



Neil Kirby
Travel Masters

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Mint signs FCTG

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's Independent Division has appointed Mint Payments as its official EFT provider, with the platform to launch early next month followed by the delivery of a "seamless solution integrated with the group's choice of mid-office system shortly thereafter".

It's an extension of FCTG's existing relationship with Mint, which already provides the division's credit card payments gateway.

The new MintEFT solution (**TD** 03 Aug) has been launched as one of several alternative systems to the eNett B2B EFT platform, which closes down today.

Helloworld Travel earlier this month also selected Mint Payments as its exclusive payment provider (**TD** 13 Aug).



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Webjet "delivering results"

PARTS of Webjet Limited's business have returned to profitability over the last two months, with CEO John Gucsic this morning confirming the company's post-COVID strategy is "delivering results and the company will be operating cash flow-positive for the first half of financial year 2022".

Gucsic said the WebBeds division was profitable in Jul and Aug, with strong demand as travel restrictions ease in North America and Europe "suggesting significant upside as more international markets reopen".

Locally the Webjet OTA was also profitable during the Apr-Jul quarter, but has been subsequently impacted by the current lockdowns in Australia and New Zealand.

However the company is confident of a rebound as soon as the markets reopen, he said.

"We see a world of opportunity for Webjet...all our businesses

have significant potential to grow market share by expanding into new market segments and benefiting from consumers shifting to buy travel online," the company's CEO added.

He said transformation initiatives were also set to reduce costs by at least 20% once the business returns to scale.

"While the exact timing is uncertain as our growth opportunities are driven by the opening of borders, we know demand for travel will return and we are absolutely ready to capture it," Gucsic enthused.

LGBTIQ+ challenges

NEARLY half of LGBTIQ+ travellers in Australia revealed they have experienced some form of discrimination when travelling, according to new research from Booking.com.

The research also found that half had endured "less-than-welcoming" experiences while staying at commercial accommodation, while 61% indicated that travelling as an LGBTIQ+ person impacts how they behave with their significant other when travelling together.

Despite the concerning data, the vast majority (89%) of LGBTIQ+ travellers surveyed believe that the majority of the experiences have been welcoming, and one in three had enjoyed a great first impression on hotel arrival.

Treasurer's warning

FEDERAL Treasurer Josh Frydenberg has issued a stern warning to the state premiers baulking at the idea of keeping domestic borders shut even when key vaccination targets are met.

Frydenberg said Australia wanted to avoid a scenario where travellers could be able to fly to Canada or Singapore but not to places like Perth or Cairns.

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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news.

Nara in the spotlight

TOURISM Exchange Japan has enlisted the help of marketing agency Gate 7 to promote the Asian nation as a future travel destination for Australians.

The contract win will see the agency deliver a travel trade and communications strategy to heighten awareness of select Japanese destinations not typically visited by Aussies, such as the Nara Prefecture, referred to by citizens as "the cradle of Japanese civilization".

Located in central Japan south of Kyoto, Nara is home to historic monuments, sacred sites, and mountain range walking tracks.



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Vic prepares for restart

THE Victorian Government has revealed that eight new tourism projects will share in \$1.9 million from the state's \$10 million Enabling Tourism Fund.

Among the recipients will be the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to further develop tourism appeal at the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Budj Bim Cultural Landscape in south-west Victoria, while \$306,000 will be allocated to progress a wine and craft beverage project in partnership with the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Institute of Gastronomy and Good Food in Daylesford has received a \$200,000 injection in the pursuit of bringing together culinary, hospitality, and tourism experts under the one roof, while the Cowes to Stony Point Ferry will receive \$200,000 towards a Cowes Jetty feasibility study, \$125,000 will advance the UNESCO City of Design Geelong Gallery initiative that will aim to attract new exhibitions, and the Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village in Warrnambool has been given \$110,000 to plan for better tourism appeal at the western end of the Great Ocean Road.

Close to \$100,000 will also be allocated to a regional Victoria Live Music Census and Infrastructure Audit, designed to foster future investment to support the live music industry

across the state.

"It's important that we invest in new ideas and back our iconic attractions to become even more compelling drawcards for visitors," Victoria's Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula said.

"A strong pipeline of projects is vital as the industry moves through this extremely challenging period and businesses plan for recovery and new opportunities," he added.

A competitive round of the Enabling Tourism Fund will be announced later in the year. The Fund forms part of the \$633 million Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan, a strategy to drive annual visitor expenditure to \$35 billion and tourism sector jobs beyond 300,000 by Jun 2024.

TA details impact

A NEW series of destination profiles across the country compiled by Tourism Australia reveal the full impact of the first year of COVID restrictions have had on domestic tourism.

The reports showed that Sydney suffered a 67% drop in spend during 2020 compared to 2019, while hotel occupancy also fell by 65% over the 2019/20 period.

Meanwhile Melbourne witnessed a 70% plummet in spend last year, while domestic inbound flights dropped by 24%.

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Blue Lagoon delays

BLUE Lagoon Cruises has been forced to delay the resumption of its sailings through to 31 Oct, citing the likelihood that travel to Fiji appears unlikely to resume prior to Nov.

"Should any announcements be made regarding Fiji reopening its international borders prior to this then we will certainly revise our dates of operation and send out schedules accordingly," the cruise line said.

Funds currently held for any guests who were due to travel between 01 Jun 2020 and 31 Oct will be held in credit for travel any time up until 31 Mar 2023.

Vista looks stylish

OCEANIA Cruises has unveiled its top-of-ship library and Owner's Suite available aboard *Vista*, styled in furnishings and artwork from the designer Ralph Lauren.

"The Owner's Suites and Library are signature elements of our brand and having them styled exclusively in Ralph Lauren Home elevates them into truly iconic spaces," Oceania Cruises President and Chief Executive Officer Bob Binder said.

Air NZ flies more

AIR New Zealand saw a 55.4% increase in passengers carried in Jul when compared to the same month last year, with 1.08 million travellers hopping aboard its jets for the period.

Passenger load factor for the month was recorded at 70.9%, a 13.7 point bump on Jul 2020.

The airline's recent financial report for the 12 months to 30 Jun showed a short-term focus on improving the domestic value it offers its customers.

"We have reimaged our domestic business, increasing the choice of flight times and introducing greater price differentiation for peak and off-peak flying," Air New Zealand's CEO Greg Foran said.



Window Seat

PERHAPS the greenest form of travel ever is being offered on the streets of Glasgow, at least that's what posters taped to lampposts in the city suggest.

Hop on, hop off piggyback tours are being heralded by the mysterious flyers as being more environmentally sound than taking the bus and certainly faster given the heavy traffic.

The posters also claim the piggyback tours always feature friendly and hygienic carriers who will come to you so you needn't be forced to head to a designated city centre spot to await your human horse.

However despite many people on social media pondering the merits of the idea, it seems the offer for clean human transport is the work of an offbeat artist called Themisfortuneteller, with the site offering visitors a healthy dose of "dark therapy" at a premium price.

Other services include personally scribed party messages for events that "deliver the sweet sting of truth to you and your guests, whatever the event, just give me a few minutes and, after consulting my crystal ball, I'll pen a personalised dark prophecy and gift it to your guest, ready to frame."

I think we will stick with the DJ and smoke machine at this stage thank you very much.



Travel Daily

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Untamed Tasmania

CROOKED Compass' new seven-night Untamed Tasmania tour promises "deep cultural immersion" ideal for private groups, friends or couples.

Priced from \$13,700 per person, twin share and departing across two dates next year (06 Mar and 13 Nov), highlights include a private jet journey to Tasmania's north east, land visits with the Indigenous Lutruwita people to learn about bush tucker and cultural history, as well as a stay at a lightkeeper's cottage.

Trips start in Hobart and travel north to Launceston - for further info, [CLICK HERE](#).

New Bali resort

THE 85-room Anantara Ubud Bali Resort will open its doors in mid-2022, marking the brand's third resort on the Indonesian island of Bali.

The property will feature several restaurants showcasing local produce, an infinity swimming pool, a gym and fitness facility, as well as large meeting spaces.

The resort's design is inspired by local vernacular architecture that infuses Hindu traditions with Javanese elements.

Globus loves some trash talk



AUSTRALIAN staff at The Globus Family of Brands bid good riddance to bad rubbish for Keep Australia Beautiful Week which took place between 16-22 Aug.

Despite lockdowns preventing the company from getting together for a joint effort at the same time, the diligent travel brand still had plenty of staff out in the field doing their bit for the environment and keeping the country clean.

Employees took the seven-day Plastic Pledge to refuse single-use plastic into their lives, as well as many recycling soft plastics at their local Woolies to worm farms

and picking up rubbish at the local park.

Pictured: Globus' Director of Marketing Chris Fundell showing the kids how it's done.

SA upgrades ports

IN A win for Kangaroo Island businesses, the South Australian Government has announced \$22 million will be spent upgrading the Cape Jervis and Penneshaw ports that service ferries to the popular tourism destination.

The expenditure will see new and improved berthing and mooring infrastructure installed at the ports, a move the state government said is designed to reduce the risk of regular and longer shutdowns.

"Effective, capable and reliable port infrastructure...is critical to the welfare and economic success of Kangaroo Island, as a critical sea link between the island and the mainland for cars, freight and passengers," SA Transport Minister Corey Wingard said.

EU blocks US travel

THE European Union has recommended that American travellers should be banned from entry to its 27 member states after a rise in COVID-19 cases in the United States.

Europe began opening up to the US in May but a surge in Delta cases has raised entry concerns.

Agents key to cruise

THE role that travel agents will play in resurrecting the cruise sector in Australia and New Zealand, particularly in the expedition space, will be "huge", Ponant's Chairman Asia Pacific Sarina Bratton believes.

Speaking at an online forum organised by CLIA on Fri, Bratton said the reason for this was because travel advisors have historically been the prime movers for cruise bookings.

"We're talking about a domestic restart of cruise and 90% of the business is booked through travel agents, as against where there has been all of the govt subsidies to do domestic flights here or vouchers there and how much flows through our valued travel agents? Very little," she said.

"So I want [agents] to feel confident that we are always there at the table backing you, trying to get you up and running again as well," Bratton added.

The senior Ponant executive also lamented the impact the cruise ban has had on Indigenous communities who rely on revenue from cruise support services.

Crystal resumes Euro

CRYSTAL River Cruises has marked the resumption of European river operations as *Crystal Ravel* set sail this week from Vilshofen on a seven-night Danube itinerary featuring calls in Germany, Austria and Hungary.

Following in her wake is sister ship *Crystal Debussy*, which departed overnight from Basel on a seven-night Rhine itinerary with calls in Switzerland, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

"The effortless luxury and relaxation of river cruising seems perfectly designed for the moment in which we find ourselves, allowing our guests to escape to a world of natural beauty along Europe's rivers, highlighted by great art and history," the line's Senior VP Walter Littlejohn said.

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France bubbles toward World Cup



AUSTRALIANS WILL BE ALLOWED TO TRAVEL WHEN WE REACH 80% OF THE POPULATION VACCINATED, SO LETS

#givetravelshot
#letsgetto80



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- 2 Use the social media hashtags
- 3 Access our toolkit of assets
- 4 Tag us: the best post wins a gift card

IN ANTICIPATION of France hosting The Rugby World Cup across nine cities in 2023, Atout France is celebrating two years to go with a competition for agents, with one mega-sized 15 litre Mumm Champagne up for grabs valued at around \$3,500.

To be in the running, register to watch respected French chef Guillaume Brahimi show you how to make the best cassoulet at home via a live Facebook cooking class taking place at 7pm AEST on 08 Sep - register to attend [HERE](#).

Travel advisors also need to participate in Atout France's Rugby Quizz competition [HERE](#), with two Le Creuset signature cast iron casseroles in the French colours of blue and red also on offer for lucky winners.

"The 2023 France Rugby World Cup is our glimmer of hope for the travel industry, as we expect Australian visitors to book at least 100,000 bed nights on this occasion - Atout France can't wait to welcome you all back," Atout's Director Patrick Benhamou said.

Pictured: Benhamou poses with the giant bottle of Mumm.

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AFTA UPDATE

from the Australian Federation of Travel Agents

TODAY is the last day of winter. It's just 116 days to Christmas. Where has this year gone?

Importantly, the green buds of international travel resuming are starting to appear and multiply.

Federal Tourism Minister Dan Tehan

confirmed a travel bubble with Singapore will be "ready to go" as soon as Australia achieves that milestone of 80% double vaxxed.

You may have seen the comments from our Chair Tom Manwaring in *The Australian* newspaper over the weekend on the growing confidence that by mid-2022, a strong travel overseas travel pattern will be in place.

This follows the announcement from Qantas that it is targeting December for a resumption of overseas flights.

We need more people vaccinated more quickly so that we reach the 80% threshold as soon as possible.

Our members are back, rolling up our (mostly Zoom) sleeves,

lobbying their local members of Parliament on the need for ongoing and wider support as well as incentives and campaigns to encourage Australians to #GetTravelReady.

The resilience

of our sector and our people is proven time and time again not just through this current challenge.

Now more than ever we need to continue to keep the fight going and we are very, very grateful for the many messages of support we receive each and every day.

We are even more grateful for the ongoing membership renewals as we keep up the good fight. There has never been a more important time for the professionalism of our industry sector to continue to meet the daily challenges.

The near future will confirm the needs of our travel-consumers will be best served by us!

Without a travel agent you are on your own.



Disney price surge?

THE cost of purchasing Disney theme park tickets is expected to increase by 104% over the next 10 years, according to a study conducted by online timeshare website Koala.

The conclusion was based on historical price rises recorded from the time Disney's parks first opened, with future prices calculated using the same upward cost trajectory.

Walt Disney World Resort in Florida topped the list as likely being the most expensive in 2031, with adult tickets tipped to cost US\$253.20 each - an increase of 7,134% since opening in 1955.


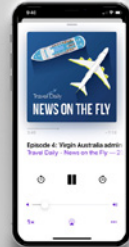
Disneyland Resort in California is also predicted to cost \$224 per person by 2031.

Humans beat tech

FOUR in five Americans say they would prefer to plan future travel via a travel agent over an online travel agency, according to a recent survey from Internova Travel Group.

The study found that 71% of US travellers preferred a travel advisor to provide travel recommendations or request an upgrade on a flight, while 57% stated they trusted a human more to provide access to the best travel discounts.

Two in three respondents said agents were more likely to give them a pathway to exclusive events and experiences, while 52% of Gen Zs revealed they would consider using an agent for the first time on their next trip.

Catch up on the news of the week

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

WA tourism support

THE Western Australian Government has announced new support initiatives for tourism businesses in Kalbarri National Park affected by Cyclone Seroja. Help will come in the form of the waiving of tourism operator licence fees for the 2021/22 financial year, as well as \$250,000 to support the redevelopment of public infrastructure.

"Tourism businesses in Kalbarri have already been doing it tough during the pandemic and this has been worsened by the devastating impacts of Cyclone Seroja," WA Environment Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson said.

Bring on mate of origin!



MANY of them may be in lockdown and enduring the biggest challenge of their respective careers, but nothing could stop personal travel managers from TravelManagers getting together online for some fiercely contested digital trivia fun and games.

The competition, which is conducted via the Kahoot app, attracted 64 keen participants in the first round, each with the dream of bringing glory to their home state thanks to a State of Origin-style format.

Recently holding the first round of the cognitive competition (pictured), the event was organised by Noree Kahika who is TravelManagers' Business Partnership Manager for Northern New South Wales, Southern Queensland and the NT.

Kahika explained that many participants had "high expectations" of victory this

time around, especially with reigning champion Luke Vaughan temporarily in Toronto, Canada.

But little did agents know, Vaughan's commitment to online quizzes is second to none.

"Luke wasn't going to let a little thing like a fourteen-hour time difference stop him from notching up another victory," Kahika laughed, adding that he logged on from Toronto at 2am local time and "put in another huge performance", scoring the maximum 30 points on behalf of his home state of Victoria.

"Although this year I am half a world away in Canada, nothing was going to stop me from helping to defend our Victorian crown," Vaughan beamed.

"Our 2020 State of Origin trivia competition was so much fun and a brilliant way to connect with my colleagues when we couldn't catch up and celebrate as usual," he added.

Google enlists Klook

GOOGLE has enlisted Hong Kong-based online travel marketplace Klook to be a partner for its newly introduced Things to do initiative, designed to give travellers easier access to a wider range of tour operators.

Google things to do is a display feature that allows consumers to discover and compare prices across activities and attractions globally, where travellers can book in real-time through a partner's website.

The deal follows Google's recruitment of Australian tech company Livn (**TD** 17 Aug) to be part of the things to do project.

Yacht still delayed

THE Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection has announced that its inaugural ship, *Evrima*, has been delayed once again, this time to a planned launch date from Lisbon on 06 May 2022.

The vessel's first sailing has been a long time coming, with the cruise arm of the famous hotel brand initially announcing its intentions in 2017 to hit the water for the first time toward the end of 2019 (**TD** 23 Jun 2017).

However, the brand has encountered numerous issues in the manufacture of the vessel, delaying the launch date multiple times citing issues at Spanish shipyard Hijos de J Barreas as the reason in 2019 (**TD** 03 Oct 2019).

More recently, the impact of COVID-19 restrictions has been the cause, with the line stating it "remained excited" about *Evrima*'s launch next year.

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.729

THE AUD jumped higher on Fri as the US Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell signalled the country had no immediate plans to reduce its bond-buying program.

The AUDUSD gained 0.9% as a result and the AUDEUR also climbed mildly by 0.6%.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.729
UK	£0.531
NZ	\$1.042
Euro	€0.618
Japan	¥80.21
Thailand	฿23.67
China	¥4.717
South Africa	10.679
Canada	\$0.919
Crude oil	US\$72.70

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Travel Daily
www.traveldaily.com.au

Travel Daily is part of the Business Publishing Group family of publications.

Produced each weekday since 1994, Travel Daily is Australia's leading travel industry publication.

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