

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news including our PUZZLES.

CHOICE takes aim

CONSUMER advocate CHOICE is calling for banks to cap interest rates on Virgin Velocity credit cards at 10%, while the Velocity program is not fully operational.

"While many of the banks have ceased selling new Virgin Velocity credit cards, existing card holders face high interest rates up to 20.74% in legacy Virgin products," CHOICE banking expert Patrick Veyret said.

"There has been no relief for existing Virgin velocity credit card cardholders."

Despite Virgin Australia's administrators remaining positive on the future of Virgin Australia, yesterday shortlisting a small number of "well-funded" bidders and the carrier reopening some redemption options on its Velocity Frequent Flyer program on Fri, CHOICE has asserted that the "value of Virgin Velocity points remains in limbo".

Qld allocates \$50m

QUEENSLAND Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk has allocated an extra \$50m to support tourism businesses, theme and animal parks.

Separately, The Premier warned Qld's border with NSW could remain closed until at least Sep.

QF middle seat to stay

QANTAS and Jetstar say social distancing is not practical on board, but the carriers will introduce a range of safety and sanitation measures under a "Fly Well" program from 12 Jun.

The program will see a higher level of disinfection and sanitation & reduced contact, but Qantas Group Medical Director, Dr Ian Hosegood said social distancing on an aircraft was not practical.

"Given the low transmission risk on board, we don't believe it's necessary in order to be safe," he said, emphasising the risk of catching coronavirus on an aircraft was extremely low due to the cabin air filtration system, people not sitting face-to-face and the high backs of aircraft seats acting as a physical barrier.

The program will see all passengers provided with masks and sanitising wipes, asked to limit movement around the cabin, enhanced cleaning of aircraft, simplified service and catering and sequenced boarding and disembarkation to reduce crowding.

Pre-flight initiatives include contactless check-in and self-serve bag drop use being strongly encouraged, physical distancing and increased disinfection of Qantas Lounges, installation of hygiene screens wherever practical, and hand sanitising stations made available at departure gates.

The airlines have also revised their booking policies in preparation for easing of domestic travel restrictions.

Customers who wish to change an existing Qantas or Jetstar international booking (excluding trans-Tasman) for travel between 01 Aug-31 Oct will be able to request a flight credit by 30 Jun.

These credits can be used to rebook travel across domestic and international services by 31 Dec 2021, with Jetstar credit vouchers to allow up to two years to travel from issue date.

Qantas and Jetstar will waive the change fee one time for travellers who book a domestic flight between 21 May and 30 Jun, for travel between 12 Jun and 31 Oct.

If a flight is cancelled by the airline, customers will be rebooked on the next available flight at no additional cost, or they can choose a flight credit or a refund.

Club Med new tool

CLUB Med has developed a new free marketing tool for agents called the Club Med i-frame.

The tool embeds Club Med marketing on a website, which is then updated in real-time by the resort operator's marketing team.

Three versions of the tool are available to choose from.

For more info on the Club Med i-frame, **CLICK HERE**.

APT brand campaign

APT has developed a new brand campaign with media partner Nine Network which aims to inspire future travel.

The campaign has the tagline "Here's to getting back out there" and will feature across television, BVOD (broadcaster video on demand), digital display, social & print media over coming weeks.

The campaign's message will be "we will travel again, and APT will be with you for every step of the journey" and will encourage travellers to get in touch with their travel agent.

Agents can download assets for the campaign, for more, head to **ATG CONNECT**.

Air NZ boosts flts

AIR New Zealand will restart its Wellington-Queenstown route on 28 May and is also adding additional flights between Auckland and Queenstown.

The airline will operate a daily return service between Wellington and Queenstown between 28 May-02 Jun, as well as a daily return service on 05 Jun and 7 Jun using its A320 aircraft.

From 12 June Air NZ will operate three return Wellington-Queenstown A320 services a week on Fri, Sat and Sun.

Air NZ GM Networks Scott Carr noted that the requirement for physical distancing services meant the airline would need to see strong demand for seats in both directions.

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The advertisement features a row of puzzle pieces at the bottom, each showing a different scenic landscape: a snowy mountain peak, a sunset over a field, a close-up of purple flowers, and a night sky with a starry galaxy.

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The advertisement includes a map of Nouvelle Calédonie and a photo of a woman in a tropical setting holding a large hat.



LIVE in Paris

This weeks LIVE Instagram chat with Zarina in Paris, tomorrow at 5pm



QR status match

QATAR Airways is offering the opportunity for top-tier loyalty scheme members of rival carriers to join its Privilege Club program with 12 months of complimentary matched status.

The offer applies to frequent flyers with Virgin Australia's Velocity program as well as loyalty program members of Emirates, Etihad, Singapore Airlines, South African Airways and Turkish Airlines.

After the first year of matched status, a further 12 month tier extension is possible by earning 50% of the Qpoints usually required.

The rare promotion ends at midnight Doha time tomorrow, and may be popular with Aussies because QR's Oneworld membership means Virgin Australia Gold and Platinum members would gain reciprocal access to Qantas Clubs worldwide - see qatarairways.com.

IHG's new "Clean Promise"

INTERCONTINENTAL Hotels Group has announced a range of new cleaning protocols and service standard for a post-COVID-19 world.

The global IHG Clean Promise, set to formally debut on 01 Jun, has been developed in partnership with health and hygiene experts Cleveland Clinic, Ecolab and Diversey.

CEO Keith Barr said "the future of travel may look different, but a safe, secure stay is fundamental to deliver true hospitality - and that will never change".

He said the new measures included deployment of enhanced, highly visible and more frequent cleaning, plus new approaches to food and beverage.

Building on the 2015 launch of the IHG Way of Clean, the enhanced protocols will see reduced contact at check-in along with sanitiser stations, sanitised keycards and paperless checkout.

In guest rooms there will be visible verification of sanitised items such as glassware and remote controls and new laundry protocols, while public areas will undergo additional deep cleaning and the implementation of best practice for pools, fitness centres and hotel lounges.

Each property will have Clean Champions appointed to continue building the "culture of clean," while guidance and resources are being developed in partnership with the Cleveland Clinic including updated training and certification for hotel staff.

VAH downgrade

RATINGS agency Moody's has downgraded the credit rating of Virgin Australia Holdings to "C" after the carrier missed a 15 May payment on US\$425m worth of bonds, following the appointment of voluntary administrators.

TG downplays bankruptcy reports

THAI Airways International has debunked widespread reports overnight that it is about to seek bankruptcy protection.

Prominent sources including *Reuters* quoted a government spokesperson saying TG would file a plan for restructuring its business with bankruptcy courts in Thailand and the USA.

The carrier subsequently issued a statement clarifying that its formal Board resolution "does not conform to the news".

A rehabilitation plan has already been approved by directors on 17 Apr, and ratified by the State Enterprise Policy Committee.

"At the present, our rehabilitation plan is currently underway to present to the Cabinet for further rehabilitation resolution," the carrier said.

The restructuring plan proposes cuts in staff, fleet and flights, plus a US\$1.7 billion bailout loan.

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Ultramarine floated

QUARK Expeditions is celebrating the float-out of its new *Ultramarine* from the Brodosplit shipyard where it's under construction in Croatia.

The 200-passenger vessel is currently on schedule for a planned debut in the Canadian Arctic in 2021.

More details in today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

QF IASC requests

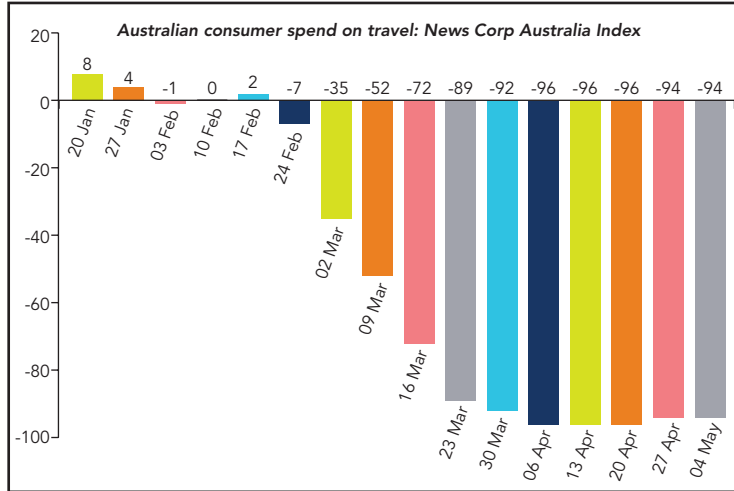
QANTAS has lodged International Air Services Commission (IASC) applications seeking the renewal of 2016 determinations allocating capacity on the Philippines and New Caledonia routes, with the IASC inviting other applications for capacity on the routes.



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"Genuine increase" in spend



EXCLUSIVE

THE latest travel spending data from News Corp Australia (pictured) confirms the slight uptick revealed in last week's data - but while looking insignificant is actually indicative of a possible start to an upturn.

New Corp Industry Head, Travel, Omri Godjin said the results last week included regular periodic payments to some hotel groups relating to timeshare properties - whereas this week's figures are a "genuine increase".

All of the sub-sectors tracked by News Corp - including air, cruise, OTAs, tour companies and accommodation - showed an uptick, with direct sales to the accommodation sector recording

QT Auckland 2020

EVENT Hospitality Limited has confirmed that the tenth property in its QT Hotels portfolio will open in Auckland, NZ later this year.

QT Auckland is a conversion of the former Viaduct Harbour office building into a 150-room hotel, creating a "new hub of quirky luxury," according to Event GM Operations NZ Simon White.

Full details of the design have not been released at this stage.

The lowering of COVID-19 restrictions in NZ has allowed construction on the project to resume, with a planned opening in the fourth quarter of 2020.

the largest spending increase.

The increased interest reflects a bump in consumer confidence following lockdown restrictions being eased in some states.

However the difference is less than 1%, with the travel and tourism sector still reeling as the hardest hit industries due to the coronavirus pandemic.

News Corp tracks the data based on credit card spending, with sub-category breakdowns available to CEOs and CMOs if that is of interest.



Window Seat

COVID-19 has led to some pretty strange adaptations to the "new normal," but this one is quite out of the ordinary.

A South Korean soccer team has been forced to issue an official apology after allegedly filling empty stadium seats with blow-up sex dolls in an attempt to maintain a competitive atmosphere for players.

FC Seoul was hosting a home match against rivals Gwangu FC at Seoul World Stadium last weekend, and with no crowds allowed to watch due to coronavirus lockdowns officials decided to spice things up.

The club's abject apology claimed the whole thing was just an unfortunate mix-up, with intention to use retail store clothing mannequins.

However fans viewing the match on social media noted that some of the dolls were also holding signs promoting a Seoul adult supplies outlet.

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Travel Daily

Agency brings travel to clients



BOUTIQUE agency Melbourne Travel Project has found a neat way of helping feed their client's appetite for travel, from the comfort of their homes.

The Mornington Peninsula-based agency is now offering Virtual Reality (VR) Travel Headsets using Google Cardboard.

Previously the family owned small business was offering the technology in-store as a "try before you buy" experience for clients but is now selling the headsets on its website for \$36.

"We wanted people to still experience some of the freedom that travel brings and remind them of what is possible when they decide to plan their next

holiday" Melbourne Travel Project owner Matt Coyle said.

The headsets allow clients to explore 80 experiences in VR, from cruising the streets of Cuba in a vintage convertible, a hot air balloon ride in Cappadocia, Turkey, and a Wingsuit Skydive over Dubai.

Coyle is **pictured** providing a demo of a headset.

Carnival layoffs

CARNIVAL Corporation is undertaking a combination of layoffs, furloughs, reduced work weeks and salary reductions to help it manage costs during an extended pause in guest operations due to COVID-19.

The move will save the company hundreds of millions of dollars a year and follows Carnival Corporation's pause of guest operations in early Mar.

Carnival Corp said it would continue to pay commissions on cancelled cruises & on future cruise credits when guests rebook.

In a message to the local team, Carnival Australia President Sture Myrmell expressed regret about the changes, which will take effect from 01 Jun and 01 Jul.

Last week both Holland America Line President Orlando Ashford and Seabourn President Rick Meadows announced they would retire at the end of May.

Hilton China open

HILTON has reopened all of its hotels in the Chinese Mainland as its first step in a global recovery process.

"We are seeing demand gradually return to China starting with domestic travel, and green shoots of recovery across the wider region as countries begin to ease restrictions," said Hilton President Asia Pacific Alan Watts.

Last month Hilton announced a partnership with Reckitt Benckiser and Mayo Clinic to elevate hygiene practices during guest stays (**TD** 28 Apr).

Having trouble unpacking the government stimulus packages and how they can help your business? Read the May issue of *travelBulletin*.

CLICK to read

travelBulletin



AFTA UPDATE

from Tom Manwaring on behalf of the AFTA Board



IT IS with deep regret that the AFTA Board accepted Jayson Westbury's resignation last Wednesday.

The Board* has a clear charter – to act in the interests of AFTA and our AFTA members at all times.

Jayson's contribution to AFTA and to our industry at an Australian and global level is significant.

He has championed this organisation and Australian travel agents for 13 years, often at great personal cost with time away from his young family.

He has led our sector through the transformation to industry self-regulation with many other game-changing initiatives.

Jayson has been fearless and tireless in his advocacy at all political levels.

One of Jayson's other key contributions is his success in building, mentoring and supporting an incredibly talented, connected and committed team at AFTA.

Our AFTA operational team is exemplary, each bringing their own skills and expertise and each having benefited from working alongside Jayson.

Almost without fail, each of the team have commented on Jayson's generosity, loyalty and passion in supporting their own professional development.

It is this fact that makes it very easy for the Board to commit to you that it is business as usual.

The recruitment process for the incoming CEO will commence this week. Candidates will need to appropriately represent the diversity within our sector.

The Board is very grateful to AFTA's Head of Strategy & Finance Courtney Duddleston for accepting the role of Acting GM Operations while recruitment is underway.

These are challenging times.

On top of COVID-19, we have all had the frustration and disappointment at some mainstream media reluctance and/or refusal to accurately report the role of travel agents in the supply and refund chain.

This has, wrongly, led to travel agents being abused and threatened.

We know this makes you angry.

It certainly makes us angry.

While the AFTA "The Facts on Refunds" campaign to spotlight the good news stories continues to gain traction, we continue to explore additional opportunities to get the word out.

Thank you for your feedback, thoughts and recommendations and for sharing them with us and the AFTA team in a mainly constructive, open and respectful way.

Thank you for your understanding that we have, and will continue to act in the interests of this organisation so that AFTA can continue delivering for you.

Know that we all remain determined to keep delivering initiatives and support that drive real benefit your way.

Know that we continue to lobby hard so the key decision makers at a Federal, State and Territory as well as consumers know the reality we all face, and the critical role travel agents will play in Australia's economic recovery.

Know that work continues seeking both JobKeeper extensions and protection from chargebacks for agents.

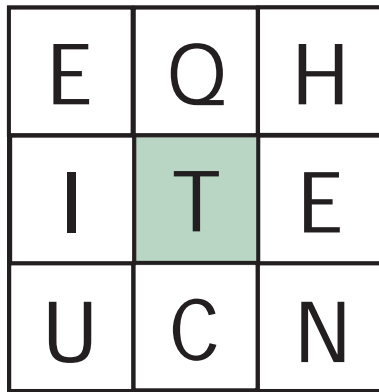
These are stressful times for all of us. By continuing to work together, we can and will emerge stronger.

Next Tuesday's update by the AFTA team will cover key initiatives to tackle member challenges and weekly team priorities.

*To learn more about your AFTA Directors please visit www.afta.com.au/afta/our-role.

Unscramble

HOW many words can you make out of these nine letters? Every word needs to include the centre letter, have four letters or more and not be a proper noun or a plural. You can only use each letter once.



Good – 17 words
Very good – 25 words
Excellent – 33 words

NOTE: We've used Chambers Dictionary to decide what words are acceptable.

Where in the world?



THIS golden statue has become so popular that usually there's a line of people waiting to take their picture with it.

Not only that, but there is a replica in Shanghai - a testament to the statue's fame.

Do you know where the original is located?

Check tomorrow for the answer.

ANSWERS 18 MAY

Pub quiz: 1 The Running of the Bulls in Pamplona, 2 Canada, 3 Nigeria, followed by China, Japan and then the U.S., 4 Vietnam, developed by the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War, 5 The Bridge of Sighs, 6 Simon Bolivar, 7 Qatar, 8 France, 9 True, 10 Athens, 11 Toronto (toe + ron + toe)

8	6	1	3	5	7	2	9	4
2	3	7	4	6	9	5	1	8
9	4	5	1	2	8	3	7	6
6	2	4	5	7	1	9	8	3
7	5	8	9	3	2	4	6	1
1	9	3	6	8	4	7	2	5
4	7	9	8	1	5	6	3	2
5	1	6	2	9	3	8	4	7
3	8	2	7	4	6	1	5	9

Funnies Flashback



WE'VE trawled through the **TD** Window Seat archives to give you blast from the past. Here's some gems from 06 Jul 2011:

THIS probably won't appear in inflight amenities kits. A new razor has gone on sale in the US priced at US\$100,000. The Zafirro Iridium is made of metal extracted from a meteorite, and has solid white sapphire blades which are claimed to last forever.

The manufacturer says the razor is hypoallergenic and extremely sharp, because it's sharpened using high energy ionised particles.

Just 99 of the special shavers will be produced, with Zafirro CEO Hayden Hamilton claiming the product is a "quantum leap forward in razor technology".

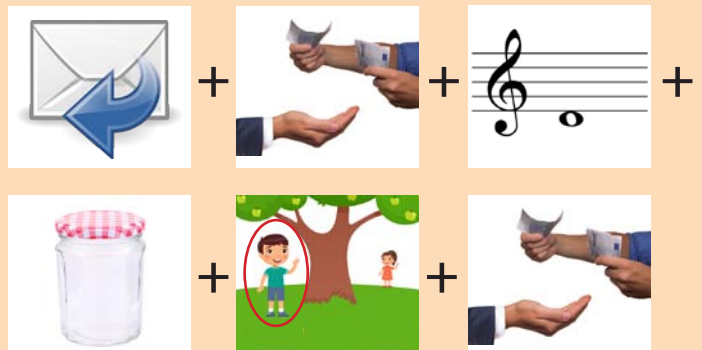
Bored passengers on Emirates flights between now and 31 Dec can while away some of the time by putting in a bid for a priceless watch in a charity auction being conducted globally by the carrier.

On offer is a limited edition 18 carat red gold Montblanc Nicolas Rieussec TimeWriter.

Most of the bids are likely to come from up the front of the plane, with the price starting at a meagre US\$45,000 - but as well as the special watch the auction winner will receive two First Class EK tickets to Geneva for a stay at the luxurious Montblanc Chateau in LeLocle.

Pub quiz

1. What heart-warming invention was first created in Finland and has since become a term to describe anywhere with intense heat?
2. What country's postage stamps are marked 'Magyar Posta'?
3. What country was historically referred to as Cathay?
4. Which continent on average is the windiest?
5. What African mountain was formerly known as Kaiser-Wilhelm-Spitze?
6. Which country is referred to as the birthplace of civilisation?
7. What type of bean is the main ingredient in the Egyptian dish Ful Mudammas?
8. What animal is depicted on the German coat of arms?
9. What is Alaska's most populated city?
10. Which ocean can be reached from Bolivia along the Paraguay River?
11. What South American city is this collection of pictures spelling out?



TD's quiz a hit in Queanbeyan



MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US0.650

THE Australian dollar has skyrocketed off the back of a strong day in US share markets, thanks to positive news about a potential COVID-19 vaccine from drug company Moderna.

The US Dow Jones index was up 911 points, or 3.9%, overnight, with the market up more than 1,800 points since Thu's lows, with the Aussie piggybacking on the heightened sentiment.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.650
UK	£0.533
NZ	\$1.072
Euro	€0.596
Japan	¥69.93
Thailand	฿20.73
China	¥4.586
South Africa	11.87
Canada	\$0.903
Crude oil	US\$34.81

QUEANBEYAN City Travel has taken our advice and added some appropriate libations to their daily afternoon tea time, which sees the agency's staff vie for supremacy in the *Travel Daily* puzzle pages.

In fact there was quite a bit of outrage a couple of weeks ago when we mixed things up a bit on page five and left out the quiz.

Fortunately that's all past us now, with agency owners Jenny and Jim Cooper sending through the photo **above** of yesterday's puzzling session.

She noted that the team don't cheat by searching Google.

"But thank God for desk maps.

"There have been many days with many wrong answers...or as we like to say, wrong questions," Cooper added.

Eurowings schedule

EUROWINGS will expand its flight schedule from Jun by adding 40 new destinations in Europe to its flight schedule, including Naples and London.

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Visit Britain virtually

VISITBRITAIN has announced a two-day "virtual exhibition" to showcase the UK's business events product offerings.

"Meet GB Virtual" will take place from Tue 23 Jun in partnership with MeetEngland, VisitScotland Business Events, Meet in Wales, Tourism Northern Ireland and the London Convention Bureau.

More than 60 UK suppliers are taking part across the event, with live chat available and 10 pre-scheduled virtual meetings for buyers - visitbritain.com.

More in today's issue of *Business Events News*.

Finnair plans for Jul

FINNAIR will begin adding frequencies and routes, including long-haul, back into its network from Jul, when the carrier says it expects aviation to begin its gradual recovery.

Long-haul operations will commence in phases from Jul, with the carrier to begin flying to Beijing, Hong Kong, and Shanghai in Greater China (subject to government approval); to Nagoya, Osaka and Tokyo Narita in Japan; and to Singapore, Seoul and Bangkok.

In Aug, Finnair will start flights to Delhi and to New York, and in Nov to Tokyo Haneda airport.

It also has flights to Miami, Krabi and Phuket during the winter holiday season and will review its schedule on a monthly basis and update it as travel restrictions are removed and demand starts to recover.

QR adds PPE suits



QATAR Airways has announced that its flight attendants will wear disposable full body protective suits during flights, along with modified service protocols to reduce interactions between passengers and crew.

Effective from next Mon all QR passengers will also be required to wear face coverings, while all social areas aboard the carrier's aircraft have been closed to enforce social distancing.

Large bottles of hand sanitiser are being made available for both cabin crew and passengers, and aircraft are being regularly disinfected.

Doha Airport has also deployed fully autonomous mobile UV-C emitting disinfectant robots.

Other measures include enhanced sanitisation of linen, blankets and headsets, while crew rosters have been modified so two groups are being dispatched on short- and medium-haul flights - the first to manage the outbound sector and the second for the inbound flight.

For long-haul destinations crew members who have to stay overnight in a foreign city may only travel in QR-approved transport, and must remain in their rooms and limit human interactions.

For confidential tip offs, connect with *Travel Daily* via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click [HERE](#)

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