

## Travel Daily on location in Fiji

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Tourism Fiji and Fiji Airways, which are celebrating the reopening of the nation to tourists this week.

**HAPPINESS** has long been used to promote Fiji, and there's certainly lots of it around this week as the country reopens.

Every person working in the country's resorts seems to have a permanent smile on their face, joyful at being able to return to work after 20 long months of pandemic border closures.

And the joy isn't just limited to hoteliers, with Fiji's 100% double-vaccinated tourist-facing transport operators, activity providers, taxi drivers and even shop assistants set to share in the economic afterglow of the reopening.

## FJ debuts new product

**THIS** week's reopening of Fiji is due in no small part to a determined plan by Fiji Airways CEO Andre Viljoen to persevere through the pandemic.

Viljoen has been on hand to personally welcome arrivals, with FJ ramping up capacity to 80% of pre-COVID levels in an aggressive push to capitalise on the extensive safety protocols in place across Fiji's tourism sector.

"It's been a tough journey," he told *Travel Daily*, with the last 20 months seeing FJ scramble to raise financing, manage repatriation and cargo flights - but also invest in new product.

The carrier now has medically-qualified Customer Wellness Champions on board every international flight, and has also launched a suite of new products and benefits including boosting the Economy class passenger allowance from 23kg to 30kg.

On selected long-haul and

medium-haul services, it's also now possible to purchase the My Island sleeper product in economy, allowing passengers to stretch out and relax across an entire row - with a Business class-sized pillow, mattress topper, extra blanket and seat belt extension.

New complimentary "Our Ocean, Our Life" activity packs and books are being offered to passengers aged two to 12 years, while in-flight dining has been overhauled by newly appointed Fijian-NZ chef Richard Cross to oversee all catering functions across the carrier, including in the Fiji Airways Premier Lounge at Nadi International Airport.

As well as this week's Bula Bubble flights from Australia and the US, Viljoen confirmed Singapore would become a Fiji Travel Partner country later this month, while talks are also in place to expand the scheme to include Hong Kong and Japan.

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today has six pages of news plus a full page from CAPA.

## More menu options

**OCEANIA** Cruises has revealed several new menus in its Privee private dining rooms aboard the line's *Marina* and *Riviera* vessels.

Options include a degustation menu, wine pairing menu, best of Oceania Cruises menu, and best of Polo Grill & Toscana menu.

## US travel changes

**THE** US Government has tightened up travel rules for all inbound international arrivals, mandating that all passengers obtain a test for COVID within 24 hours of departure.

Mask mandates have also been extended on all domestic flights and public transport through to at least 18 Mar, with the move motivated by a cautious approach to the new Omicron variant.

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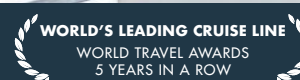
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## Nova steel cut

**SILVERSEA** Cruises has begun construction on its first Nova-class ship *Silver Nova*, as it aims to push the boundaries in sustainable cruising.

Developed as part of its innovative newbuild program known as Project Evolution, the commencement of *Nova*'s construction at Meyer Werft in Papenburg, saw executives from Silversea and Meyer Werft mark the occasion with a traditional steel-cutting ceremony.

*Nova* is set for delivery in the northern summer of 2023, and will be the first hybrid luxury cruise ship free of local emissions at port, as Silversea aims to position itself at the forefront of sustainable cruising.

*Nova* will use liquefied natural gas as its main fuel, which will also allow her to achieve a 40% overall reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

## MH ramps up entertainment

**MALAYSIA** Airlines has tapped Moment for its next-gen in-flight entertainment platform.

The connectivity services provider for the travel industry has partnered with Malaysia to install its in-flight entertainment platform Flymingo Connect.

Put in place aboard its fleet of Boeing 737-800s, the platform enables seamless streaming of passenger devices, and also provides in-cabin connected services and automated aircraft operations.

Moment is scheduled to roll out pilot tests starting next month on selected aircraft.

## We have a natural edge



**VISIT** Sunshine Coast (VSC) has hosted a Real Talks event, as it uses its natural assets to position the region as a premium business events destination post-COVID.

More than 70 delegates attended the event at The Lakehouse Sunshine Coast, to bring together the region's business events operators and suppliers in preparation for a recovery in the meetings and incentives sector.

VSC Chief Executive Officer Matt Stoeckel said the initial recovery was likely to be cautious, with event organisers seeking destinations that could offer a "more natural" environment, along with accessibility and quality of product.

"The Sunshine Coast must play to its strengths, which are our natural assets and environment – that's what we are hearing from meetings, events and incentive organisers," he said.

"The aim of Real Talks was to bring local businesses together to hear from all sides of the industry about what is required to kick start the industry in 2022."

Stoeckel said a takeaway from

Real Talks was, during the past two years, it had demonstrated clearly those who typically attend events can learn anywhere, through online conferences.

**Pictured** at the event are IRONMAN's Geoff Meyer, Sunshine Coast Council's Brenda LaPorte, Spectacular Events's Zoe Sparks, Australasian Society of Association Executives' Toni Brearley and Nectar Creative Communications' Peta Moore.

## Undara purchased

**THE** Undara Experience, located in Undara Volcanic National Park, has been sold to G'day Group by the Collins family for an undisclosed amount.

Located on the edge of the Undara Volcanic National Park and around 275km southwest of Cairns, the property features accommodation, tours and food and beverage venues.

G'day Group said the purchased asset was an "internationally significant geological treasure" and was positioned well for tourists travelling across northern Australia from Cairns to Broome.



## Window Seat

**TRAVELLERS** considering planning a trip to Hobart can now get a sneak peak via one of the world's most famous board games.

The Hobart edition of Monopoly is now on sale, featuring major tourism hotspots like the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, the Royal Hobart Golf Club and Port Arthur Historic Site.



## Club Med expands

**CLUB** Med has this week announced its expansion into Utah at the opening of its inaugural Canadian resort.

The travel operator revealed details about a new property at Snowbasin Resort in Huntsville Utah, slated to open in Dec 2024, as it unveiled its anticipated Club Med Quebec Charlevoix.

The Utah opening will mark Club Med's first-ever five-star Exclusive Collection resort in the United States, as well as the company's first new resort in the country in more than 20 years.

Club Med has also launched an earlybird sale for Australian travel advisors, with agents able to secure the best price of up to 30% off Club Med Quebec - **CLICK HERE** for more details.



How has the pandemic impacted the way the travel sector operates, and what will remain in the emerging post-covid world? We investigate taking travel back to the future in the latest *travelBulletin*.

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## Travelport agrees

**TRAVELPORT** has reached NDC distribution agreements with International Airlines Group.

The accord will see Travelport able to offer NDC content from Aer Lingus, British Airways, Iberia, and Vueling.

By channelling its NDC content through the next-generation Travelport+ platform, IAG will be able to offer additional price points, an expanded selection of ancillary products, and intelligent storefronts.

## Agoda wholesale

**AGODA** has expanded into wholesale distribution via the Beds Network, with the aim to help properties around the world distribute their wholesale rates more efficiently and effectively.

Beds Network's partners will be able to manage multiple third-party redistribution more easily, and also gain access to around 10,000 affiliates.

## A timely support reminder

**THE** recent global impact of the Omicron variant on the travel sector is another opportunity to reinforce the critical importance of travel experts and highlights the need for ongoing support, the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) believes.

This week AFTA has updated its National Mobilisation Campaign Toolkit so that agents have the latest resources to continue government lobbying efforts to support the industry, with priorities shifting to skills and workforce renewal.

"We have revised and updated the National Mobilisation Campaign Toolkit to provide members and the broader sector with the latest tools and information they need to drive these critical conversations with their local Federal Members of Parliament," CEO Dean Long said.

"Whilst the message and call for support remains the same, the

language has changed.

"We are asking for a 'Travel Sector Skills Retention and Recovery Package' to align with the government's priorities - this is highlighted in the leave behind flyer provided in the Toolkit," Long added.

AFTA is encouraging all of its members to get in touch with their local MP using the language and messaging in the updated toolkit as soon as possible.

"The more members out there pushing our message, the bigger impact we will have in highlighting the critical importance of ongoing sector support for travel," Long said.

The resource includes assistance with scheduling a meeting, proposing an agenda, providing a list of key speaking points and a travel agent letter to the PM.

The updated National Mobilisation Campaign Toolkit can be accessed [HERE](#).

## RAC Esperance Holiday upgrade

**RAC** Group has unveiled a \$12 million improvement to the RAC Esperance Holiday Park - the most significant upgrade in its almost 60-year history.

The complete rebuild has seen the construction of a range of new accommodation options, as well as an oceanfront entertainment precinct with a heated pool, a games room, a BBQ area, an electric vehicle charging station, and brand new camp kitchen facilities.

## More puff for Billy

**A NEW** Puffing Billy Railway Visitor Centre will add steam to Victoria's tourism revival.

The new \$24.8 million facility at Lakeside railway station, which will serve thousands of visitors per week, was officially opened today by Victoria's Minister for Tourism Martin Pakula.



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## We're open for happiness



**TOURISM** Fiji has formally kicked off its latest campaign starring Aussie actress Rebel Wilson (*TD* 19 Nov), letting travellers know that the country is now "Open for Happiness".

The newly released video shows Wilson escaping the hustle and bustle of Hollywood life by washing up on Fiji's pristine shores, where she is warmly welcomed by locals with a

friendly bula greeting.

"Even more than the landscape, I love Fiji the most for its people," Wilson said upon filming the campaign.

"Everyone greets you with a smile and a 'bula', the warmth and hospitality of everyone I met is something I will always remember," she added.

Watch the full campaign video by **CLICKING HERE**.



## SeaLink launches Whitsundays trip

**SEALINK** has unveiled the details of a new Whitsundays day cruise, exploring the Molle group of islands, Cid Harbour, Hook Island, Whitsundays Passage, Whitehaven Bay, Hamilton Island and Dent Island.

The sailing, which takes place aboard the newly modified *MV Nancy Wake*, also offers passengers lunch, morning and afternoon teas served in an air-conditioned dining area, guided tours of the Hill Inlet and South Whitehaven lookouts, full bar service throughout the tour, as well as a 360° rooftop observation deck.

Adult tickets lead in at \$220 per person, with kids aged between five and 14 priced at \$165, while children under four are free.

Bookings are open now for the first cruise departure scheduled on 11 Dec - call 1300 317 445 for further details.

## Oct figures dwindle

**AIR** New Zealand carried 340,000 passengers in Oct, around half the number of travellers flown during the same month last year.

The vast majority of flights were short-haul domestic routes, with only 3,000 customers accounting for long-haul services.

## Holiday Inn Express debuts in Japan

**IHG** Hotels & Resorts has announced the debut of the Holiday Inn Express brand in Japan, with the opening of Holiday Inn Express Osaka City Centre Midosuji this month.

The property is located just minutes' walk from the world famous Shinsaibashi retail & Namba entertainment districts, and provides guests with "simple and smart travel" accommodation options, such as comfortable bedding, high-speed wi-fi and a cooked buffet breakfast.



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## CORPORATE UPDATE

### Time for a reinvention

**AUSTRALIAN** businesses are preparing to “reinvent themselves” when it comes to formulating risk strategies around future corporate travel plans, according to travel software company SAP Concur.

SAP Concur Australia and New Zealand Managing Director Jonathan Beeby said local companies were now finding new ways to adapt to sudden changes in the areas of cost control, visibility into spending, and achieving more efficient and productive teams.

“Many organisations have now accepted that the pandemic has permanently changed the business environment with the aftershocks to business expected to continue for years,” he said.

“The pandemic has underscored that adaptable organisations are much better positioned to weather any market disruption, that is why businesses are now rapidly adopting artificially intelligent technologies that support manual business processes, as well as shifting how they will manage employee travel and cost and compliance into the future,” Beeby added.

While the travel environment is far from stable, demonstrated more recently by the anxieties created by the Omicron variant, Beeby believes an overwhelming majority of businesses want to reboot corporate travel plans.

“A recent SAP Concur survey showed that 96% were willing to travel in the next 12 months, while 88% of business travellers worry that their inability to travel would hurt them personally and professionally,” he said.

Beeby added that while companies will obviously try and avoid virus hotspots while employees are on trips, part of the safety strategy will also be a need for real-time oversight about adverse external events so that businesses can pivot and respond swiftly.

“Organisations will also require visibility of the employee’s itinerary so that, if an outbreak occurs, the organisation can quickly...remove employees from areas of risk,” he said.

“On the other hand, organisations will need to balance these requirements with employee expectations for greater levels of flexibility.”

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## Did you know?

Travel & Cruise Weekly’s fortnightly consumer magazine called *Keep Dreaming* is specially designed for agents to send their clients.



## Hickman lands early Xmas gift



### Greatest biz risks

**CLIMATE** change will be among some of the top risks to business travellers in 2022, according to new data from risk assessment company Riskline.

Extreme weather events such as floods, wildfires, hurricanes, cyclones, exacerbated by climate change, are likely to cause disruption to corporate travel plans, the company noted, while the ongoing impact of the pandemic will also echo throughout the next 12 months.

More supply chain disruptions and worker shortages are tipped to continue in the hospitality and travel industries, which Travelrisk said would likely be one of the hardest hit in 2022.

For business travel to return to normality, countries will need to expand vaccination access in developing countries and combat misinformation campaigns.

Political unrest caused by voting in countries like the US & France are also listed as having a high disruption potential, while the threat of extremism also rates highly as a travel disruptor.

**AZAMARA** President Carol Cabezas has reviewed all of the amazing entries received as part of the cruise line’s *Azamara Onward* competition run in conjunction with *Travel Daily*, selecting Jonathan Hickman (pictured) from Travel on Crown as the major prize winner.

Hickman’s entry was deemed to have “brought out all the right elements” to the competition, crafting an aspirational acrostic poem about why an Azamara cruise in Europe would be so amazing to be part of, scoring himself a place on the new *Azamara Onward* vessel.

Hickman previously took out a minor round prize for his entry (*TD* 24 Nov) before being named the major winner.

**MEANWHILE** the latest weekly prize winner has been revealed as Adrienne Witteman, Managing Director of Trendsetter Travel & Cruise Centre in Northwood/Longueville in NSW.

She has walked away with a \$100 Visa e-gift card for her poem about needing an Azamara cruise to complete her bucket list.

## TRAVEL SPECIALS

**WELCOME** to Travel Specials, *Travel Daily's* Friday feature. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of, send the details to [specials@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:specials@traveldaily.com.au)

Savings of up to 25% are available on **Intrepid Travel's** extended cyber sale. Deals are valid for domestic and international trips, with the specials extended until the end of today. **CLICK HERE** for more details.

A Murray River cruise and Indian Pacific trip combo package has been released by **Cruise Traveller**, with departures from Jun to Nov 2022. The 10-night Australia by Paddlewheel and Locomotion package, which includes four nights aboard *Emmylou* and one night aboard the Indian Pacific, is available to those who book by the end of the year. The package can be booked **HERE**, or call 1800 507 777 for more information.

Share in the festive cheer with **Ponant** with its End of Year promotion, with an extra 5% off all departures with the code "XMAS21". Explore the voyages on offer **HERE**.

Boutique cruise line **Viking** is inviting travellers to celebrate Antarctica Day, and save up to \$8,000 per couple on the 13-day Antarctic Explorer voyage. Travelling from Buenos Aires from Nov 2022, the adventure takes travellers to the Antarctic Peninsula, and its towering glaciers & snow-covered landscapes. Available from \$19,995 per person, **CLICK HERE** to view the itinerary.

## WA tightens to SA

**BORDER** controls between Western Australia and South Australia have been tightened by the WA Government.

SA's risk rating to WA has been elevated from low risk to the medium risk category, seeing a hard border drawn from today.

Travel from South Australia is not permitted, and approved travellers are subject to strict requirements, such as a double doses of vaccination, a negative COVID-19 test, and self-quarantine for 14 days before further testing is undertaken.

However, any WA citizen who has recently travelled to South Australia is eligible to return under compassionate grounds.

## Crowne Plaza Phu Quoc Starbay

**CROWNE** Plaza Hotels & Resorts has arrived in Phu Quoc Island in Vietnam.

The new 308-room Crowne Plaza Phu Quoc Starbay resort is situated in the country's unspoilt Bai Dai beach.

Crowne Plaza Phu Quoc is a 40-minute drive from the Phu Quoc International, and 30 minutes from downtown.

With a philosophy of building hotels for the future, the new-look Crowne Plaza leans on design aspects that move guests seamlessly between work time and downtime, including the new 'Plaza Workspace'.

## Marriott NYE appeal

**SYDNEY** Harbour Marriott Hotel at Circular Quay is opening its doors and inviting visitors to join it for accommodation packages in the heart of the New South Wales capital this Christmas and NYE.

The hotel has curated accommodation packages for the holiday season, including two special menus on both Christmas and New Year's Eve at in-house restaurant Silvester's; an exclusive rooftop viewing of the fireworks on the 34th floor for only a limited number of guests.

For more info, **CLICK HERE**.

## Fiji targets Chinese

**TRIP.COM** Group and Tourism Fiji have deepened their cooperation with a strategic memorandum of understanding, which will aim to further enhance the nation's position as a world-class destination.

The new agreement will see both parties work together on the promotion of Fiji to the Chinese community as a destination.

Trip.com Group's deepened cooperation with Tourism Fiji also aims to support and stimulate the recovery of travel to the destination.

## WA word search

L	P	I	D	I	K	P	W	H	E	M	O	O	R	B
U	I	W	N	H	T	R	E	P	A	C	O	P	D	H
S	N	M	A	R	G	A	R	E	T	R	I	V	E	R
V	N	R	L	H	C	Q	A	K	K	O	U	Q	E	L
A	A	P	S	O	O	G	H	N	U	E	Y	G	D	J
I	C	Q	I	K	K	R	A	P	S	G	N	I	K	B
M	L	R	T	Q	W	H	T	U	O	M	X	E	X	F
Y	E	C	S	W	K	I	M	B	E	R	L	E	Y	I
E	S	R	E	C	A	B	L	E	B	E	A	C	H	B
K	L	E	N	S	H	A	R	K	B	A	Y	N	P	M
N	N	O	T	L	E	S	S	U	B	Y	F	M	M	K
O	C	T	T	Y	E	U	W	T	U	X	W	P	H	K
M	W	R	O	B	M	W	A	V	E	R	O	C	K	F
G	F	A	R	F	R	E	M	A	N	T	L	E	E	P
Y	F	R	H	V	T	L	O	O	L	A	G	N	I	N

**SEE** if you can find these words. They are hidden horizontally, vertically and diagonally, forwards and backwards.

BROOME  
BUSSELTON  
CABLEBEACH  
EXMOUTH  
FREMANTLE  
KIMBERLEY  
KINGSPARK  
MARGARETRIVER  
MONKEYMIA

NINGALOO  
PERTH  
PINNACLES  
QUOKKA

ROTTNESTISLAND  
SHARKBAY  
WAVEROCK

PUZZLE

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