clients a Whistler Stay to earn **TRIP Dollars***

VIVA HOLIDAYS

WHISTLER CANADA

TRIP

*For full terms and conditions please see www.triponline.com.au

VIKING

EXPLORER SALE

EXPLORE A SELECTION OF SPECIAL OFFERS ON OCEAN AND RIVER CRUISES

CLICK HERE



FLIGHT OFFERS

FREE CITY EXTENSION

NEW TO VIKING SAVE \$200



CHECK OUT OUR
EXPERIENCE OF THE
DINING ON BOARD
NORWEGIAN ENCORE

Travel Daily

Travelport COO

TRAVEL tech company, Travelport, has announced the appointment of John Elieson as its new Chief Operating Officer.

The role, based in the company's global headquarters in Berkshire UK, will see Elieson take over the company's growth strategy, sales organisation and M&A agenda.

Prior to his appointment, Elieson was President and CEO of Radixx International.

US downgrades Oz

THE US Govt has downgraded its Australia travel advisory to the lowest level of "exercise normal precautions", after last week increasing the warning to level two amid the country's bushfires.

The advisory now recommends US travellers exercise increased caution in areas affected by bushfires and air quality issues.

Google refreshes travel

GOOGLE has updated its travel planning features to include a suite of new tools that help travellers decide which hotels to stay at, the best time to visit a destination, and pricing information on what you can expect to pay.

The new "Where to stay" option provides users with a summary detailing the most popular neighbourhoods, what each area is known for, a location score, and the average cost of accommodation.

In terms of planning the timing of a trip, Google's new "When to visit" tab includes information on what the weather is generally like, as well as how busy the destination is likely to be during your selected date range.

The "What you'll pay" option provides travellers with an insight

into whether rates are low, typical or high for the dates selected, taking into consideration factors that might spike prices such as conferences or sporting events.

Personalisation is also a key feature of Google's latest travel service, with results curated to prioritise listings which are similar to the types of trips a traveller has previously undertaken.

For example, users who have either searched for or stayed at a specific hotel, Google's toolkit will present options that are similar to the hotels guests have stayed in other cities on previous holidays.

Google will also present a list of hotels that are located close to points of interest a user has previously searched for.

Popular activities and day trips are listed for each destination under its "Things to do" feature, with Queensland's Gold Coast for example listing its range of theme parks and nature walks on offer.

Currently, not all destinations have been added to the new features but are expected to be added during the year.

Rail Europe training

A NEW, year-long training program has been launched by Rail Europe.

"Once Upon a Train" features a fortnightly EDM offering clues and an accompanying quiz, with agents who solve the mystery going into a draw to win a place on a famil in 2021 - more **HERE**.

MNL flights resume

OPERATIONS have partially resumed at Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport, which were suspended on Sun due to volcanic ash from the eruption of Taal volcano, located south of Manila.

More info is available **HERE**.

Infinity
MAKING HOLIDAYS EASY™

**Making
holidays
easy.**

Land | Air
| Cruise | Rail |
Sports & Events

1300 007 429

FIND OUT MORE

ATAS
travel accredited

GATE 1
TRAVEL™

Hiring Again! Assistant Operations for Inbound groups at Gate 1 Travel

Join Gate 1 and be part of the success of our expanding inbound operations team in Melbourne.

Are you a highly organised with strong negotiating skills? Do you have in-depth product knowledge of AU & NZ & enjoy logistical challenges?

Previous inbound tour operations experience is a huge advantage.

If this sounds like you, email Kim at kerskine@gate1travel.com for more information.

Reward your customers when they fly for business

Qantas Business Rewards members can earn up to 1,000 bonus Qantas Points on every eligible flight booked between 13-20 Jan, for travel by 29 Feb 2020. That's on top of the points and Status Credits earned by the flyer.

Plus, any customer that joins by 29 Feb 2020 will be rewarded with a share of 10 million Qantas Points.

[Learn more](#)

*For travel by 29 Feb 2020. T&Cs apply.

ONLY | BUSINESS
WITH | REWARDS 

Eur, SA up for Bunnik

BUNNIK Tours' 25th anniversary celebrations has been buoyed by early returns of double-digit growth in the European market, and a strong rebound in South America, co-founder Dennis Bunnik revealed to **Travel Daily**.

Bunnik noted the company was yet to see the impact of the fire season in Australia, but was boosted by results through to the end of 2019.

"We're seeing Europe up 10-12%," Bunnik said.

"Africa is doing really well... South America is starting to sell really well again which is nice after a few lean years, and the Middle East has been selling really strongly."

Bunnik said South American inquiries were down previously due to negative press generated by the Olympics, but was beginning to make a comeback, with Australians becoming more confident exploring the region.

"There were some security issues in Rio, the Zika virus, and there was a massive upturn in business pre-Olympics, so post-Olympics people are wondering if they want to go there."

He said the rest of South America, Peru, the Galapagos, was starting to sell well again.

"Australians are starting to realise you can do South America in pieces, you don't have to do the whole continent one trip, whereas before, if there was a problem in one part of South America, they wouldn't go at all," he explained.

"Now you can see it in sections, the same way you would Europe or Asia."

Bunnik Tours and Small Group Touring Co are poised to reap the success of the hike, with Bunnik reinforcing his businesses' commitment to stick by destinations despite lulls in business.

Secure
your seat

22 April 2020

CLICK HERE TO PURCHASE TICKETS
AND VIEW THE SPONSORS

Travel Daily



Sustainability
SUMMIT

Aurora's new prog

AURORA Expeditions has released its 2021/22 program which runs across the line's two new expedition ships, the *Greg Mortimer* and the *Sylvia Earle*, which will launch in Oct 2021.

Aurora Expeditions Global Head of Marketing Victoria Primrose said the delivery of *Sylvia Earle* gives the line the ability to widen its offering.

"Whilst polar voyages remain core to the program, we have introduced new itineraries and destinations such as Ireland and Costa Rica which will offer our customers breathtaking experiences in some of the most biodiverse and impressive places on the planet."

Aurora Expeditions is running an earlybird sale offering savings of up to 30% on new bookings made and deposited by 31 Mar, or until sold out.

To download the full 2021/22 program, **CLICK HERE**.



Window Seat

AS THE saying goes, never work with children or animals - and it seems the sentiment could also be attributed to certain travel adventures.

Data released by Southern Cross Travel Insurance has revealed a list of the strangest travel insurance claims for 2019, with one of the more bizarre stories lodged by a 33-year-old woman, whose handbag was stolen and hurled off a cliff in Ubud, Bali, by a cheeky monkey.

In another case, a 58-year-old woman visiting South Africa came across a puff adder snake that was coiled up and hissing outside her accommodation.

In her panic, the woman ran into a closed door, breaking her nose to the tune of a painful \$4,000...ouch.

FEEL THE PULSE OF NEW CAL

nouvelle calédonie
Pacific heart

Discover New Caledonia's amazing landscapes!

HAPPY NEW CALEDONIA SALE

#BoardNow FLY TO NOUMEA FROM

\$499*

Ex SYD, BNE and MEL

LEARN MORE

Sale ends 24 January 2020.
Travel until 31 October 2020.

*Seasonal surcharges and blackout dates may apply.



Aircalin
New Caledonia



www.aircalin.com

Chimu appoints

CHIMU Adventures has appointed Ben Goschnick as its National Sales Manager, after nine months at Chimu as Relationship Manager for NSW, ACT and Tas.

MEANWHILE, Chimu is offering up to 40% off a range of expeditions until the end of Feb.

Lockout laws end

SYDNEY'S lockout laws were repealed early this morning, with extended trading hours expected to "provide a boost for the night time economy", according to NSW Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, Stuart Ayres.

Changes now in effect include extended bottle shop opening hours across NSW; a removal of the 1.30am last entry for all venues in the Sydney CBD Entertainment Precinct; and an extension of "last drinks" at venues with good records in this precinct by 30 minutes.

Natural Hab offsets

NATURAL Habitat Adventures has announced it will offset a year's worth of carbon output for anyone who joins one of the 2020 trips from the company's new 35th anniversary series - Climate Change & the Wild World.

In order to do so, Natural Habitat will partner with South Pole to fund three community and conservation projects, including the construction of wind farms in India.

The initiative follows the "smash success" of the company's Zero Waste Adventure (**TD** 18 Sep 18).

Air Serbia NDC

AIR Serbia has attained a Level 2 NDC (New Distribution Capability) certification, claiming it is among the first airlines in south east Europe to do so.

The airline also announced from next year it will offer a portal to distribute its product, including tickets and all additional services.

AAT drives donations



THE AAT Kings team (pictured) have delivered care packages filled with toiletries, first aid kits, clothes, food and drinks to Hanson's Bay Wildlife Sanctuary on Kangaroo Island, which has been devastated by bushfires.

The care packages from AAT Kings will assist Hanson Bay's six local staff members who lost their homes and belongings in the fire.

According to reports, around 25,000 koalas have perished on Kangaroo Island along with thousands of kangaroos and many other native wildlife.

Hanson Bay requires aid to rebuild and regenerate the vegetation so it can take care of

the wildlife that survived, and to fund the sanctuary.

CLICK HERE to visit the Hanson Bay GoFundMe page to make a direct donation.

SQ and MasterCard

SINGAPORE Airlines has extended its partnership with Mastercard with the launch of KrisFlyer Experiences.

The program allows KrisFlyer members and Mastercard holders to use their miles on "specially curated activities" and enjoy "privileged access to events", including culinary, entertainment, arts and sports.

The back to holidays sale

Book a Virgin Australia flight or holiday package, add a Velocity Frequent Flyer number and register details at specials.virginaustralia.com/au/everyone-is-a-winner and your client could win[^].

Prizes up for grabs:

- 1 Return Economy Class flight for two to Tokyo
- 25 Domestic Business Class upgrades
- 25 Short Haul International Business Class upgrades

+ every client who makes an eligible booking during the sale, adds their Velocity number and registers their details will receive a \$30 Virgin Australia Holidays gift voucher[^].



*The Promoter is Velocity Frequent Flyer Pty Ltd (ACN 601 408 824) of registered address 56 Edmondstone Road, Bowen Hills, Queensland 4006. The Promotion commences at 00:01 AEST on 13 January 2020 and ends at 23:59 AEST on 21 January 2020 (Promotion Period). Entry is open to Australian residents who are Velocity Frequent Flyer members, and 18 years of age or older, except employees (and their immediate families) of the Promoter, its related bodies corporate and agencies associated with this Promotion (Entrants). To enter the Promotion, Entrants must, during the Promotion Period: (1) make an Eligible Booking; (2) enter a valid Velocity membership number at the time of making an Eligible Booking; and (3) enter their membership details on the entry form at <https://virg.in/5U9>. An Eligible Booking is a new Virgin Australia marketed and operated flight or a Virgin Australia Holidays package, which contains a Virgin Australia marketed and operated flight that is ticketed. A Virgin Australia Holidays package must include a minimum of flights and accommodation to be an Eligible Booking. An Eligible Booking excludes AFL Travel, Supercars Travel and Mystery Breaks holiday bookings. There will be 1 Major Winner and 50 Runner Up Winners. The Winners will be notified within 2 days after 29th January 2020 directly by email. All eligible Entries will receive a \$30 Virgin Australia Holidays gift voucher for use on any Virgin Australia Holidays bookings which include one or more components of travel related services or to use towards a Virgin Australia Holidays 'Experiences' booking. There is no minimum spend required and a redemption period of 12 Months applies. The Major Prize is one (1) return Economy Class flight for two (2) people flying Virgin Australia departing from any Australian capital city to Tokyo. Twenty-five (25) Domestic Business Class Upgrades for one (1) person on a booking flying Virgin Australia. Twenty-five (25) Short haul International Business Class Upgrades for one (1) person on a booking flying Virgin Australia. Upgrades are subject to Redemption fare availability and must be redeemed within 90 days. The average total prize value is AUD\$42,323.25 (including GST). The Prize is not exchangeable, transferrable and cannot be taken as cash. If the connecting flight schedules requires accommodation, this will be at the expense of the Winner. All bookings for Virgin Australia Holidays packages are subject to the Virgin Australia Holidays Terms and Conditions <https://virg.in/5Uy>. View the full Virgin Australia Holidays Voucher Terms of Use <https://virg.in/5UF>. Flights on Virgin Australia are subject to the Virgin Australia Conditions of Carriage <https://virg.in/4MR>. The Velocity Member Terms and Conditions <https://virg.in/UMz> apply. Full competition terms and conditions can be accessed at <https://virg.in/5UT>. Authorised under SA Permit Number: T19/2107, NSW Permit Number: LTPS/19/40811 and ACT Permit Number TP19/04859.

AFTA UPDATE

from Jayson Westbury



THE new decade is upon us and 2020 has kicked off with some very sobering news around the fires that have

engulfed our nation, and very sadly taken the lives of so many.

It is a dreadful situation that the country finds itself in and of course we are only half way through summer.

As some containment and a softening of weather conditions provides much needed signs of hope, the travel and tourism industry has become a new story line which is close to us all, but also very important for the nation and our industry.

Domestic holidays are something that the travel agency community has sold for years and continues to sell.

This fact is often a surprise to govt and other stakeholders, as it is the media who has said "it's all done online direct these days", which of course we in the travel game know is not actually true.

But having said that, the issue for fire-impacted regions that fall within hamlets that may not be internationally known, or contained within a domestic wholesaler's/tour operator's brochure that will really need the help.

And, in some cases the building and reconstruction of facilities and infrastructure is only just beginning.

So the question for the travel eco-system is: "what can we do to help?" As small regions in NSW, Victoria and South Australia look to market and outline what they can offer and what is open

and available, it is something for the travel agency community to keep an eye on if we are able help people look to support these areas where possible with a holiday or visit.

Over the coming weeks, I suspect more will be announced and done by the industry and the government, and AFTA will be sure to be supporting and updating when we can.

The second sobering news for 2020 is the appointment of administrators to Excite Holidays.

This is yet another difficult situation for those travel agents who held bookings with Excite and what they now must do to re-accommodate clients. There are many and very serious questions that must and will be asked going forward with this company and while Excite was NOT an ATAS accredited entity, AFTA will ensure that due process is followed in finding out the truth.

For the past few months the behaviour of this company is in question, and while agents have been left holding the pieces, it is good to note that many of the groups and other platforms are offering to help where they can.

I do also note that as Excite was not ATAS accredited, there is no cover from the ACS Scheme and I just hope that impacted agents have taken some form of business process that will allow them to alleviate some of the exposure to loss that I am sure many have now found themselves in.

Certainly not the kick off to the year that we were all hoping for and let's just say, my hope is that things can now only get better for the year ahead.

Vasco da Gama goes west



CRUISE & Maritime Voyages' (CMV) *Vasco da Gama* made her debut in the Western Australian port of Fremantle yesterday, a visit that forms part of her inaugural Australasian season.

"We are proud to be welcoming *Vasco da Gama* into Fremantle today for the first time...it is expected that 7,200 guests will travel on CMV cruises departing [the city] this season," said the cruise line's MD Dean Brazier.

The vessel had already visited other major WA cruise hubs such as Albany (pictured) and Busselton for the first time, with plans to also make three visits to Broome this season.

Fremantle will also be the location for CMV hosting its Fringe on the Water event on 01 Feb, an occasion Brazier said represented a first for cruising.

"This is something that, to our knowledge, has not been done on board a cruise ship before and consequently has attracted much media...interest," he said.

The Fringe on the Water event will see a combination of circus acts, roving performers, live music and DJs entertaining guests on board during an overnight experience.

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US0.690

FOREIGN exchange investors are tipping the Aussie dollar to fall in the wake of the ongoing bushfires, believing it will have a significant drain on the country's economy.

The damage bill for the disaster is anticipated to run into the billions and this is in turn expected to harm consumer sentiment in important spending sectors such as retail and tourism.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.690
UK	£0.531
NZ	\$1.041
Euro	€0.612
Japan	¥75.88
Thailand	฿20.83
China	¥4.759
South Africa	9.943
Canada	\$0.901
Crude oil	US\$64.98

Carnival Chair gives

CARNIVAL Corporation's Chairman Micky Arison has pledged over \$1.5 million to help school children affected by Australia's bushfire disaster.

The generous donation, made via the Micky and Madeleine Arison Family Foundation, will see UNICEF Australia granted \$1.2 million, and the Australian Red Cross Disaster Relief and Recovery Fund receive \$350,000.

The foundation will also support a separate project to help Australia's wildlife recover from the devastation of the fires.

INDEPENDENT DOESN'T MEAN ALONE.

At Express Travel Group we know how hard independent travel agents work. That's why we provide tools and support for over 700 agents across Australia. We make sure you have everything you need to improve backend efficiency and boost profitability. Join us today to improve your customer satisfaction and grow your business, all while remaining fiercely independent.

Learn how we can help at etg.travel/joinus



**Express
Travel Group®**



ACCREDITATION PARTNERS