

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news plus a full page from Emerald Cruises.

Cheers to Sunshine!

THE Sunshine Coast has announced "Australia's biggest welcome back party," with 21 craft breweries across the region to simultaneously throw their doors open at 4pm this Fri.

The event is part of celebrations for the reopening of the Qld border to much of Australia, with guests at the breweries having the opportunity to win a year's supply of the local tipples.

For more information see visitsunshinecoast.com.

Intrepid donation

THE Intrepid Foundation has donated \$81,000 to the Blue Carbon Lab at Deakin University in Vic, helping to support the institutions ongoing research into climate change solutions.

The partnership is also seeing Intrepid team members given the opportunity to join the lab's researchers in the field as "citizen scientists," with the work focusing on so-called Blue Carbon coastal wetlands of mangroves, tidal marshes and seagrasses which are believed to draw down carbon from the earth's atmosphere up to 50 times faster than trees, locking it away to help slow global warming.

Australia is home to about 10% of all blue carbon ecosystems.

Two more months of pain

THE Government's decision to extend Australia's Biosecurity Emergency Declaration (**TD** breaking news Fri) has been blasted by the travel and hospitality sector, with the cruise industry particularly dismayed at the unexpected decision.

Previously scheduled to expire this Fri 17 Dec, the rules governing mask-wearing, pre-departure testing, travel from high risk countries and the entry of international cruise ships, will now be in place until 17 Feb.

Health Minister Greg Hunt said the cruise ban would be reviewed on a monthly basis, but industry pundits have noted that the next four weeks include the traditional Christmas shutdown meaning it's likely many holidaying bureaucrats will not be available

FlyPelican VA pact

FLYPELICAN has announced a new partnership with Virgin Australia, giving eligible FlyPelican passengers access to VA lounges alongside the ability to earn Velocity Frequent Flyer points.

VA lounge access is complimentary and inclusive for all Pelican Corporate and Pelican Flexible fare classes in Virgin's Sydney and Canberra lounges, effective from today.

FlyPelican CEO Marty Hawley said the addition of lounge access on selected fares made it a "great day for FlyPelican and our valued customers".

to engage with the industry on a restart plan by 17 Jan.

Cruise Lines International Association MD Joel Katz has spent the weekend on TV discussing the debacle, reiterating the transformation of the cruise industry and its multi-layered protocols, as well as the ongoing need for certainty to allow ships to reposition in time for a restart.

The extension of the ban was "another devastating blow to the 18,000 Australians whose livelihoods depend on cruise tourism," Katz fulminated.

Dan Russell, GM of Qld travel agency Clean Cruising, said given the government's intransigence "no one can now reasonably expect any cruise ship to be back in Australia in the first half of 2022, or even later".

"The frustration of travel agents and others that are affected is that after more than 20 months, Federal and State authorities have made no genuine attempt to set the guidelines for the resumption of cruising," he said.

WA walls up again

QUEENSLAND has been elevated to a "low risk" state by the Western Australian Government, meaning travel from Qld to WA is only permitted with 14 days of self-quarantine, double vaccination and COVID-19 testing.

The heightened risk level is due to Qld's opening to travellers from NSW and Vic today.

Emerald out now

EMERALD Cruises has released its 2023 brochure, featuring a range of Mediterranean superyacht voyages leading in at \$4,845 per person twin share for an eight-day adventure.

For details see the [last page](#).

Well I Nevada!

TRAVEL advisors are being invited to join a special Travel Nevada Roadtrips Trivia Finale taking place tomorrow.

The virtual gathering taking place at 9am AEDT tomorrow will allow participants to enjoy a journey of all 10 Road Trips and test their knowledge at the same time - register for free by [CLICKING HERE](#).

Laos reopening

LAOS is set to reopen to vaccinated tourists in Jan 2022 under a so-called "Lao Travel Green Zone" program.

The initiative will see the capital Vientiane as well as Vang Veng and Luang Prabang designated as "green zones" with visitors able to book tour packages as long as they have a Laos visa, a certificate of entry, a vaccination certificate dated at least 14 days prior to entry and a negative PCR test for COVID-19 done 72 hours or less prior to departure.

Further details are expected to be released in the coming days, including information on a new LaoSafe approved hotel and transportation program.



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Captain Cook Cruises (WA) provides an unrivaled experience for exploring Perth and surrounds. Offering:

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- Optus Stadium Charters
- Charters Cruises

There truly is a cruise to suit everyone with Captain Cook Cruises WA.

Express Tickets adds NDC

THE newly launched Express Tickets consolidation platform (**TD** breaking news) has a host of new features, with the Aeronology-based system combining traditional GDS content with direct New Distribution Capability connections to key airline partners.

Express Tickets says it's the "first and currently only consolidator to have this dual capability," adding that the shop and book functionality in the system gives a "comprehensive choice of airfares at all times plus uninterrupted access to distribution channel offers" along with ancillary add-ons such as seat selection and extra baggage.

Express Travel Group GM of Sales & Marketing, Jason Aghan, said Express Tickets had remained open and accessible throughout the challenging COVID-19 period.

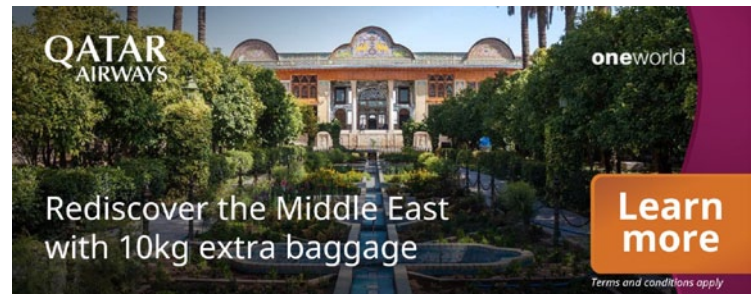
"We have processed and paid over 98% of refunds and we are equally proud of our staff and

travel agency clients who have risen to the challenge.

"Now we look forward to continuing to provide best in market tools to assist our customers with the rebound, backed by the experienced, friendly and available service levels Express Tickets is known for," he added.

The new platform also features Aeronology's TravelCheck technology (**TD** 24 Nov), giving users the ability to instantly check the required documentation for multi-trip destinations as well as collating the most recent advice from multiple sources about COVID-19 restrictions.

The new Express Tickets platform is now available to all Express Travel Group members in Australia as well as First Travel Group in NZ and "any travel agents seeking commitment-free, ticketing-only access" - see expresstickets.com.au.



Virgin, Jetstar hail Qld opening

TODAY'S reopening of the Qld border has seen a swift reaction from airlines, with Virgin Australia, Qantas and Jetstar all welcoming the move which sees NSW and Vic residents able to enter the state for the first time in more than five months.

VA is offering over one million seats from \$59 one way to multiple Qld destinations, while Jetstar and Qantas will this week operate about 700 flights to and from the sunshine state across 28 routes from NSW and Vic.

Jetstar Group CEO Gareth Evans said thousands of the company's Qld-based team members were also now able to return to work after pandemic stand-downs.

VA Chief Commercial Officer, Dave Emerson, described the reopening of Qld as particularly significant for the Brisbane-based carrier, saying it was a "monumental day for Australians".

Orient Express back

THE iconic Orient Express rail brand is returning to Italy, with a new *La Dolce Vita* product offering six trains travelling across 14 regions and beyond.

The relaunched Orient Express *La Dolce Vita* will also include three international destinations, taking travellers from Rome to Paris, Istanbul and Split, while a stopover option in Rome will feature the first Orient Express Hotel, Minerva, which is scheduled for a 2024 opening.

The luxury rail tourism project is being developed by Italian operator Arsenale S.p.A. in association with Orient Express, now a brand of Accor Group.

The first passengers will be welcomed in 2023, with the companies describing the trips as a new way of experiencing the country in "an environmentally-friendly adventure where forgotten roads are explored... and hidden treasures discovered".



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Window Seat

WANT to really get away from COVID-19? Apparently the only place in the world which is completely coronavirus free is a platform in the North Sea about 11km off the UK coast.

The so-called “micronation” of Sealand has been in existence as a standalone entity for over 50 years, but the principality’s sovereignty is not actually officially recognised elsewhere.

The former anti-aircraft platform was built during World War II and had been scheduled for demolition since it was outside British waters.

However an entrepreneurial local businessman called Roy Bates - who also ran a pirate radio station - took over and declared independence, ultimately resulting in the Principality of Sealand being formally established in 1967.

The destination is now run by Bates’ descendants including his son, Prince Michael, and grandsons Prince Liam and Prince James.

The platform is maintained by two shift workers, and it’s actually possible to become a Lord of Sealand by paying £29.99 for an official title.

However to visit you must have a negative COVID-19 test - and be prepared to make your arrival by being winched onto the platform from a boat.

African awesome day



TOUR operator The Africa Safari Co hosted a group of supplier partners and travel advisors at a Christmas lunch on Sydney Harbour last week.

The event was a chance to thank all those that have supported The Africa Safari Co over the last 18 months, in which the company has pivoted to an Australian wholesaler.

“[The move] has been wonderfully supported by the retail chains and again I want to thank everyone for their continued support,” said Chief Executive Officer Susie Potter.

“It has not been an easy time, but we are still standing and ready to tackle 2022 head on.”

Pictured, The Africa Safari Co team enjoying their day on the Harbour, hosting representatives from Atour Travel Service, Compass Travel & Cruising, Luxury Travel Management, and more.

Crown remediation

CROWN Resorts today showcased its new leadership team and “culture transformation program” in an investor update.

A comprehensive Remediation Plan aims to “position Crown as a leader in the industry in its approach to governance, compliance, responsible gaming and the management of financial crime risk, underpinned by an uplifted organisational culture”.

New appointees include Simon McGrath as CEO of Crown Sydney (**TD** 09 Nov) and Chief Corporate Affairs & Brand Officer Danielle Keighery, both of whom will start at Crown in early 2022.

While hospitality is a key part of Crown’s offering, the company also highlighted the “opportunity to grow the size of the Sydney tables market segment,” with the new Crown Sydney featuring about 160 gaming tables.

Uber MEL update

UBER will tomorrow launch new “Uber PIN” technology at Melbourne Airport, with the system matching passengers with the first available ride at a dedicated pickup point.

Uber PIN is expected to reduce waiting times by up to 50%.

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Solomons' long road back



THE Tourism Solomons team (pictured) this week did their best to get into the Christmas spirit as the country's capital Honiara slowly returns to calm following recent rioting and unrest.

Tourism Solomons Head of Sales & Marketing, Fiona Teama (far right) said that fortunately the city's hotel and tourism infrastructure remained intact, despite many buildings having been badly damaged.

That piece of good fortune aside, Teama acknowledged the

reality of the unrest's negative impact on the destination's tourism ambitions.

"The Solomon Islands now faces a long road back to its pre-COVID successes when we saw international visitation grow by 10% year on year from 2013, and we had a strong voice on the South Pacific tourism stage.

"While we haven't anticipated reopening our borders until sometime in 2022, and that all depends on when we reach a 90% vaccination rate, sadly this occurrence will likely push that date back even further," she said.

Teama urged potential travellers to remember that for many international visitors, Honiara is simply a springboard to the Solomon's main tourism corridors in the outer islands which have not experienced any trouble.

"With Munda now in place as our second international airport, the world still has ready access to these outer regions and all the amazing activities we offer - from diving, surfing and fishing to our WWII history and of course our amazing living culture," she said.

AA 2022 route cuts

AMERICAN Airlines is scaling back some of its international network for 2022, citing delivery delays of new Boeing 787 aircraft.

Planned services will now comprise about 80% of pre-pandemic capacity, with the long-haul schedule seeing AA discontinue services to Hong Kong as well as Edinburgh in Scotland and Shannon, Ireland.

Frequencies will also be reduced to Sydney, Shanghai and Beijing, the carrier said in a staff memo.

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FEELING peckish? NSW has you covered, with food and beverage experiences, fine dining restaurants, friendly family eateries, cosy cafes, cuisines from all corners of the globe and everything in between. Foodies can satisfy all manner of cravings - like the Bite around Berry walking tour, truffle hunting in the Blue Mountains with Lowes Mount Truffiere, or even charcuterie with Maugers Paddock to Plate Tours in the Southern Highlands. With such a diverse coastline

seafood is on the menu, whether it's from the famous Sydney Fish Markets or the bounty plucked straight from the ocean at Merimbula Gourmet Oysters (below left).

While you're down south don't forget to check out the award-winning cheeses at charming dairies such as Tilba's ABC Cheese Factory in Bega - or try some fresh-caught fish from the Eucumbene Trout Farm.

NSW regions like the Hunter Valley or the Central West offer globally-renowned wines perfectly paired with creatively curated culinary experiences, while right up and down the coast a new generation of chefs continues to wow the crowds at restaurants such as Forster's Spice Monkey (pictured above).

Head to visitsw.com for travel inspiration, itineraries, and ideas on how to #FeelNew in NSW.



Images: @Destination NSW



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AABH welcomes back tourists



AUSTRALIA & Beyond Holidays (AABH) has welcomed its first international tourists in more than 21 months.

AABH's first two customers (pictured with the company's Managing Partner Simon Bernardi) recently completed their isolation period and begun their private tour of New South Wales with AEA Luxury Tours.

The customers took advantage of the vaccinated travel lane arrangement between Singapore and Australia, thanks to which AABH has five group arrivals from Singapore that will visit New South Wales prior to Christmas.

AABH paid tribute to Destination NSW, which has been "instrumental" in assisting the inbound travel company to package itineraries within the state for Singaporean travellers, with most of the country still closed for international arrivals.

"We have groups from Singapore booked up until Sep next year and are delighted with the response from the

Singapore market," said Bernardi, who reported most groups were looking for fly-drive and campervan experiences.

"Once other states open up, we believe there will be great demand for travellers from Singapore and Asia to explore the other non-restricted states."

CBD hotel slump

THE Accommodation Association has highlighted new figures from Tourism Research Australia which showed Australian CBD hotels saw a 76% drop in spend in Sep 2021 compared to pre-COVID levels.

And despite a purported boom in domestic trips, regional hotels were also down 54% over the same period, with the body's interim CEO, Richard Munro saying properties are "struggling to manage the twin punch of the pandemic and the pressing need to urgently fill 100,000 current vacancies across the sector to meet growing demand".

EY ITA codeshare

ETIHAD has confirmed a new codeshare agreement with Italy's new national carrier, ITA Airways.

The pact will see ITA's AZ code placed on Etihad services from Abu Dhabi to Rome and Milan, while EY will codeshare on AZ services onwards to destinations including Genoa, Bari, Brindisi, Catania, Palermo and Malta.

New role for Lou

LOUISE Wallace has been named as the Program Leader Tourism Development at Blue Mountains City Council.

Wallace, who also edited *Travel Daily's* sister publication *travelBulletin* some years ago, takes on her new role after five years at Scenic World.

Also leaving Scenic World is Chief Experience Officer Amanda Byrne, who joins Experience Co as Head of Marketing.

Dettol Pro launch

A NEW "Dettol Pro" B2B range of hygiene products has been launched by Reckitt & Benckiser, with the company seeing an opportunity to increase consumer confidence in travel, hospitality and leisure spaces.

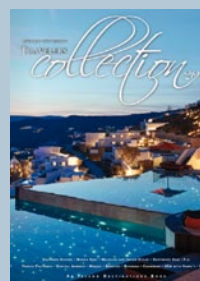
Reckitt Health Australia/NZ Regional Director, David Rankine, said Dettol Pro Solutions was the official hygiene partner at the recent COP26 summit in Glasgow.

"For generations of Australians, Dettol has been entrusted with helping provide protection against germs inside the home... with Dettol Pro Solutions we are able to extend that commitment to accompany them as they go about their daily lives against the backdrop of one of the toughest times in modern history".

The range includes hand sanitiser, disinfectant wipes and trigger packs, along with training and signage - more info **HERE**.

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.



ID Travel Group - 2022 Travelers Collection

ID Travel Group has gone to press with its 2022 Travelers Collection brochure. Recognising a strong interest for next year's travel to southern Europe, ID has introduced its ID Europe collection, featuring some of the best destinations in Greece, Italy, and the Balkans. The Myconian Collection will feature 10 leading properties from both the Myconian Villa Collection, as well as the Myconian Naia Luxury Suites, featuring 18 adults-only resorts, just minutes from Mykonos Town's cobblestone streets, with boutiques, bars, and cafes.



Collette Oklahoma - Rhythm & Routes

For music lovers, Oklahoma is a state brimming with museums, bars, and festivals that showcase the state's enduring musical acts and legacy - all of which are detailed in Travel Oklahoma's Rhythm and Routes brochure. Among many stops, the state's musically inspired road trip publication showcases Tulsa, which often appears in many lists of "Cities to Watch", thanks to its eclectic arts scene and ever-expanding quirky persona. Tulsa is also known for being the home to some of Oklahoma's must-visit music locations, such as the Arts District and The Church Studio.



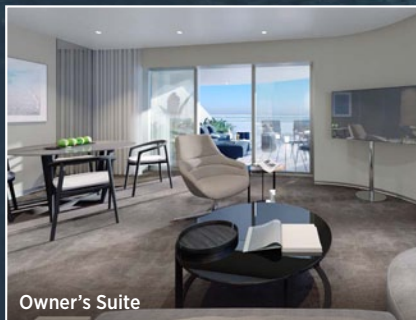
EMERALD CRUISES



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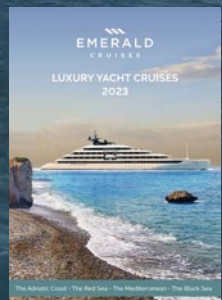


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