

## Bench waits for rain

**BENCH** Africa said the COVID-19 pandemic has forced it to fine-tune its strategy and bid a “sad farewell to a few cherished members of our close-knit team”.

GM Cameron O’Neill said it had been a very painful process, and that those who had left are “the same individuals we will look to rehire when we can ultimately return to business as usual”.

“Bench Africa remains in a stable financial position as we await the inevitable end to restrictions,” O’Neill said, noting the gradual reopening of African borders amid strict protocols.

He said Africa is perfectly set up for post-pandemic travel, with open spaces, low population density and experience in containing health issues.

Likening COVID-19 to a drought, he said Bench would be around to see the rain wash away the dust.

“We may be leaner, hungrier and a little irritated that the rain took so long, but we will be here”.

## ATAC steadies the ship

**EXCLUSIVE**

**THE** Australian Travel Agents Co-operative (ATAC) conducted its virtual Annual General Meeting late last week, with Chairman Ken Morgan telling *Travel Daily* he was “very heartened” by the amount of positivity in the room from members.

“As a board, we really set out to highlight how strong our position is...we had a terrific first nine months, in fact it was probably another record if you compared it with the first nine months the previous year,” he said.

“Overall our TTV ended up flat, which is not a bad result considering where some other travel organisations have ended up,” Morgan added.

Despite the challenging headwinds created by the coronavirus, ATAC was also able to maintain a healthy financial return for its members, while ensuring the group’s viability for

the next two years.

Members were told they would receive “a touch under a million” in overrides, only a mild drop from the \$1.2 million paid out last year, as well as four air payments, earnings on calendar year contracts and a 12% interest on shareholdings.

“I think any group at the moment would be really happy if they were getting money and I don’t know if there are too many other groups out there that are actually paying bonuses,” ATAC GM Michelle Emerton said.

The buying group also revealed it has ramped up efforts to maintain important touch points with its members throughout the ongoing health crisis.

“From a head office point of view, our workload has increased by 25% because we have been very conscious of communicating with our members about...getting legal advice from lawyers, letting them know how they can talk to their customers around things like refunds & credits,” Emerton said.

Meanwhile, ATAC’s recently launched ATAC360 intranet resource now houses an increased volume of helpful resources, including industry updates & expert HR advice.

### Today’s issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news including our PUZZLE page and a full page from **Tourism Malaysia**.

## Norwegian extends

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line

Holdings today announced that its Norwegian, Oceania and Regent Seven Seas brands have extended their current cruising pause for another month, through until 30 Nov - more in today’s issue of *Cruise Weekly*.



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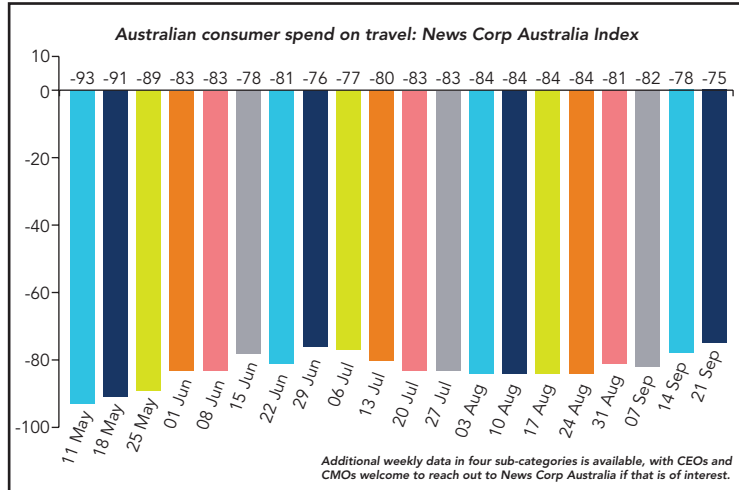
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## Spending improves 3 pts



### EXCLUSIVE

**CONSUMER** spending on travel for the week of 21 Sep reflected improving sentiment across the board as state border restrictions begin to be relaxed.

The exclusive News Corp Australia figures (pictured) are

### Disney memories

**DISNEY** Destinations is offering travel consultants the opportunity to win one of 30 Disney Plush characters commemorating the 65th anniversary of Disneyland.

To enter, send a photo of your favourite Disney memory, or alternatively a pic of how you're keeping the Disney magic alive at home during COVID-19.

Entries are open until 20 Oct and can be emailed through to [WDPDR.DisneyDestinations.AUNZ@disney.com](mailto:WDPDR.DisneyDestinations.AUNZ@disney.com).

based on credit card spend with major brands across accommodation, air, cruise, OTAs, travel agents and tour operators.

The weekly results also came amid school holiday planning, according to News Corp Managing Director Food & Travel Fiona Nilsson, who said further breakdowns of the figures for WA residents saw travel intent focusing on NSW and the USA, as well as intrastate destinations.

### Calgary webinar

**DESTINATION** Canada will tomorrow host two 30-minute sessions on the Calgary Stampede, giving travel consultants the lowdown on "The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth".

The webinars take place at 8.30am and 11.30am AEDT - to register [CLICK HERE](#).

## New NZ role for Leanne Geraghty

**AIR** New Zealand this morning announced the appointment of Leanne Geraghty to the newly created position of Chief Customer & Sales Officer.

Geraghty is well known to the Australian market, having led NZ's local operations for some years, before returning to Auckland where she has held several roles including Regional GM for NZ and Group GM - Airports.

She will report directly to the airline's Chief Executive Officer Greg Foran, who described Leanne as "an outstanding leader with a tremendous depth of industry knowledge, having worked in the aviation and tourism industries on both sides of the Tasman for over 30 years."

"Her detailed knowledge of the New Zealand, Australian and Pacific Island markets in particular sets us up well for the post COVID-19 international tourism recovery when the time comes," Foran said, noting the deep regard in which she is held.

Air NZ has also announced the pending departure of its Chief Financial Officer, Jeff McDowall, towards the middle of 2021 after the completion of a planned capital raising by the airline.

Foran said Air NZ would shortly commence a global search for a successor to McDowall, whose illustrious career with the airline included acting as CEO prior to Foran's commencement this year.

## WA regional push

**THE** Government of Western Australia is backing the state's biggest ever regional flight sale, with 50,000 discounted fares offered from Perth to Broome, Exmouth and Kununurra.

Partnerships with Qantas and Virgin Australia "will deliver a vital economic boost to the northern WA tourism regions who were hardest hit by COVID-19," according to Premier Mark McGowan and Minister for Tourism Paul Papalia.

The flights are being funded under a \$21.4 million Regional Aviation Recovery Program, and tickets can be booked through travel agents or online.

## Thanks, teacher!

**QATAR** Airways is celebrating World Teacher's Day by giving away 21,000 complimentary tickets to teachers across the globe, to thank them for their work in educating young people during the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The giveaway is on now and will close at 03:59am on 08 Oct GMT+3, with teaching professionals able to receive a unique promo code by registering for the offer at [qatarairways.com/ThankYouTeachers](http://qatarairways.com/ThankYouTeachers).

Teachers from over 75 countries where QR operates are eligible, with each nation to receive a daily allocation of Economy seats staggered over the three day campaign period.

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## Viagogo fined \$7 million

**THE** Federal Court has ordered event ticket reseller Viagogo to pay \$7 million in penalties for making false or misleading representations and breaching the Australian Consumer Law.

The court found that in 2019 the company falsely claimed to be the “official” seller of tickets to live music and sports events, as well as not disclosing significant fees including a 27.6% booking levy.

The proceedings were brought by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), with ACCC Chair Rod Sims saying “Viagogo misled thousands of consumers into buying tickets at inflated prices when they created a false sense of urgency by suggesting tickets were scarce and when they advertised tickets at a lower price by not including unavoidable fees.”

Examples included a ticket for *The Book of Mormon* advertised

at \$135 but sold for \$177.45 including booking and handling fees, as well as Ashes cricket tickets advertised at \$330.15 which were actually sold for \$426.81 after fees were added.

The judge in the case described some of the false representations as being made on an “industrial scale,” with Viagogo’s responses giving it “the appearance of being a company that is indifferent to the interests of Australian consumers and which prefers to elevate its own profit motives above those interests”.

As well as the fine, Viagogo was ordered to undertake a compliance program and pay the ACCC’s legal costs.

The Commission has conducted a long-running campaign against Viagogo’s business practices, which last year also saw Google ban the website from its top search results (**TD** 19 Jul 2019) but then allowed it to return some months later (**TD** 04 Dec 2019) after Viagogo purchased its main rival StubHub from Ebay.

## FJ out until Dec

**FIJI** Airways has further extended the suspension of its international operations, with GDS screens now indicating planned resumptions from 01 Dec including flights from Nadi to Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Auckland and Christchurch.

Booking systems also indicate that FJ services to Honolulu, Los Angeles and San Francisco will recommence operations from 11 Jan 2021.

## Thai medical plan

**MEDICAL** groups in Thailand have requested the government to allow direct international flights to dedicated quarantine spa and resort locations for medical tourists, suggesting Samui, Phuket, Chiang Mai and U-Tapao as part of an attempt to revive the country’s visitor sector.

## AFTA UPDATE

from the Australian Federation of Travel Agents

**AS YOU** would be aware, on 28 August AFTA lodged its Pre-Budget Submission which set out a compelling case for the Federal Government to provide a Travel Agent Support Package of \$125 million

as well as a range of additional business measures.

An essential ask if our industry is to get through to the other side of COVID-19 safely.

Today the Federal Government will announce its Budget and whatever the outcome AFTA remains committed to rebuilding and restoring the travel sector to greatness for both Australian consumers and its employees.

We would like to thank everyone for taking up the calling and participating in the National Mobilisation Program.

We were overwhelmed by the determination and passion of members and their commitment to meeting with their local Federal MP. Your voice matters.

This is the first battle in the war to rebuild and re-establish the travel sector.



Through your efforts we have started to build momentum and it is evident that the plight of travel agents, tour operators and wholesalers is being heard by government.

This is the first time they are truly hearing and understanding your needs so we must let our efforts continue.

Let your voice continue to be heard by meeting with your local Federal Member. This process does not need to and must not stop. We must continue to let our stories be heard.

AFTA will continue to work constructively with government at all levels, irrespective of political persuasion and we continue to work with state government to secure funding support and other important measures which will ease the financial burden on members at this time, including commercial tenancy relief.

This is a difficult time for all and getting as many businesses as possible safely through COVID-19 is our top priority.

## Airbnb seeks US\$3b

**AIRBNB** is pressing ahead with plans for a public listing, with *Reuters* reporting expectations the company will float after the upcoming US election.

The accommodation sharing platform hopes to raise US\$3 billion by selling shares in about 10% of the business, which will value the company overall at around US\$30 billion.

The business also looks to be persevering with the listing despite previously revealing its 2020 revenue will be down by about 50% year-on-year.

## Two new Kimptons

**INTERCONTINENTAL** Hotels Group last week added two new Kimpton hotels, with the debut of the Kimpton Maa-Lai in Bangkok and the Kimpton Shinjuku Tokyo.


The new Bangkok property marks the brand’s South East Asian debut, while the Tokyo hotel is also the first ever Japanese Kimpton.

Kimpton’s Asian expansion includes upcoming openings in Bali next year, followed by Suzhou in 2022 and then Hong Kong, Shanghai, Nanjing and Kuala Lumpur in 2023.

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### APT Indochina

APT has launched its Vietnam & Cambodia season for 2021.

The program includes a brand new ship, *Mekong Serenity*, to cruise the Mekong River, as well as another Luke Nguyen cruise, with the celebrity chef hosting a tour in the region in Nov 2021.

*Serenity* also boasts the on-board Indochine by Luke Nguyen restaurant where guests can feast inside a private dining room seating 16 people, with an exclusive five-course menu designed by the eponymous chef.

The ship has been designed with some of the largest entry-level suites among vessels cruising the Mekong River, with all suite categories including a private balcony.

Bookings made prior to 28 Feb on trips of 13 days or more will save \$2,400 per couple - for more on the season, [CLICK HERE](#).

### Harwood heads off

**LEANNE** Harwood, who has led InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) in Australasia and Japan for the last three years, is set to take a new Dubai-based role, IHG this morning confirmed.

The move which will see her leave Australia next month to become the company's Managing Director for India, Middle East and Africa.

She will take the role vacated by Pascal Gauvin, who is retiring.

### Perry chat tomorrow

**SPACES** are still available for tomorrow's interview session with Hurtigruten Cruises MD Damian Perry, with *Travel Daily's* Bruce Piper to discuss the company's response to COVID-19 and other challenges experienced over the last few years.

See [thetravelindustryhub.com](http://thetravelindustryhub.com).

**REMEMBER** the good old days, about six months ago, when we were able to check out aircraft, cruise ships and hotels with impunity?

This lucky group of Queensland corporate agents were treated to a taste of that last week when they were hosted on an inspection by Alliance Airlines Sales Development Manager Michelle Nickelson and the

Alliance's National Sales Manager Alex Ananian-Cooper.

As well as checking out the interior of the F70 and F100 aircraft, they were treated to a 15-minute joyflight over Brisbane in a Fokker 70 private jet, which is currently available to charter.

Alliance is undergoing rapid expansion in Queensland, and recently commenced services from Brisbane to the Whitsundays and Moranbah as well as Maroochydore-Cairns flights, and last week announced two weekly flights from Canberra to Maroochydore and Cairns.

### SIA Star connection

**SINGAPORE** Airlines has today become the launch airline for the digital version of the Star Alliance Connection Service.

Introduced in 2017 to facilitate time critical flight connections between Star Alliance member airlines (**TD** 11 Sep 2017), the Connection Service has until now required dedicated staff support to assist affected passengers to transfer between flights.

The new digital version of the Star Alliance Connection Service is embedded within the Singapore Airlines' mobile app, providing updated transfer information and "intuitive navigation services" to guide pax through major hub airports without further intervention.

Information includes the optimum route from the arrival to the departure gate including the distance and time required, and in the case of critical connections passengers receive a digital "Express Connection Card" allowing expedited passage through certain checkpoints.

The initial release focuses on Heathrow Airport's T2, and will expand to other transfer-intensive airports in the future.

### GC "Play Money"

**DESTINATION** Gold Coast is incentivising the region's residents to explore their own backyard with a \$1 million campaign offering them cash to spend on local tours, attractions and experiences.

The Play Money promo unlocks exclusive discounts for residents of up to \$50 on products which will be listed on a special website from 9am this Fri.

Smaller discounts of up to \$10 are on offer to visitors from outside the region.

### QF cancels Nov

**QANTAS** has begun cancelling future international flights, which had remained live in its schedule despite CEO Alan Joyce saying the QF international fleet is likely to be grounded until Jun 2021.

Most Nov services have now been removed from GDS, along with several routes through until 28 Mar 2021 including Bali, Santiago, Jakarta and Vancouver.

## 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](mailto:brochures@traveldaily.com.au).



#### Kirkhope Aviation - 2021 Air Tour Guide

Kirkhope Aviation has gone to press with its 2021 Air Tour Guide. The program celebrates almost 50 years of small group Australian air adventures, with more than 50 set departures and bespoke itineraries available. The brochure also details trips to some of Australia's most iconic destinations, with itineraries including A Weekend in Strahan, a Weekend in the Gawler Ranges, a four-day Bass Strait Islands trip, a Birdsville Big Red Bash voyage, a three-day Broken Hill Adventure sojourn and a 13-day Cape York Safari.



#### Collette - 2021-22 Worldwide Travel Guide

Collette's new 2021-22 Worldwide Travel Guide provides a range of 145 exciting new tours including destinations as diverse as Alaska and New Zealand. A highlight of the brochure is seven new exploration small group tours, which all feature boutique accommodation and multi-night stays. These include three new Italian experiences, bringing Collette's total number of offering in the country to 18. Other new inclusions are an Alaska's Northern Lights tour, a Netherlands, Belgium & France journey and an African Safari, visiting Kenya and Tanzania.



## Where in the world?



**THIS** tidal island and commune is a UNESCO-listed World Heritage Site and is usually visited by over three million people each year, despite the island only having a population of 30.

The island is only accessible by foot during low tide meaning it

was easily defended from outside attacks during the Middle Ages.

Over its 1,300-year history the island has served as a monastery and a jail.

Do you know where in the world this is located?

Check tomorrow for the answer.

## Pub quiz

1. What airline is Japan's flag carrier?
2. What is the second-largest city in Norway after Oslo?
3. Which city's skyline are you admiring if you are standing atop Gellert Hill?
4. Which American state has the longest coastline?
5. Mudgee is located in the valley of which river?
6. What is the most populous neighbourhood of the Gold Coast?
7. Is Fiji a Melanesian, Micronesian, or Polynesian country?
8. Brisbane's cultural precinct of South Bank is located in which neighbourhood?
9. How many countries does the Danube River flow through?
10. Mildura is often intrinsically linked with what fruit?
11. What place in Australia is this collection of pictures spelling out?



+



+



## 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.

E	A	P
T	N	R
M	N	E

Good – 24 words

Very good – 36 words

Excellent – 48 words

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

## World Egg Day



**EGGS** are such a versatile food, it's only right that we have an entire day to celebrate them.

World Egg Day is held every year since 1996 on the second Fri in Oct, this year falling on 09 Oct.

The day celebrates not only chicken eggs, but also fish eggs or caviar, which are a symbol of luxury, along with Easter eggs and Faberge eggs and any other

famous eggs.

The International Egg Commission suggests that in celebration of the day you consider the places that eggs hold in the hallways of history, while also commemorating it by consuming these excellent sources of protein, holding an egg and spoon race or have an omelette making competition.

### ANSWERS 02 OCT

Pub quiz: 1 Hawaii, 2 Tahiti, 3 Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, 4 Brunei, 5 2008, 6 Navarra, 7 Harbour Bridge, 8 Over 17,000 islands, 9 South Africa, 10 Burnett River, 11 Jeju (jay + Jew)

Unscramble: anode, anted, atoned, attend, attended, dado, date, dated, dead, deaden, dean, deed, denote, denoted, dent, dentate, dented, detonate, DETONATED, donate, donated, done, dote, doted, dotted, ended, need, netted, node, notated, noted, teed, tend, tended, tented, toad, toed, toned, toted

Where in the world: Charles Bridge, Prague, Czech Republic

## Lux NSW accomm

**NEW** luxury accommodation Marramarra Lodge has just debuted on the edge of its namesake national park in New South Wales.

Located just under an hour from Sydney, Marramarra Lodge is accessible only via the Hawkesbury River, and is all-inclusive.

Only eight Peninsula Tents and six Hawkesbury Bungalows are offered, with the Lodge also featuring an on-site restaurant, Budyari, where breakfast, lunch and dinner are all prepared by a Michelin-starred chef.

Also on offer are a day spa, a billiard room, conference facilities and more.

## Tassie set to open

**TASMANIA** has announced it plans to open its borders to safe and low-risk COVID states and territories on 26 Oct.

Premier Peter Gutwein said the decision was based on public health advice, with Tasmania to open to all but Victoria and New South Wales, with the latter state to be assessed over this week.

"If at any time the situation changes in these jurisdictions and the advice is that the risk is increasing or too high, then we won't hesitate to change this decision," he said.

Gutwein added the decision would aid Tasmanians in their vacation planning, as well as the country's airlines.

## APT sweeps up reality TV



**WITH** Australia's reality television season conveniently coinciding with a raft of state-based coronavirus lockdowns, APT Travel Group decided to make the best of a bad situation.

The company has this year been hosting a range of sweepstakes, starting with *Survivor*, which was followed by *MasterChef*.

APT recently ran a sweep for the top rating reality TV hit *The Bachelor*, with participants from across the business connected with weekly updates.

The group has even occasionally

gather together (remotely) to share in all of the fun as a group - **pictured** are some of the stylish costumes and backdrops.

## MONEY

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

**AU\$1 = US0.715**

THE AUD is at a two-week high against the USD, gaining 0.2% ahead of an announcement on interest rates from the Reserve Bank of Australia.

The decision is due later today, with another cut expected, while the Australian Federal Budget is also due tonight.

The Australian dollar's gain against the US dollar was also helped by big hikes in American sharemarkets.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.715
UK	£0.551
NZ	\$1.073
Euro	€0.607
Japan	¥75.78
Thailand	฿22.30
China	¥4.765
South Africa	11.80
Canada	\$0.945
Crude oil	US\$39.27

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## QR fights the Big C

**QATAR** Airways has partnered with Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) to raise awareness of breast cancer prevention.

Coinciding with Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Qatar will run a 30-day long series of Think Pink awareness-building activities.

The program includes awareness-raising aspects, including health-education webinars, free mammograms for staff and fundraising events.

Proceeds will be donated to the Qatar Cancer Society, with QCS Chairman Khalid bin Jabr Al Thani delighting at QR's involvement in the cause.

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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