

## Ready for Canada

HEAR from three Canada experts during The Travel Community Hub's Canada Ready To Explore webinar next Tue.

Entire Travel Group's Greg McCallum and Sam Treby join Destination Canada's Nathan McLoughlin - [CLICK HERE](#).

## Bonza aircraft purchases

BONZA has revealed plans to operate up to eight 737 MAX 8 aircraft in its first 12 months of operation in Australia.

To be leased from the airline's Miami-based investment firm 777 Partners, Bonza said the aircraft will each have 186 Economy seats on board, while the jets' fuel efficiency will help keep fares low for its future customers.

"We are thrilled to share our commitment to operating up to eight aircraft within the first 12 months of operation," Bonza CEO Tim Jordan said.

"This is another way in which we are focussed on creating new market growth opportunities for regional Australian destinations, better connecting all of Australia, and in turn, stimulating direct and indirect job opportunities for the aviation and tourism industry."

## Oklahoma assures

TRAVEL Oklahoma will donate \$10 to the R U OK? initiative for every Australian agent who watches one of its newly released mini-webinars themed around some of the state's biggest tourism drawcards.

Themes include road trips and indigenous cultural centres.

In addition to the donations, the tourism body will also be giving away one \$200 and four \$50 Amazon or Farmers gift cards to five lucky agents.

To enter the R U OK Oklahoma incentive, [CLICK HERE](#).

Bonza is expected to make an announcement regarding its initial routes and aircraft bases in the coming weeks, while CEO Tim Jordan will also be speaking at the CAPA Australia Pacific 2021 Aviation Summit in Sydney today, where he will provide more details about the airline's future growth strategy.

More to come in tomorrow's edition of *Travel Daily*.

## We underestimated CBD tourism: Tehan

FEDERAL Tourism Minister Dan Tehan has conceded the pandemic has exposed just how vital tourism is to Australia's big cities, admitting the impact on CBD areas has been underestimated.

Speaking at the CAPA Summit in Sydney earlier today, Tehan said the impact on the shutdown was "taken for granted" on CBDs, adding no int'l students, no tourists and cruise ships "had really hurt" CBD economies.

While the Minister was upbeat about the prospect of a sharp recovery in the next 12 months as borders open, Tehan did admit that the tourism skills shortage was the one big factor inhibiting the speed of the rebound.

### Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today has seven news pages including a photo page from **ATOUT France**.

## Sparkling bookings

PONANT has teamed up with Creative Cruising for an Exclusive Champagne Incentive to celebrate the cruise line's Europe 2023 season, with a bottle of Charles Heidsieck Champagne on offer for every qualifying booking made - call 1300 362 599.



## Searching for Inventory?

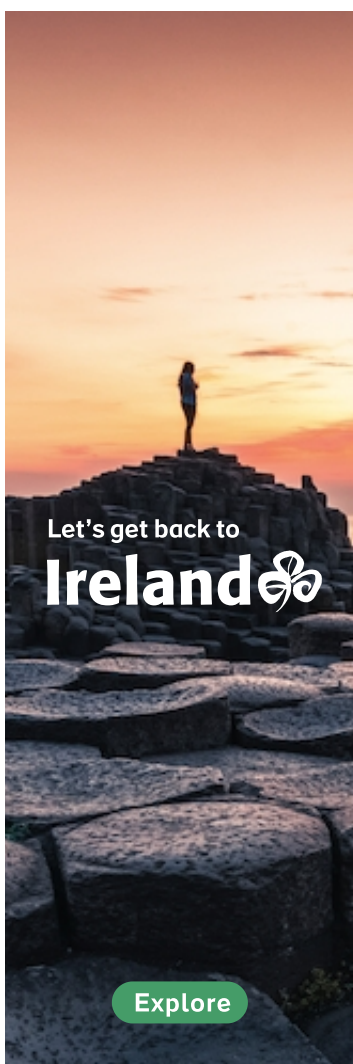
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## VA "fiercely competitive"

**VIRGIN** Australia has come out of its administration "fiercely competitive as a business", Chief Executive Officer Jayne Hrdlicka told the CAPA Australia Pacific Aviation Summit today.

Identifying the changes Virgin has made since its administration, Hrdlicka told CAPA attendees the airline is a different organisation now than it was 12 months ago, when she first took it over during its restructuring.

Hrdlicka described the airline as "lean", "strong", "capable", and "very purposeful."

"The most important thing for us was, one: getting our costs down so we're in a position where we can be super competitive across all ends of the marketplace, which we have done," she explained.

"The second thing is to be very clear about who we are and where we're going to sit in

the marketplace, and the third thing is to invest quickly and aggressively behind the customer experience to ensure that we have the ability to compete very effectively for hearts and minds."

Although Hrdlicka admitted the Australian airline sector would be a predominantly leisure-driven industry for the foreseeable future, the VA Chief Executive was positive that there would be a healthy amount of small business activity which the airline is ready to take advantage of.

"The SME market has been very fond of Virgin Australia, and Virgin Australia disproportionately was successful in the small-medium sector, relative to other players in the market," Hrdlicka explained.

"We lost a little bit of focus on that part of the marketplace in the last five to seven years or so, and that focus is back."



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## VA goes for gold

**VIRGIN** Australia is gearing up to launch three new Gold Coast routes this month.

The trio of new services kicked off yesterday with the introduction of a Launceston to the Gold Coast route flying three times weekly, with a daily Gold Coast to Cairns service also commencing tomorrow.

From 13 Dec, VA will start flying from Hobart to the Gold Coast four times a week, offering more than 5,600 seats a month.

"Whether you're reuniting with family and friends over Christmas or looking forward to a holiday getaway, VA's commitment to new flights makes Qld the place to be this summer," Qld Tourism Minister Stirling Hinchliffe said.

Passengers who book on the flights can change or cancel to credit with no fees for domestic travel up to 30 Apr 2022.

Since the start of Sep, Virgin Australia has added 15 additional services to its network.

## Mat honours 80 yrs

**MAT** McLachlan Battlefield Tours will operate a number of WW2 in the Pacific tours in 2022, including several special 80th anniversary adventures.

The suite of new products will take travellers to the PNG to look back at the Kokoda campaign, as well as a private tour in Singapore and in country NSW to look back at the Cowra breakout.

## Anna calls for mandatory testing

**QUEENSLAND** Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk has revealed she will take a plan to the next National Cabinet meeting to request Australia require international travellers to take a COVID-19 test on arrival at the airports across the nation.

The Premier's suggestion would be in addition to the current requirement that passengers provide a negative pre-departure test before entering Australia.



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## CX/Travelport renew

CATHAY Pacific and Travelport have renewed and expanded their existing distribution agreement, which includes a commitment to advancement in New Distribution Capability initiatives.

The new long-term agreement will be supported by Travelport-connected agencies through real-time access to search, sell, and book the airline's content.

## WTTC lashes UK

THE World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has lashed out at the United Kingdom's latest suite of COVID testing measures, with President & Chief Executive Officer Julia Simpson characterising the protocols as "cumbersome".

"If the UK Government insists on testing individuals two days before arrival in [the country], it makes no sense to ban entry from whole countries," she said.

## Smuggled through customs



**PROVING** once again that upcoming challenger airline Bonza will operate a little bit differently to its competitors, the airline's CEO Tim Jordan finished off his key address at the CAPA Summit in Sydney today by presenting a special pair of branded budy smugglers to an exuberant Chairman Emeritus of CAPA Peter Harbison (**pictured**).

After delivering a speech focused on the brand's leisure-centric approach, Jordan revealed what the gift shop might look like for passengers when the airline launches next year.

"I know there will be a big rush to buy these and I'm not sure what price they are going to be but they will feature on board the aircraft," Jordan assured.



## Window Seat

**WELL** the results are finally in folks, Australia's obsession with "big things" has yielded a grand champion, and his name is Larry.

A very official Twitter poll asking Australians what their favourite big tourist icon is saw Larry the Lobster from the fishing town of Kingston in South Australia clawing his way to ultimate tourism glory.

He beat out more fancied rivals which included the Big Banana in Coffs Harbour, Rambo the Big Merino in Goulburn, and Kurri Kurri's Big Kookaburra.



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## US & India lead the way

**THE** United States and India are the most sought after destinations for Australian travellers booking trips subsequent to international borders opening, according to new Expedia data.

Both the United States and India accounted for 30% of total flight searches, while the United Kingdom, Thailand and Canada were listed as the next most popular destinations, with overall searches increasing by 10% during the same period.

For trips planned between May and Oct 2022, Italy climbed its way into the top five countries, replacing Thailand.

"It's most interesting to see the destination changes in line with the northern hemisphere's summer," Expedia's Head of Account Management, Air Partnerships James Marshall said. "We see Italy replacing Thailand on the top five list - an

encouraging sign of optimism that Australian travellers are ready to get back to long-haul holiday habits in the second half of next year," he added.

The figures also showed that Australian travellers planning trips to the United States and United Kingdom in their summer seasons also increased by 5% and 10% respectively.

On the domestic front, flight searches have grown by more than 45% over the last month.

Queensland heads up the list of holiday demand, commanding 85% of Expedia flight searches from Sydney and Melbourne (an increase in searches of 45% and 20% respectively).

Further findings established that Australians are more motivated by having booking flexibility than good deals, with 31% valuing a full refund, compared to half of that number wanting a lower price.

## What a thought bubble!



**THE** Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp & Resort in Northern Thailand has introduced novel nature accommodation that allows guests to get even closer with the local wildlife than ever could before.

The resort has unveiled new two-bedroom Jungle Bubble Lodges which can house up to

four guests in a combination indoor/outdoor space, perched on a raised wooden deck and offering views of rescued elephants and stargazing at night.

The luxury viewing space also boasts a separate alfresco lounging and dining area, as well as a plunge pool.

For more info, [CLICK HERE](#).

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Applications close 17 December 2021.

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*.

CLICK to read

travelBulletin

## Travel spend jumps

**INTENTIONS** to spend money on travel among Aussie households has seen a 14.7% increase in Nov when compared to the previous month, according to figures from the latest *CommBank Household Spending Intentions (HSI) Index*.

The report also showed that travel spending has risen by a significant 77% since Aug, with the largest increases allocated to hotels, motels and resorts, travel agents, airlines and tourist attractions.

While spend was up in Nov across most major categories, travel outperformed the traditional big spending segments of retail (+9.6%) and household services (+9.4%).

"It would appear the recent further easing in travel restrictions across the country has encouraged many Australians to put their long awaited travel plans into action," the CommBank report noted.

Overall household spend intention was noted as being at its highest level in Nov since Dec 2019, finally returning to pre-pandemic volumes.

## Unique opportunity

**THE** Travel Concierge Sri Lanka has announced its entry into a joint venture with Unique Paradise Travels which will see Australian and New Zealand agents offered favourable contracted rates on a number of travel packages in the Maldives.

## The ultimate private paradise



**OPTIONS** for luxury travel to the Maldives has expanded following news that COMO Maldives has partnered with Global Jet International to offer Australians private jet charters to two of the brand's luxury Maldivian properties.

The package can accommodate up to 13 passengers, with onboard facilities including a state-of-the-art entertainment system, a full suite of business facilities, a fully equipped galley, and a dedicated flight attendant.

Upon arrival in Male, guests will be picked up on the tarmac to head off on a private 40-minute speedboat ride to COMO Cocoa Island for a three-night stay at the 34-overwater villa resort.

Guests will then take a one-hour seaplane to the sixty-island Thaa Atoll, where they will spend four



nights at COMO Maalifushi.

Here travellers can relax at the property's wide range of holistic wellness and yoga facilities, as well as enjoy the many marine activities on offer, including reef diving, night snorkelling, whale shark expeditions, kayaking and paddle-boarding.

The package is priced at \$78,820 per couple, based on occupancy for 13 passengers for a seven-night stay.

**Pictured:** One of COMO Maalifushi luxury villas.

## Max confidence

**777** Partners, the investor behind Bonza, has agreed to double its 737 MAX order from Boeing this week, confirming plans to purchase 30 extra jets.

The latest order, valued at around US\$3.7b, takes the company's portfolio to 68 737 MAXs, with the majority of the aircraft to be distributed to low-cost carriers around the world.

"We have long been confident in the economics of the 737 MAX family but we are especially excited about the 737-8-200 variant which represents the bulk of our additional orders," 777 Partners Managing Partner Josh Wander said.

The investment business also suggested the 737 MAX would be the hallmark aircraft in the low cost and ultra low cost carrier space, particularly in the sub-200 seat market.

## Crystal solo deal

**CRYSTAL** Cruises has canned single supplements on 15 *Crystal Symphony* Caribbean and Mediterranean voyages in 2022.

The applicable cruises will depart from six homeports in North America and Europe, including Miami, London, Lisbon, and Monte Carlo.

"We wanted to provide our solo ocean guests with the same opportunity to take advantage of the incredible value and convenience offered by this promotion," SVP Marketing and Sales Carmen Roig said.

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# A French Flair Affair by Atout France

H.E. MR Jean-Pierre Thebault, Ambassador of France to Australia, Anne Boillon, Consul-General of France, and Patrick Benhamou, Atout France, launched the Rugby World Cup France 2023 to celebrate 2 years to go, at an event earlier this week.

Guests were entertained with the French Marseillaise led by Peter Fitzsimons and watched a personalised message from Claude Atcher, Director of the RWC Committee in Paris, who can't wait to welcome Australians in 2023.

Fine cuisine was prepared by the talented Guillaume Brahim, and each course was paired with an exclusive Bordeaux wine including a very rare white Merlot...the guests naturally raised a glass to the reopening of international borders!



**JACQUI** Walshe of The Walshe Group and Patrick Benhamou from Atout France.



**TV AND** radio personality, Melissa Doyle, and Graham Wilson of Accor Hotels.



**H.E. MR** Jean-Pierre Thebault, Ambassador of France to Australia, with Natalie Ward, Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans.



**CHEF**  
Guillaume Brahim with French rugby legend, Frederic Michalak.



**ANNE** Boillon, Consul-General of France, and Olympic Gold Medallist, Jessica Fox.



**PETER** FitzSimons with Rod McGeoch, Sydney 2000 Olympics bid Chief.

**HOT** off the press: Atout France's Magazine with a Rugby World Cup France 2023 cover story.



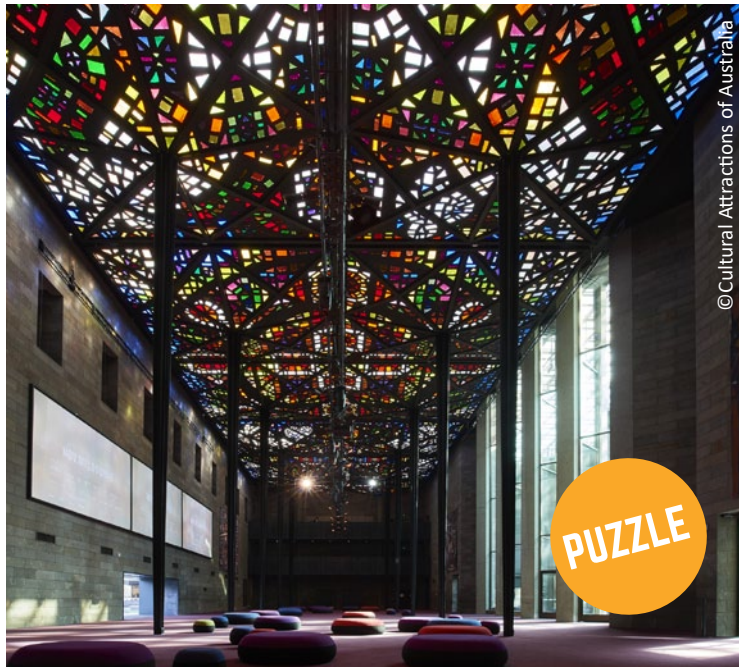
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## Where in the world?



© Cultural Attractions of Australia

**THIS** stunning stained glass ceiling was created by Australian artist Leonard French and is installed in a large function area inside this gallery.

It is the largest stained glass ceiling in the world and belongs to Australia's oldest, largest and

most visited art museum.

Available for private functions, this hall can be used for gala dinners, wedding receptions, large scale cocktail functions or presentations.

Do you know where in the world this is?

Answer: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Victoria

## BA cuts thousands

**BRITISH** Airways (BA) has cancelled thousands of flights through to Mar due to reduced demand for air travel.

More than 2,000 flights have been withdrawn from British Airways' winter schedule, more than half are from next month.

The decision has affected domestic routes like London to Belfast, as well as transcontinental flights such as London to Cape Town.

## Finnair to Seattle

**FINNAIR** will launch a Helsinki-Seattle route next year, with the airline viewing its trans-Atlantic expansion as critical to rebuilding its global network.

From Jun, the Helsinki-Seattle route will be operated three times weekly, with Helsinki-Dallas to also launch from the northern summer season.

Finnair said it is delighted to offer more connections between the US and northern Europe.

## Europa floatout

**MSC** Cruises and Chantiers de l'Atlantique have celebrated the float-out of the line's first liquefied natural gas-powered vessel, *MSC World Europa*.

The ship plays an important role in MSC's commitment to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050; in particular, a fuel cell pilot plant known as Blue Horizon has been installed on board.

It will use LNG to convert fuel into electricity.

## Park Hyatt picks Sam

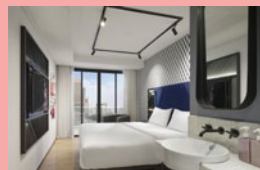
**PARK** Hyatt Sydney has appointed Samuel Dabinett to be its GM, taking over from former GM Marc von Arnim.

Enjoying a career with Hyatt spanning more than 15 years, Dabinett will oversee operations of the 155-room hotel, joining the team from Park Hyatt Sydney's sister property in Seoul.

Dabinett commenced his career at Hyatt Regency Adelaide, before moving into other rooms management roles.

## ACCOMMODATION

**WELCOME** to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to [accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au).



The first **TRIBE** in Asia is set to debut in Phnom Penh. Opening in Feb, the 260-room **TRIBE Phnom Penh Post Office Square** will bring a bold design to Cambodia's hotel scene. **TRIBE** Phnom Penh will feature an urban social hub, a workout atelier and an outdoor saltwater pool overlooking the Mekong River. Travellers can expect "an unapologetically modern environment where guests and local neighbours can relax and unwind".



**Sydney Harbour Marriott Hotel at Circular Quay** is opening its doors and inviting visitors to join it this Christmas and holiday season with award-winning food offerings and accommodation packages. Highlights include two specially curated menus for adults and the little ones on both Christmas and New Year's Eve at Silvester's, and a secret rooftop viewing of the fireworks on NYE on the 34th floor, unlocked only for a limited number of guests.



**W Hotels** has debuted in Italy with the opening of **W Rome**. The 162-room hotel, spanning two adjacent 19th-century palazzos, is located on Via Liguria, next to the Spanish Steps. Designed by Meyer Davis, **W Rome** juxtaposes the city's traditional architecture and cultural heritage with W's typically unique interpretation of Roman design. Boundaries are blurred between public and private spaces, and there is even a hidden door in the hotel.