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AFTA webinar

AFTA CEO Dean Long along with members of the organisation's Board including Graham Turner, Tom Manwaring and Laura Ruffles will appear in the final AFTA webinar of the year, taking place tomorrow at 11am AEDT - to register [CLICK HERE](#).



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Chris Hall to leave APH

EXCLUSIVE

LONG-TIME MD of APT parent company Australian Pacific Holdings (APH), Chris Hall, is set to depart the business he has led for the last 21 years.

Hall told *Travel Daily* the last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic had seen significant consolidation within the APH investment portfolio, which had seen the group take stakes in several travel businesses both in Australia and overseas.

Much of this has now been rationalised to see the company focus on its core business, the APT Travel Group and its key partner AmaWaterways.

"With this consolidation there is now a natural conclusion to the APH Managing Director role and with some regret, Chris Hall will be leaving the business in Feb 2022," the company said today.

Having been in various roles within the business over the last two-plus decades, Hall has put in place structures across the organisation including David Cox as APT Travel Group CEO, meaning the McGeary family, the APH Board and the business are "ready for emergence from the pandemic".

"We have appreciated Chris Hall's leadership, not only during

these tougher pandemic times, but throughout his tenure as both MD of APH and CEO of APT," said family members Robert McGeary and Louise Tandy.

"His contribution to the business has been significant and we wish Chris all the best for his future endeavours...he will always be a respected part of our travel family," they added.

Hall told *TD* he felt privileged to have been part of the amazing transformation and growth that the group had achieved over the last 20 years, with his role encompassing multiple board directorships, working closely with partners across the globe and seeing the overall business more than double in size.

"I've loved every minute of it," he said, with his departure from APH set for the end of Feb 2022.

P&O pauses again

P&O Cruises Australia this morning announced the further extension of its cruising pause until mid-Apr 2022.

The move follows last Fri's shock two-month extension of the current biosecurity orders which now ban foreign cruise ships from Australian waters until 17 Feb.

P&O expressed "profound disappointment" at the move, which has seen it forced to cancel voyages scheduled through to 16 Apr - the 23rd cancellation announcement since the rolling pause began in Mar 2020.

JQ Christmas sale

JETSTAR today placed more than 500,000 fares on sale for travel from Jan 2022, with domestic flights leading in at \$29 and some international services priced from \$109.

The seven day sale covers 60 domestic and 28 int'l routes.



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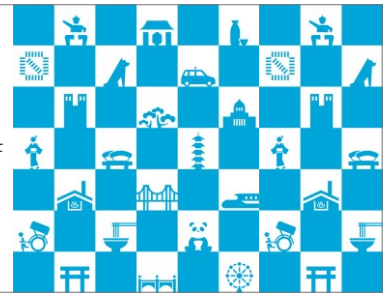
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HLO sells off QBT, Show

HELLOWORLD Travel Limited (HLO) will become a 2.5% shareholder in Corporate Travel Management (CTM) once the \$175 million deal to sell QBT, AOT Hotels, TravelEdge, Show Group, APX and Atlas Travel to its rival settles in the new year.

CTM has announced a fully underwritten equity raising of about \$100 million to pay for the cash component of the deal, while HLO will also receive \$75 million worth of CTM shares, escrowed for 12 months.

Helloworld CEO Andrew Burnes said "we believe that CTM is the right home for our corporate and entertainment travel clients in the future," while CTM MD Jamie Pherous noted the deal provided further diversification to the company's existing high quality client base in Australia and NZ - including a significant portfolio of state and federal govt clients.

Burnes said the proceeds from

the selloff would be used to repay debt and "to support growth opportunities in HLO's retail and leisure travel businesses as activity rebounds following the COVID-19 disruption".

He said recovery was already under way, with HLO recording non-corporate TTV in Nov of \$95 million, up 50% on the prior month and almost double the figure for Nov 2020.

"We believe this transaction is at a compelling valuation to maximise HLO shareholder value, and that will allow HLO to focus on operations which, pre COVID-19, represented 80% of our TTV," Burnes added.

Pherous said there was scope for material synergies, with savings of \$8 million estimated upon full recovery to FY19 revenues and integration of the businesses expected to be completed within 12 months at a one-off cost of about \$5 million.

FLT + Traveltek

FLIGHT Centre and Traveltek have agreed on a global cruise partnership, in which the technology company's API will enable more than 30,000 integrated itineraries for the travel agency group globally.

The two have partnered in Asia-Pacific for more than a decade, but Traveltek will now power cruise for Flight Centre's North America, United Kingdom and South Africa businesses.

Traveltek's cruise API will become available in the coming months, providing exclusive deals and availability for more than 30 FCTG cruise line partners.

"We are delighted to extend our long-standing partnership with such a well-established travel brand," said Traveltek Chief Commercial Officer Cressida Sergeant.

"We look forward to supporting Flight Centre grow its cruise business in other markets" - more in **Cruise Weekly** tomorrow.

WA to (finally) open

WESTERN Australia will proceed with its Safe Transition Plan from 05 Feb, when the state will open its borders to interstate and international visitors.

The date is based on the state's 90% double dose vaccination target projection, with new testing requirements to be introduced, depending on a traveller's length of stay.

Arrivals will be required to return a negative PCR test result within 72 hours prior to departure, and both within 48 hours of arrival to Western Australia, and (if applicable) on day six.

However, interstate travellers coming into WA for five days or less will not be required to have any tests on arrival, according to Premier Mark McGowan.

Tourism WA has also launched an attraction campaign, "Western Australia - It's like no other", to boost the state's reconnection with the world.

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Travel Daily

Wednesday 15th December 2021

To infinity and (Journey) Beyond!



JOURNEY Beyond's relaunch of the iconic Melbourne Skydeck (TD 09 Dec) has seen the facility encompass the largest virtual reality theatre of its kind in the world - and the first in the Southern Hemisphere.

The new Melbourne Skydeck Voyager Theatre (pictured) has 24 Positron chairs taking guests on a thrilling Luna Park wooden rollercoaster ride, as well as an exploration of Melbourne's laneways complete with the smell of freshly roasted coffee as two of

16 iconic Melbourne experiences which also include a courtside seat at Rod Laver Arena.

The Skydeck also features the Bollinger-supported Bar 88, and visitors can test their nerves on the Edge, a transparent cube suspended almost 300m above the city streets.

Individual or small group bookings can now be made online by **CLICKING HERE**, while tickets for groups and corporate events are now available via 03 9693 8888 - more on the **cover page**.

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Travel Daily

AAT Kings research

AAT Kings has revealed a number of Australia-centric travel trend insights for next year, with an increase in bookings for family groups & bucket-list destinations.

The guided holiday company has seen rising popularity for Top End and Red Centre experiences, as well as Tasmania and Western Australia, with particular interest in bookings from Mar through Jul.

Outback Queensland has also seen a surge in search enquiry, while more granular trends include an increase in bookings for small groups for travellers 55 years and over, as well as private charter flights.

While international travel is set to increase, Australia will remain extremely busy for domestic travel next year, the company believes - especially when it comes to travellers wanting off-the-beaten-track adventure, with AAT Kings seeing a big uptick in "bucket list" bookings, as well as short breaks.



Window Seat

NORMALLY visitors from around the world flock to the Vatican to see Michelangelo's famous frescoes adorning the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

But there's now an easier option - just head to a shopping centre in Dallas, Texas.

The Irving Mall has announced it will offer shoppers the ability to experience the iconic artworks "from an Up-Close, Life-Sized and Never-Before-Seen perspective".

The Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel exhibition, which is currently touring internationally, uses licensed high-definition photos of the 35 frescoes, and will also visit malls in Nashville Tennessee, Cleveland Ohio and the Westfield Mission Valley centre in San Diego.



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Read about taking travel back to the future, the industry celebrating 'Still Standing', and more in the December/January issue of *travelBulletin*.

travelBulletin

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Austria alps out the trade



VIRTUOSO travel advisors in Melbourne and Sydney last week experienced what Austria has in store for travellers next year at a VIP lunch hosted by Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO). The meal featured dishes from the current menu of the Hotel Sacher Wien, plus original sachertorte flown in from Vienna

as dessert. Virtuoso agents also attended afternoon education sessions to hear updates from Austrian suppliers, museums and tourist boards. **Pictured**, Virtuoso's Fiona Dalton, Goldman Travel's Anthony Goldman, and ANTO's Astrid Gruchmann-Licht.

QF reignites its Rome-ance

QANTAS Airways is saying "buongiorno" to Italy, with the carrier's aircraft to fly to Rome for the first time in many years.

From 22 Jun 2022, Qantas will operate three Sydney-Perth-Rome flights per week, the only direct service between Australia and Continental Europe.

The new flight will aim to meet demand over the European tourist season, and will cut more than three hours off the current fastest travel time to Rome.

The new route, on which customers will fly aboard a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, is also expected to entice more visitors to WA, and Qantas will partner with Tourism Western Australia to boost inbound travel.

Qantas will also promote Perth as an ideal stopover for Australians travelling to Europe from the country's east coast. QF Chief Executive Officer Alan

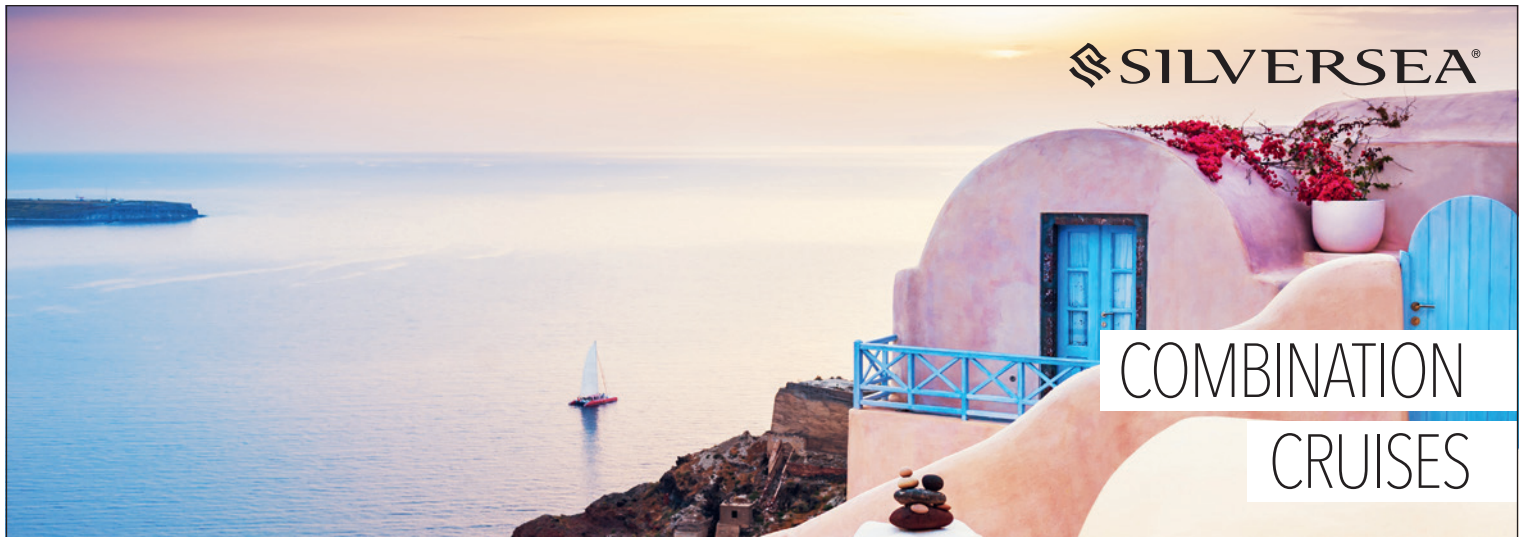
Joyce said strong travel demand since borders reopened had prompted confidence to explore a new destination.

"We've seen amazing demand on our direct service from Perth to London and on our new services to Delhi from Melbourne and Sydney," he commented.

"These are exciting destinations and there's strong evidence the pandemic is making non-stop flights between Australia and the rest of the world even more desirable as we learn to live with the virus and its variants.

"Italy is the largest market for us in Continental Europe for people visiting family and friends from Australia and we think customers will love flying direct to one of the world's great cities to spend time with loved ones or enjoy Italy."

Joyce added now was the "ideal time for Qantas to reinvigorate its international network".



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Bamboo into BSP

VIETNAMESE airline Bamboo Airways has joined IATA's Billing and Settlement Plan (BSP) in Australia.

IATA has advised that travel agents can now simply request a ticketing authority for Bamboo Airways in Australia, with transactions processed conveniently as part of BSP sales effective immediately.

However Bamboo Airways does not accept IATA Easy Pay as a form of payment in Australia.

AY Singapore transit

FINNAIR has confirmed that its passengers from Australia who are transiting in Singapore are not classified as travelling under the Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) arrangements, meaning they can fly to and from any destination in Europe as long as they transit in SIN under the airline's transit permits with QF/JQ and BA from any port in Australia.

TourRadar partners with Flight Centre

FLIGHT Centre has announced a new global partnership with TourRadar to create an "end-to-end multi-day adventure booking experience" for FCTG consultants.

The companies said the move would enable Flight Centre to simplify its booking processes, giving access to instant availability and real-time content, pricing and availability from tour operators under Flight Centre commercial agreements.

Previously when booking trips for their clients, advisors would need to add information into an itinerary then book the tour separately via multiple web portals each requiring unique login credentials.

The new integration will offer a single login, and also make financial operations simpler by centralising payments.

The full integration is expected to be finalised by Jun 2022.

Breakfast fit for a Princess



PRINCESS Cruises' Australian trade partners were yesterday morning invited to tune into the line's 'Our World, Enchanted' production, the official naming ceremony of *Enchanted Princess* (TD yesterday).

Taking place at Carnival Corporation's local headquarters in Sydney, Princess' local team joined the group for a champagne breakfast to view the live stream.

The fifth Royal-class ship in the Princess fleet was officially named in a ceremony hosted by Celebrations Ambassador Jill Whelan and the ship's Cruise Director Dan Falconer.

Our World, Enchanted

introduced viewers to the ship's innovative features, and honoured the three members of The Explorers Club who will serve as *Enchanted's* godmothers - Captain Lynn Danaher, Jenifer Austin and Vicki Ferrini.

Pictured: Cruise Guru's Andrew Zhang, CruiseCo's Kristy Johnston and Lia Malone, Princess' Nick Ferguson, Discerning Traveller's Kee Foreman, OzCruising's Craig Chisholm, Cruise Express' Meg Hill, Travel Associates' Allison Lord, Princess' Rachaelle Tyrrell, Hunter Travel's Louise Dann, Princess' Shaun Kavanagh, Hunter Travel's Brett Dann, and Princess' Elly Eves.



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Ponant '23 savings

CRUISE Traveller has released a new 2023 package including a Ponant Kimberley expedition voyage, promising savings of almost \$15,000 per couple.

The deal includes a free two-night hotel stay in Broome and no single supplement, valid for bookings confirmed by the end of next month.

Six departures are available on board *Le Soleal* and *Le Laperouse* from Apr to Sep 2023 - book through Cruise Traveller [HERE](#).

Vegas Mirage sale

MGM Resorts has announced the sale of its iconic Mirage Hotel & Casino on the Las Vegas strip, with the property being bought by Hard Rock International.

The US\$1.08 billion deal will initially see Hard Rock retain the Mirage branding while the company finalises plans to rebrand the property.

However eventually a proposed remodelling will include the demolition of the resort's famed strip-side volcano.

Reunited and it feels so good



THE founders of The Explorer Society, Cameron Neill and Martin Edwards (**pictured**), have finally caught up in person for the first time since the company launched in Sep (**TD** 22 Sep).

Due to lockdowns and travel restrictions, it had been over a year since the two last caught up.

They are spending a few days together in Melbourne talking all things travel, and working on their plans to make traveller's dreams become reality next year.

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.



The newly opened **The Standard Hua Hin** is going glam this Christmas & holiday season, with celebrations on Thailand's Gulf coast. The fun starts on 23 Dec with the lighting of the resort's Christmas tree in the tropical garden, accompanied by chilled-out tunes and fresh exotic cocktails. Then on Christmas Eve, guests are invited to celebrate "An Eve You Won't Believe" at the Lido Restaurant, with a spectacular selection of festive favourites, fresh seafood and more.



The first internationally branded, 5-star hotel in Napier, New Zealand has been opened by Swiss-Belhotel International, **Swiss-Belboutique Napier**. The first of its kind in the destination, the hotel is hoped to place the art-deco Napier in the world's gaze, offering some of the most spacious rooms and enticing facilities in the country. Swiss-Belboutique Napier promises unique and personalised experience for discerning travellers.



IHG Hotels & Resorts has continued its growth in Vietnam with the signing of **Crowne Plaza Vinh Yen City Centre**. The destination's first upscale international hotel will open next year, with 170 rooms located in the heart of downtown. Crowne Plaza Vinh Yen introduces the brand's distinctive design style to the destination - an integration of business and leisure. It will feature contemporary, design-led spaces inspired by local influencers.

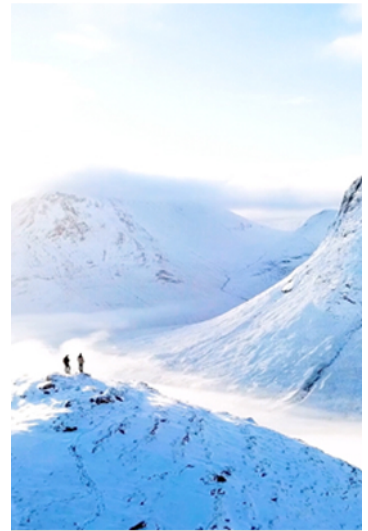
QF SAF deal

QANTAS has announced it will purchase sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) from next month, with the move expected to help reduce carbon emissions by about 10% on flights from London.

QF noted it was the first time an Australian airline would purchase SAF on an ongoing basis for regular scheduled services, with the move pursuant to a London Heathrow Airport agreement with BP for the purchase of 10 million litres of SAF in 2022, and similar amounts in 2023 and 2024.

The fuel will be produced using certified bio feedstock from used cooking oil and other waste products, which is then blended with normal jet fuel, with QF also in discussions to access SAF at other ports such as Los Angeles.

QF Group Chief Sustainability Officer, Andrew Parker, said SAF was key to the airline meeting its target of net zero emissions by 2050, adding there was a "huge opportunity" to build a local SAF industry in Australia.



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