



QR can't touch this

QATAR Airways is gearing up to introduce new "zero-touch" in-flight entertainment technology across its fleet of A350s as part of the airline's latest COVID-19 safety measures.

The new tech allows passengers to pair personal devices with their seat-back in-flight entertainment screens by scanning a QR code displayed on the screen, unlocking a suite of options on their devices.

Also set to debut will be options for Business and Economy pax to pair personal Bluetooth headphones with in-flight entertainment on Boeing 787-9s.

The carrier said the concept would limit onboard surface contact and provide greater peace of mind for its customers, with no launch date confirmed.

No bail for dodgy agent

FORMER South Australian travel consultant Arthur Zacharias (**TD** 09 Aug 2016) will await his fate in prison, after yesterday being refused bail during a hearing in the Adelaide Magistrates court.

49-year-old Zacharias was contracted to Axis Travel between 2014 and 2016, during which he defrauded clients and the owner, Max Najar.

Najar told the court how Zacharias had stolen almost five years of his life in an "orchestrated and cruel" scheme which personally cost him hundreds of thousands of dollars.

"What you did to me, my family, my business, my valued clients, my trusted suppliers and the entire travel industry is morally reprehensible, especially as you have displayed no sincere regard, concern or remorse for what you intentionally and strategically perpetrated in pursuit of your selfish actions," he said.

Najar told **Travel Daily** that in retrospect his strategy of rescuing clients and repaying suppliers out of personal funds was wise.

"The incentive we had was the need for us to bring Zacharias to

justice and not let him get away with his totally orchestrated and deliberately callous methods".

He hailed assistance from Gow Gates Insurance and other travel industry colleagues, which had helped Axis provide evidence of fraud, Ponzi schemes, ID theft and GDS manipulations.

"New strategies and verification processes have now been adopted by our agency...other agents, airlines and suppliers should consider implementing these to save them the torment, costs, time, stress and monetary losses we have been tortured with," Najar added.

The deceptions included booking one way flights to Europe despite providing itineraries that clearly included return travel, as well as a plan to part-purchase the agency from Najar using money obtained from a former Hells Angels bikie gang member.

Zacharias had previously pleaded guilty to multiple offences including 19 counts of dishonestly dealing with property without consent.

He had also breached an earlier suspended good behaviour bond for earlier fraud expenses in relation to fake social security claims, the court heard.

The fraudster's sentencing will take place in the first week of Mar, with Najar saying he was pleased to have "done our part to remove him from the travel industry".

Swan Hellenic appoints GSA

EXPEDITION cruise line Swan Hellenic has linked up with Aviation Online division Cruise Online to represent the brand in Australia and the Pacific.

The line said the move is part of its strategic vision to establish a presence in more international markets and strengthen its ties to the travel trade.

Travel the World Group has also been Swan Hellenic's preferred Australian partner for 10 years.

Senate motions

THE Australian Senate has formally signalled a motion to discuss the extension of JobKeeper for the tourism and travel sector beyond 28 Mar.

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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news including our PUZZLE page plus a full page from **Singapore Travel Specialist**.

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THE GHAN SPECIAL OFFER



Overseas arrivals down

OVERSEAS arrivals to Australia in Jan were down by 9.7% on Dec to 31,700 estimated trips, according to new provisional statistics released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Unsurprisingly, the figure was down markedly on the same period last year before the pandemic struck, with the ABS showing a 98.6% decrease.

Of the total number, 14,100 were by Australian citizens, while departures also decreased in Jan by 14.1%, with 42,900 estimated travellers leaving our shores.

New Zealand led the way again as the biggest source market for arrivals in Jan, recording 4,400 travellers, while China and India tied in second spot with 1,500 each with India's inbound volumes dropping by 13.4% on Dec 2020, and China bucked the trend by increasing arrival numbers by 12.8%.

Other countries showing an

increase were the United States, which was up 13.9% on Dec 2020, as well as Malaysia which boosted its inbound passengers by 31.4% from 330 to 430 people.

NSW took in the bulk of arrivals with 11,420, followed by Victoria with 7,070 and Qld with 5,840.

QF hits back at VA

FOLLOWING Virgin Australia's plan to launch new routes and frequencies for the Easter period (**TD** 19 Feb), Qantas will add three new routes and boost capacity to the New South Wales north coast.

Commencing 01 Apr, the airline will operate daily Melbourne to Coffs Harbour flights, Brisbane to Coffs Harbour four times a week, and for the first time Canberra to Byron Bay services operating twice a week.

Qantas said it would look to boost the Canberra/Byron service from Jul in line with demand.

Primus Syd bought

GLOBAL investment firm Pro-invest has enjoyed an active week in the Australian hotel market, acquiring the luxury five-star Primus Hotel in Sydney and revealing conversion plans for two properties in Brisbane.

The acquisition of Primus represents the company's first hotel in Sydney's CBD and its first in the luxury segment, labelling the purchase as an "exceptional opportunity to rebrand and reposition the hotel towards upscale lifestyle hospitality."

Primus Sydney's sale to Pro-invest is scheduled to be formally completed in Aug.

MEANWHILE the property investor has partnered with IHG Hotels & Resorts in Queensland to rebadge the Mercure Brisbane and the ibis Brisbane to become the 194-room voco Brisbane City Centre (opening later this year) and the 212-room Hotel Indigo Brisbane City Centre, scheduled to open in 2022.



Window Seat

THE Gold Coast is no stranger to grand tourism ideas, so it is no surprise the city has proposed some fairly bizarre visitor concepts over the years.

This week *The Gold Coast Bulletin* detailed just a few that never got off the ground, like the proposed giant geyser (**pictured**) which would have spurted water more than 150 meters into the air and would have acted like a clock, reaching the highest height on the hour.

Other ideas included the world's tallest bikini girl statue and a Polynesian theme park.



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*Offers correct as at 18 February 2021 and are subject to change or withdrawal. Offers end 31 March 2021 unless extended. For full terms and conditions click here.

Vax the way I like it

CRYSTAL Cruises has announced all guests will be required to be fully inoculated with a COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days prior to their cruise.

Guests will need to provide proof of vaccination before embarkation and must have received both doses of the vaccine, if recommended.

The variation in the availability of vaccines means crew members may not require it to sail, with operations now paused through to May.

An active reminder

NEW Zealand-based hiking and adventure tour company Active Adventures is reminding Aussie agents that its products offer generous commissions and increased booking flexibility.

Clients are able to transfer their \$500 deposit on trips to any future departure 30 days prior to the start date, and clients receive a free trip if they are not satisfied.

Active Adventures is also offering \$500 worth of value when \$250 of travel vouchers are purchased before Dec 31 2023.

Cooking up a return

COOK Islands Tourism has introduced a new travel agent specialist program that focuses on its two most popular islands - Rarotonga and Aitutaki.

The free education forum features five modules covering important topics such as activities, accommodation weather, the seasons & transport.

Once complete, agents can download a Certification of Completion certifying themselves as specialists for the Cook Islands.

Register to complete the new training modules [HERE](#).

New Adina Mel GMs

KEY General Manager appointments have been announced for Adina's pair of new Melbourne hotels.

Nigel Maxey will take control of Adina Apartment Hotel Melbourne Southbank, while Lucy Ockleston will be in charge of Adina Apartment Hotel West Melbourne.

Supporting Ockleston as Assistant General Manager will also be Emma Jarrett.

Tennis a smash for Emirates



THE lifting of Victoria's snap five-day lockdown yesterday saw Emirates back into full swing with its hospitality program at the Australian Open.

Industry partners are being hosted at tennis sessions through to the finals this weekend, with yesterday's day session including the exciting semi-final match between Serena Williams and Naomi Osaka.

Pictured above enjoying some pre-game libations are, from left: Keiran Cromie, Brighton Travelworld; Julie Abbott, Emirates; Julie Avery, Brighton Travelworld; and Emirates state manager Dean Cleaver.

MEANWHILE Chris McGetrick from Bayview Travel, who was also in the audience yesterday, suggested that Serena Williams could have been employed by Qantas to undertake some sneaky ambush marketing.

Her innovative one-piece catsuit sported exactly the same colours as the QF flight attendant uniforms ([right](#)).



A little Aussie luxe

TRIPADVISOR search data has revealed travellers are ready for international trips this year, many craving a hint of luxury.

More than one in 10 (11%) Australian travellers said they plan to stay at luxury accommodation in 2021, with almost that same amount having already done so (9%).

The 2021 travel splurge is not just apparent in the cost of each trip, with nearly a quarter (22%) of Aussie travellers saying they plan to take three or more int'l trips in 2021 - let's hope they can!

Qantas moves sims

QANTAS has announced new homes for its flight simulators, with a new training centre being built at Brisbane Airport, with another planned for Sydney, and the existing Flight Training Centre in Melbourne to be expanded.

The relocation has been triggered by the need for Qantas' simulation centre in Mascot to move to make way for a major roads project.

Help us discover
chocolate

AROUND THE WORLD

In the lead up to Easter, submit your chocolate recipes from around the world for our weekly feature.

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Travel Daily

CORPORATE UPDATE

Broad array of travel risk

FCM Travel Solutions Global Risk Product Leader Matthew DeMaris has told *Travel Daily* he fears there will be too much emphasis on coronavirus and how it relates to travel risk, and not enough on the downstream effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The release of FCM's Travel Risk Review 2020-2021 pointed to other topics such as the environment, cybersecurity and geopolitical risk as some of the largest obstacles corporate travellers will face this year.

Even in the wake of historically low travel volumes, DeMaris believes these issues may not

receive the requisite level of attention from sectors such as corporate travel thanks to the predominance of the pandemic.

"The civil unrest, the shifting geopolitical landscapes, the economic instability in weaker economies, that has the potential to be truly impactful," he said.

"Even as travel returns, travel risk management strategies will have to change and adapt to instability risks."

"The concerns from a risk management perspective is the fragmented approach to solving some of these issues... depending on the region and whether they have access to these tools, the road to recovery will remain fractured."

CTM CFO changes

CORPORATE Travel Management (CTM) has announced the resignation of Global CFO Neale O'Connell from Aug, with Deputy CFO Cale Bennett set to assume the role.

CEO Jamie Pherous was glowing in his appraisal of O'Connell, praising him for being "instrumental in managing the financial impacts of the company through COVID-19".

"Neale has helped to execute acquisitions in the current period and ensures CTM is in a strong financial position for recovery post-COVID-19," Pherous said.

CTM released its half-year financial report this week (**TD** 17 Feb), revealing an optimistic outlook that will seek to invest in more technology focused on traveller well-being and benefits from permanent cost reductions.

Serko signs inTravel

INDIGENOUS-OWNED InTravel Group has agreed to be a reseller for Serko's expense management platform Zeno in Australia.

"We pride ourselves on offering our clients a boutique service model & we're confident Zeno's intuitive platform will be a real drawcard for our customers," said Executive Director Dwayne Good.

Vaccine a game changer: GBTA

THE Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) has revealed that 79% of GBTA members and stakeholders would be "very comfortable" or "comfortable" travelling for business purposes if they have received a vaccination for COVID-19.

The latest results from the business travel association also found close to half of respondents would support mandatory testing prior to travel to ensure the safety of face-to-face meetings.

Overall, the finding showed there was an increased willingness to travel for business, with 55% of GBTA buyer and procurement members either "willing" or "very willing" to travel, up from 49% in Jan.

A majority of GBTA members (58%) also demonstrated support for airlines requiring passengers to provide proof of vaccination in order to fly once vaccines become more readily available, whereas only 28% thought it was a bad idea and 15% were unsure.

Close to 90% of GBTA members have not resumed business travel.

NEED A DISTRACTION AMID THE DOOM AND GLOOM?

Check out our daily puzzle page.



Travel Daily

This is Accor to action



ACCOR has launched ALL CONNECT (pictured), a new hybrid meeting concept powered by Microsoft Teams.

ALL CONNECT, upon its Apr launch, aims to enable Accor's guests to enjoy an enriched hybrid meeting experience through the combination of physical in-hotel meetings with virtual interactions across multiple locations.

Meetings will take place on

the Microsoft Teams platform, where attendees can connect and engage virtually with other parties located in Accor's meeting spaces.

Microsoft Teams Rooms and Surface Hub 2s will connect people on-site to those joining remotely.

Accor's target is to fit out 100% of its hotels across all its brands with meeting rooms with ALL CONNECT by 2022.



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Icon under a microscope



THIS landmark is iconic and easily recognisable when you see the whole picture, but can you identify it from this small portion of the image?

Although only one structure

is depicted, there are actually three in this landmark, one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

One of the greatest mysteries of this icon is how exactly it was built.

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2. NBO
3. PHE
4. BFS

2



AIRLINE LIVERIES

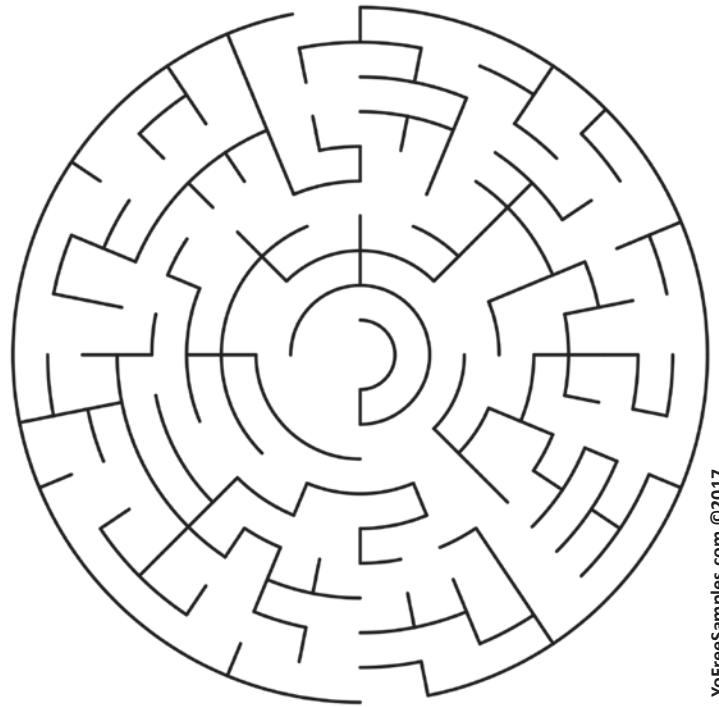


3



A-maze-ing

CAN you find your way through this maze? Start at the top and finish at the bottom.



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ANSWERS 18 FEB

Where in the world: Lake Taupo, New Zealand

Know your brands: 1 Westfield W-League, 2 Rodd & Gunn, 3 Zip Pay, 4 Hurtigruten

Whose animal is this: Gyrfacon - Iceland

Outback Qld reaches agents

THE Outback Queensland Tourism Association is gearing up to host its sold out Outback Queensland Muster - the first major travel trade event to be held in Queensland since COVID restrictions came into place.

The gathering will see 60 Outback Queensland tourism operators attend the event in Brisbane on Mon 22 Feb to share the virtues of their product to more than 70 travel agents from across the south east of the state.

The outback tourism push will also see a campaign run across print, digital, outdoor, social media and radio platforms.

Crown profit tumble

CROWN Resorts Limited has posted a \$120.9 million net loss for the six months to 31 Dec 2020, a 155.4% slide on the previous corresponding period.

Revenue during the period also fell by 62.1% to \$581 million, with EBITDA after Closure Costs & Significant items dwindling to only \$4.4 million.

Crown managed to record main floor gaming revenues of \$53.7 million, down 91.5% year-on-year, as well as non-gaming revenues of \$39.7 million, down 84.4% on the prior corresponding period.

Revised operating conditions and capacity limits due to COVID adversely impacted profits.

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

Emerald Cruises is offering savings of up to \$6,000 per couple as part of its Super Earlybird Offer for select European sailings. The promotion ends 31 Mar and is available with its deposit protection plan and commitment to health and safety guarantee. Call 1300 892 708 for more details.

Discounts of up to 25% on **Intrepid Travel's** 11-day WWF Giants of Antarctica expedition cruise is on offer for travellers until 31 Mar, and includes some meals, transport, and accommodation. Under the deal, prices per adult in a category 4 twin porthole room is \$13,350 per adult in a category 4 porthole room, down from \$15,705. Call 1300 458 437.

Discover the cultural splendours of the Indonesian archipelago on **Viking's** 17-day Komodo & the Australian Coast cruise, departing Sydney for Bali or vice versa from \$8,195 per person, twin share. The price represents savings of up to \$2,000 per couple when booked by 31 Mar. Bookings can be changed up to 24 hours prior to departure. Call 138 747 for more info.

With domestic borders once again relatively unrestricted, **Syd Airport** has discounted its parking rates by 30% in a bid to incentivise interstate holiday planning. The promotion is valid when booked before 15 Mar for vehicle entry by 11.59pm 15 Aug at the airport's Domestic Terminal P1/P2 and P3 car parks. Quote code "PARKATSYDK3LDC6". Book [HERE](#).

Gaura Travel reaches 10k



MELBOURNE-BASED travel company Gaura Travel recently celebrated the repatriation of 10,000 families since the start of the global travel shutdown.

When commercial flights operating to India ceased, the company's founders Abhishek and Ashwini Sonthalia stepped up to the plate to organise more than 40 charter flights for Indian citizens stranded in Australia.

Seeing that countless families were affected, Gaura Travel began knocking on the doors of airlines and government institutions in Australia and India, seeking a way forward to make the repatriation flights happen.

This included gaining the support of the Consulate of India in Melbourne, Singapore Airlines, Sri Lankan Airlines, Malaysia Airlines and Malindo Air to operate the first repatriation charter flights to India.

"We didn't know when we started everything that it would get this far, so it's all thanks to the support of our customers and our team, we are going to continue on this mission of reuniting as many families as we can," Ashwini Sonthalia said.

Initially, the company had only planned to get a couple of flights up and running, but after these

charter flights sold out almost immediately, Gaura worked to open many more services departing from Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide bound for Indian cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Bangalore.

Co-founder Abhishek Sonthalia said the pandemic had been a reminder for businesses to place people ahead of profits.

"Raj Kumar, the Consul General of India in Melbourne one day told me, you will get plenty of opportunities in your life to make money but take this as an opportunity to make blessings."

Pictured: The team in Melbourne celebrating the reuniting of its 10,000th family.

One Jucy big debt

THE collapse of the Jucy rental car and campervan business last year (**TD** 17 Nov 2020) left a \$44 million debt owing to ASB Bank, receivership documents show.

The business, which also operated short-stay tourist accommodation and ran cruises in Milford Sound, ran into trouble when the pandemic cut its revenue by more than 90%.

As of May 2020, the group's assets were valued at \$20m and most were sold to Polar Capital.

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

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