



## Today's issue of TD

TODAY'S issue of *Travel Daily* has six pages of news, including a page of photos from *Journey Beyond*.

## Austrade survey

AUSTRADE is inviting those who work in the visitor economy to offer their views on the Australian Government's draft long-term tourism strategy.

Respondents can provide views on key priorities and actions, and indicate their own ideas.

Participants are invited to list any innovative case studies and collaborative activity they're undertaking to help the visitor economy thrive into the future.

Austrade is working with bodies such as the Australian Federation of Travel Agents, the Council of Australian Tour Operators, and the Australian Tourism Export Council, to gain their feedback on the industry's behalf - to provide your input [CLICK HERE](#).

## Industry livid at EK cuts

THE slashing of base travel agent commission by Emirates (*TD* breaking news) has been greeted with fury across the sector, with AFTA saying it will be raising concerns about the move with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

Yesterday EK confirmed agency base commission would move from 5% to just 1% on all Emirates Economy class fares ticketed in Australia and NZ, for journeys commencing in both countries to all destinations.

Business and First class fares will move to base commission rates of 2%, versus the current 6% payout, while trans-Tasman journeys will not attract any commission at all.

EK said the disruption forced by the pandemic meant "now is the right time for our industry to adopt new ways of working".

The cuts will become effective from 01 Jul 2022, allowing time for the carrier's account

executives to "work with and support our key industry partners during the transitional phase".

AFTA CEO Dean Long said agents were strenuously opposed to the changes "that are geared towards forcing agency customers to pay more for international flights... this will have widespread adverse impacts on the travelling public, given that agents sell some 60% of the airfares sold in Australia".

With concerns already stated about the removal of competition through code share arrangements, "AFTA believes that these reductions will further reduce competition and choice," he said.

"Changes in fees only serve to decrease competition, create an uneven playing field and lower service levels to Australians."

The EK Economy commission cuts match those set to be implemented on the same day next year by Emirates' alliance partner Qantas (*TD* 20 May).

## Another AAT CEO

THE Travel Corporation (TTC) Chairman for Australia, Dave Hosking, this morning announced the upcoming departure of AAT Kings Group CEO Matt Fuller, just over 12 months after he took on the role (*TD* 17 Aug 2020).

The position will be taken on effective 10 Jan 2022 by Ben Hall, who is currently based in London as the CEO of Tracoin Services Ltd, the group's contracting division, and who has been with TTC for more than two decades.

Hall, who was also formerly MD of Contiki in Europe, will relocate to Australia with his family to take on the AAT Kings CEO role.

Hosking thanked Fuller for his contribution, confirming he would leave AAT Kings later in Jan.

He said TTC had focused on internal talent for the key position, adding that he and TTC President Gavin Tollman were impressed with the high calibre of candidates and "are delighted that Hall has accepted".

## MELBOURNE ON ANOTHER LEVEL



Melbourne Skydeck introduces an augmented reality model of Melbourne, an impressive and interactive 3-D model of the city built to an accurate scale of 1:1000. Guests can delve into Melbourne's history, showcasing the development and stories of Melbourne through various moments in time.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

JOURNEY BEYOND



## Window Seat

**SPIDER** senses tingling?

With international border restrictions coming down, tourists have already started to make their way back to the eastern states of Australia, including one arachnid-like VIP.

Spider-Man was seen scaling Sydney's rooftops earlier today (pictured), ahead of the reveal of his new-look figure at the city's Madame Tussauds.

Spidey is wearing a brand-new suit from his latest movie, *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, allowing visitors the chance to marvel at his outfit and get up close and personal with the superhero.



## No round 3 grants: AFTA

**EXCLUSIVE**

AFTA CEO Dean Long yesterday advised there will not be a third round of the COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support Program, after ongoing discussions with Government officials confirmed there would be no further

### ITB Berlin off again

THE organisers of the ITB travel trade show scheduled for Mar 2022 have announced that the in-person edition will not take place as originally planned because they can't give exhibitors certainty.

Instead the show will feature a livestreamed convention and Digital Business Day as well as in-person ITB Berlin satellite events across the year.

ITB Berlin head David Ruetz said "we deeply regret this situation," but said it was unavoidable given tightened travel restrictions and attendance caps in Germany.



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payments forthcoming as part of the \$254 million grants program.

Speaking during an AFTA webinar, Long noted that the Federation had for some time been urging members not to rely on another round, with the new advocacy focus for the industry seeking workforce funding (TD 29 Nov) "to support your employees and your businesses in rebooking through this time".

He said AFTA was continuing to engage with the Government to highlight the new push, with Long and AFTA Board members having over 30 meetings with MPs and other officials over the last month.

**MEANWHILE** Long highlighted the restart of key aspects of the ATAS scheme (TD yesterday), telling members that the focus on handling of client funds meant "if you are ATAS you should only be dealing with those that are ATAS accredited, they've gone through that independent process".

## CTM successfully raises \$75 million

**CORPORATE** Travel Management this morning confirmed the successful placement of about 3.6 million fully paid ordinary shares via a fully underwritten placement to institutional investors.

The capital raising is being used to partly fund the 100% acquisition of Helloworld's corporate businesses (TD 15 Dec), with a further \$25 million expected from a share purchase plan for eligible shareholders in Australia and New Zealand.

Corporate Travel Management is paying a total of \$175 million for the Helloworld "crown jewels" including QBT, TravelEdge, Show Group, Inspire Travel Management and AOT Hotels in Australia, and APX and Atlas Travel in New Zealand - \$100m in cash and \$75m in CTM shares.

More of the latest corporate travel news on **page four**.



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## Touchdown for the very first time



**VIRGIN** Australia's first international flight since the COVID-19 pandemic (and since the carrier emerged from voluntary administration) has taken off, with the airline saying "bula" to Fiji yesterday morning.

To celebrate the significant milestone, VA CEO Jayne Hrdlicka hosted an epic party prior to the flight's departure, naturally featuring Fijian-Australian singer-songwriter Paulini who performed - you guessed it - Madonna's 'Like A Virgin', with the airline's cabin crew taking centre stage as back-up dancers.

Hrdlicka also gave every passenger a free Economy return flight anywhere on the Virgin

## Aman plots yacht

**LUXURY** hospitality group Aman Resorts has announced its first yacht, in a project undertaken in partnership with Cruise Saudi, an entity owned by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

So-called "Project Sama" will see the creation of an Aman-managed 200m, 50-suite vessel set to launch in 2025, which will reflect the hotelier's Eastern heritage and philosophy, with multiple dining options, a Japanese garden, two helipads and a "beach club" at the stern to give guests direct water access.

domestic network, as a thank you for their support and loyalty.

"Today is a significant day for Virgin Australia and our wonderful team members with the commencement of our first international flight since our relaunch 12 months ago.

"Prior to the pandemic, Virgin Australia held the highest market share of any Australian carrier for services operated to Fiji and we aim to continue being very competitive," she said.

"We also know how important it is to our guests that we have a comprehensive network of flights operated by Virgin Australia and our partner airlines, so they can explore the world and build their businesses."

Hrdlicka described the mood in Sydney Airport as "electric".

"It's really heart-warming to see how excited our guests are to be travelling overseas again," she added.

To coincide with the inaugural flight, Virgin also announced a snap 48-hour Fiji sale, with fares from Sydney from as low as \$369.

Fares are now available to book until midnight, or until sold out.

Virgin will operate daily direct services between Australia and Fiji, before returning to Indonesia and New Zealand in the new year.

**Pictured**, Paulini and Hrdlicka crack out the coconuts.

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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to read



## NSW plots student travel

**WITH** additional cohorts of international students arriving in Sydney over the coming weeks, the NSW Government has released details of a new strategy which aims to lay the foundation for the recovery of the overseas student sector.

Four key pillars include further expediting the return of international students to the state, promotion and marketing of NSW's "great study destinations and experiences", ensuring the student experience is memorable and positive beyond the classroom walls, and developing the international education ecosystem for sustainable long-term growth.

Minister for Tourism, Stuart Ayres, said two more special student flights were scheduled to arrive on 24 Dec and 09 Jan, while the easing of restrictions

means that other vaccinated students were also able to return by their own means.

"Now that they're able to return, we're actively working to build returning students' employability and reconnect them with available job opportunities, such as the thousands of hospitality roles that were previously held by international students," he said.

The NSW Government will support the strategy with the appointment of in-market education specialists in a range of source markets, building on its existing presence in Jakarta with expansion into India, ASEAN and Latin America by the end of 2022.

See [www.study.sydney](http://www.study.sydney).

## BA, QR to extend Joint Business

**BRITISH** Airways has this week resumed services between the UK and Doha, with the move seeing the carrier and Qatar Airways announce their intention to extend their existing cooperation.

The proposal would include codesharing on flights to Europe from Sydney, Colombo, Singapore and Nairobi, as well as onwards from London to Dublin, Madrid and Amsterdam.

The expanded pact is subject to regulatory approval in a range of markets, with the carriers saying they expect to provide further updates in the first half of 2022.

## Canada travel alert

**THE** Canadian Government has released new guidance, urging its citizens to avoid all international travel even if they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

The country's Health Minister cited the rapid spread of the Omicron variant for the move.

The advisory also notes the implementation of strict travel restrictions in some countries due to spread of the virus, meaning it's possible travellers could have difficulty returning home.

An advertisement for the Tourism Malaysia website. The background is a night view of the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The text reads: "TOURISM MALAYSIA" with a logo, "SHARPEN YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF MALAYSIA", and "with the Travel Daily Training Academy". At the bottom, there is a "CLICK HERE" button and the "Travel Daily" logo.

## CORPORATE UPDATE

### Duty of Care top priority

A NEW report commissioned by Amadeus has identified Duty of Care as the number one business travel requirement for clients as the global corporate travel market begins to ramp up again.

The research, based on feedback from executives at more than 250 TMCs across the world, aimed to examine the changing priorities of business travel.

Worldwide more than 90% of business travellers want to be informed about the health and safety information on the country they are visiting, both before and during their business trip.

Another trend noted was the increasing prevalence of last-minute changes, such as flight cancellations as a result of new quarantine restrictions or testing requirements.

Almost half of the TMCs surveyed noted a shift from 'unmanaged' to 'managed' travel, with the proportion even higher in the Asia-Pacific region where this trend was noted by 57% of the survey respondents.

"As planning for a business trip becomes increasingly complex with logistical and risk management exercises, employees will require assistance

### LH, TripActions pact

THE Lufthansa Group has announced a partnership with TripActions, with the joint development of a "customer-driven solution that allows small- and medium-sized enterprises to enjoy all the benefits they experience from the airlines of the Lufthansa Group...via the tech-forward user experience of the TripActions travel platform".

Clients will be able to book work trips using the solution, which incorporates policy and profile management, sustainability solutions, duty of care, real-time reporting and centralised billings.

The new platform will initially launch in LH home markets in early 2022.

when it comes to travel arrangements," the report noted.

In terms of the future of the business travel sector, 71% of TMCs in the Asia-Pacific region cited technological advancements as the top strategy for the industry's recovery.

Automation of routine service desk enquiries and the offering of more self-service tools to clients would allow TMCs to focus on other areas such as traveller safety, respondents said.

Amadeus Asia-Pacific MD, Mieke De Schepper, said "TMCs in Asia Pacific are the most optimistic that business travel will recover - something which has already happened in the Chinese domestic market - and resume its impressive long-term growth trajectory".

"But much has changed, and APAC TMCs see clear opportunities in the new world of business travel to also further improve on the past," she said.

The full report is available for download at [amadeus.com](https://www.amadeus.com).

### CWT joins CECP

CWT has become part of the Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose (CECP) organisation, a group which aims to "create a better world through business".

CEO Michelle McKinney Frymire said being affiliated with CECP would help "accelerate and further enhance our plans to be a best in class employer, provider and member of the local and global community in which we serve".

### Radius addition

ITALIAN TMC Btexpert has joined Corporate Travel Management's Radius network in the European region.

Btexpert is part of the Robintur Travel Group, while CTM acquired Radius as part of its Travel & Transport takeover last year (TD 28 Sep 2020).

## Did you know?

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



## Hawai'i, you had me at aloha



HAWAII'I has welcomed its first Australian visitors since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as Hawaiian Airlines yesterday resumed its Sydney-Honolulu flights after 21 months.

HA staff welcomed the first guests from Australia to touch down in the state aboard HA452 with a fresh lei, a keepsake tote bag, food & drink, and live entertainment by Hawaiian's Serenaders Group.

The airline will continue to operate its pre-pandemic Sydney schedule, a five-times-weekly service, with its 278-seat, widebody Airbus A330.

International travellers entering the United States via Hawai'i

must show proof of vaccination and a negative COVID-19 test taken within 24 hours of departure, and are encouraged to monitor federal travel regulations to ensure they are following the latest entry requirements.

**Pictured** are Hawaiian's Australian team members: Head of Industry Sales Australia Andrew Best, Regional Director Australia & New Zealand Andrew Stanbury, Sales Support Co-ordinator Celeste Arthur, Senior Manager, South Pacific, Airport Operations Kathy Mainerd, and General Manager - Airport Operations Daniel Arbovski.

### Tasman now open

MARRIOTT'S Luxury Collection brand has debuted in Australia today, with the opening of The Tasman, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Hobart.

Situated in the historic centre of the city, The Tasman is on Salamanca Place with an elegant fronting on Murray Street, close to the Salamanca Markets, St David's Park and Sullivan's Cove.

The 152-room property offers a unique architectural experience which incorporates the site's history, with its Art Deco rooms dating back to 1937.

### KUL tech upgrade

SITA has completed a significant technology upgrade at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, meaning passengers will now benefit from biometric-enabled self-service touchpoints.

The deployment includes more than 100 SITA Smart Path kiosks, as well as automated bag drop and an IT infrastructure refresh.

The slimline TS6 kiosks feature wireless connectivity, and support the Sita Flex platform and the latest common-use API services to facilitate a low-touch, fully mobile passenger experience, with Malaysia Airports also migrating to Windows 10.

## Journey Beyond showcases Skydeck

**CELEBRATING** the launch of Melbourne Skydeck, trade and media partners were amongst the guests invited to experience the transformed multi-million-dollar attraction prior to the official relaunch on 15 Dec.

The night started with a tour of the Voyager Theatre, an immersive 6-D virtual reality experience that is the first of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere and largest of its kind in the world.

On level 88, above Melbourne's glittering skyline, with champagne on pour guests revelled in the enthusiasm and passion of the future of tourism, remembering the year that was, and in eager anticipation of the year to come.

Aunty Joy began with a heartfelt Welcome To Country, followed by General Manager, Mark Shaw who praised the efforts of all who were involved in this enormous project.

As well as mesmerising views, the Melbourne Skydeck also offers an array of thrill-seeking experiences including the Edge, Plank and the stunning Voyager Theatre - more details at [melbourneskydeck.com.au](http://melbourneskydeck.com.au).



**AMBER** Kelly, Express Travel Group; Michelle Mickan from Abercrombie & Kent; and Susan Haberle, The Inspire Collective.



**MELBOURNE** Skydeck GM Mark Shaw welcomes the industry to the stunning new attraction.



**DINO** and Natalie Scungio from Great Trains.



**CHELSEA** Rogerson from Abercrombie & Kent enjoying the Plank Experience.



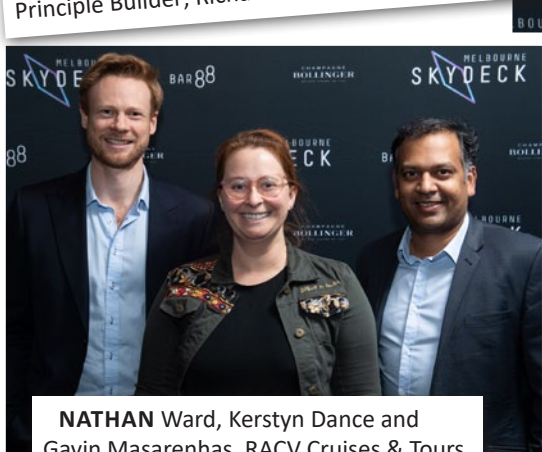
**AUNTY** Joy Murphy Wandin AO, a senior Wurundjeri Elder, presented the Welcome to Country.



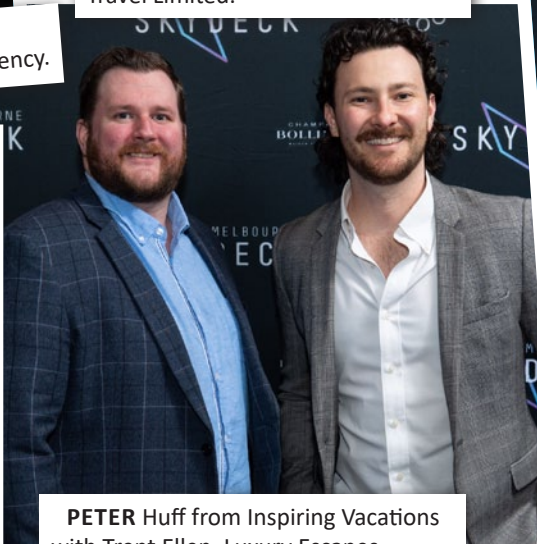
**INES** Iniesta from Journey Beyond; Bob Couchi, Principle Builder; Richard Henderson, R-Co Brand Agency.



**SARAH** Gerrand, Jordan Carpenter and Kate Cosgrove from Helloworld Travel Limited.



**NATHAN** Ward, Kerstyn Dance and Gavin Masarenhas, RACV Cruises & Tours.



**PETER** Huff from Inspiring Vacations with Trent Ellen, Luxury Escapes.



**QUENTIN** Long from Australian Traveller with Justine Lally, Journey Beyond GM of Marketing.

## New Smartraveller guide

**THE** Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has released a 'Planning to travel during COVID-19: step by step' guide to help Australians with what they might expect, from planning through to arrival back home.

The seven-step Smartraveller guide helps travellers decide whether it's safe to go, plan their trip, get passport and visas ready, get travel insurance and other documents ready, leave Australia through border control, and return to the country.

The guide also details what to watch for while you're away, including staying up-to-date with changes to local restrictions, following the rules for the destination you're in, and knowing what to do and who to contact if something happens while you're away.

Smartraveller advises Aussies to

read its global COVID-19 health advisory, as well as the travel advice for each destination and all potential transit locations, so they understand the risks for every place they are planning to visit, as well as entry and exit requirements.

Australians are also encouraged to read Smartraveller's general travel advice before they go to help plan to stay safe and healthy, and find out what is needed when travelling with children.

Travellers should also get a health check and organise travel vaccinations, as some need to be received well in advance of your trip, particularly those which require several doses.

In the lead-up to last month's highly anticipated reopening of Australia's borders, Smartraveller removed the "Do Not Travel" advisory for most destinations.

## 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)

**SKYE Suites** has released a summer package deal, A SKYE SUMMER, which includes the contents of the minibar, including a bottle of rose. Rates start at \$178, and include late check-out, complimentary wi-fi, and more. Valid until the end of summer, [CLICK HERE](#) for bookings.

**Azamara's** wave season travel special offerings a saving of up to 15%, as well as USD\$500 of onboard credit for those booking by the end of Mar. Available on a wide variety of 2022 & 2023 voyages, the deals include Azamara's typical inclusions, such as gratuities, select beverages, exclusive cultural events and more. [CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

Large savings have been announced for Ponant's 2023 Kimberley expedition voyage through **Cruise Traveller**. Save almost \$15,000 per couple, and pay no single supplement, on the luxury, all-inclusive voyage when booking by the end of next month. To book call 1800 507 777.

## FBI gets together for Xmas



**AFTER** almost 22 months of limited personal connection, the team at FBI Travel was thrilled to finally get together recently and celebrate at the agency's Christmas party (**pictured**).

The opportunity to gather and connect in person "made the entire team acutely aware of

what we had been missing for so long," according to MDs Mark Chaskiel and Danny Englman.

During the evening they spoke about the "interesting and testing time" for the whole team, hailing their staffs' performance and recapping on some of the obstacles faced, as well as some of the amazing successes and opportunities now happening at FBI, such as new team members, further employment opportunities, new business, and new technology.

## Maltese cannabis

**MALTA** is likely to attract a new cohort of drug-smoking tourists in the coming years after becoming the first European nation to legalise personal use and small-scale cultivation of cannabis.

However it will be illegal to consume the drug in public or in front of children.

Other countries considering similar plans include Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland, while the Netherlands tolerates cannabis use in some situations.

## Icelandair to RDU

**ICELANDAIR** has announced new seasonal services from its newest North American gateway, Raleigh-Durham International, providing North Carolina with easy connections to Europe.

The new route to Reykjavik will operate four times a week beginning 12 May, flying on a 160-seat Boeing 737 MAX-8.

## Rex BNE-MEL launch

**REX Airlines'** Brisbane-Melbourne flights have taken off, in a further expansion of the carrier's domestic jet network.

"This is a momentous day for Rex as we embark on the third leg of the golden triangle for the very first time," said Chair John Sharp.

"As other carriers scramble to follow our lead, the travelling public is the big winner with airfares tumbling to record low levels," he added, referring to Rex's launch fare of \$79.

"This also marks the restart of Rex's expansion into the domestic market after the hiatus brought about by the border shutdowns and we plan to more than double our domestic fleet over the next 12 months," Sharp confirmed.

Got a confidential tip? Contact *Travel Daily* via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click [HERE](#)