

Beyond extends

BEYOND Travel has extended its Special Travel Credits for clients who were unable to travel in 2020 through to 2023.

Clients that hold existing credits are now able to utilise them for travel to Europe and Sri Lanka until the end of 2023, and Beyond is also offering additional savings exclusive to travel credit holders on selected products in Europe taking place next year - call 1300 363 554 for more details.

BA protects tiers

BRITISH Airways has committed to protect the tier status for its Executive Club members.

Those whose Point collection end date falls between 01 Jul and 31 Dec will have their status protected for an additional 12 months, irrespective of how many Points they earn.

The move means no British Airways Executive Club member will lose their status this year.

ATG will give back more

THE APT Travel Group (ATG) has agreed to cease deducting marketing and overhead costs from refunds, following concerns raised by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

The consumer watchdog today revealed the outcome of ongoing negotiations with the company, over concerns APT and Travelmarvel had been deducting greater amounts from COVID-19 related refunds than entitled to under ATG terms and conditions.

The ACCC noted the 15% impost on high-value bookings meant a "significant amount was withheld from the refunds given to consumers".

Following months of engagement, the ACCC said ATG had now committed to cease deducting marketing and overhead costs from the refunds.

However, as part of a mutually reached resolution with the

ACCC, in instances where a refund is sought rather than a credit, APT will continue to deduct an amount to cover "reasonable losses" it has not been able to recover as a result of the travel shut down, and will also deduct \$400 per passenger fee.

The company has also agreed to provide customers who have previously received a refund quote with a revised quote, and to reimburse those who have received a reduced refund.

"The APT Travel Group understands the ACCC has a different interpretation of our terms and conditions in relation to refunds, however we have reached a mutually agreed position," said ATG Managing Director Chris Hall.

He added the new refund policy and ATG's 100% Future Holiday Credit went beyond the group's standard T&Cs, with impacted guests to be contacted by 31 Mar.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news including our PUZZLE page plus a full page from **Tourism Authority Thailand**.

PM signals support

PRIME Minister Scott Morrison has hinted that hard-hit industries such as travel and tourism will be the recipients of targeted support packages to replace JobKeeper which ends on 28 Mar.

The unconfirmed package is believed to involve a range of measures including interest-free business loans, with formal details expected to be released tomorrow.

MEANWHILE, Morrison has urged states and territories to accept a new risk framework that will effectively end the climate of sudden border changes.

"The 2020 response to COVID must be different in 2021... because the risk has changed."

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US air on same page

THE United States' airline industry has started lobbying the Biden Administration to approve a unified approach to rolling out a digital vaccine passport.

Groups including the US Chamber of Commerce and several airline trade organisation have collaborated on a letter to the White House outlining a uniform guidance for the travel sector to avoid pax confusion and reduce travel disincentives.

Royal suspensions

ROYAL Caribbean Group has delayed sailings through to 31 May, excluding *Odyssey of the Seas* (ex Israel) and *Quantum of the Seas* (ex Singapore).

Celebrity and Silversea have also suspended until 31 May.



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FCM's new brand, platform

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's FCM Travel Solutions has today announced a global rebrand, showcasing the development of "ground-breaking proprietary technology that directly targets customers' pain points with current and legacy corporate travel technology".

The new end-to-end brand identity (**pictured**) is being rolled out in 97 countries, including all FCM websites, customer communications and social media platforms, the company said.

The development of FCM's new tech platform is "already well advanced," according to Global Chief Technology Officer Adrian Lopez, who said core features will include a new proprietary online booking system planned for key markets, as well as the integration of artificial intelligence-enhanced chatbot Sam as the company's

FCM

digital avatar, providing live chat and real-time assistance across all of the platform's channels.

AI-powered reporting will also offer a search experience "similar to that of Google," Lopez promised, with customers in several regions around the world set to begin testing the FCM Platform prior to the first phase of onboarding later this year.

The in-house platform is an "omnichannel offering that is being developed following extensive research globally" which highlighted the need for an all-encompassing platform with a simple user interface that is consistent across all markets.

A video showcasing the new FCM brand is now online at traveldaily.com.au/videos.

Traveler ID update

AMADEUS has added new capabilities to its COVID travel safe tool Traveler ID, allowing passengers to use the tech either before departure, while checking in the airport or at a self-service kiosks or bag drop areas.

The new capability is agnostic to any airline passenger service system and can be integrated into airline systems as a standalone option without having to contract the full Traveler ID platform.

Traveler ID was created in order to speed up passenger processing during the challenges of COVID, providing a digital health verification that sits natively within airlines' IT systems.

"Traveler ID's new capability allows a passenger to show required health documentation in a secure and automated way, by adding it digitally into the airline or airport system, whether passengers check-in from home or at the airport," said Amadeus Global Program Lead, Safe Travel Ecosystem Monika Wiederhold.

Emerald rebrands

THE Emerald Waterways and Emerald Yacht Cruises brands have formally been folded under one name, Emerald Cruises.

The rebrand has seen the launch of new social media accounts and a new website, accessible **HERE**

"We believe moving to a single brand will support our long term growth ambitions," said Global Director of Brand and Marketing David Winterton.



JUST because air traffic is down around the world that doesn't mean the stories of human courage in the aviation sector have evaporated.

This point was especially evident at Liberty International Airport last week, when celebrity physician Dr Oz rushed to the aid of a man who collapsed of a heart attack near the baggage claim carousel.

The TV doc and astute businessman, who was luckily on the same return flight as the patient, jostled his way through stunned onlookers to clear the 60-year-old man's airways and perform emergency CPR before paramedics arrived.

Soon after, police and nurses approached with defibrillators to save the man's life.

Oz, a trained cardiac surgeon before he began hawking medical products on daytime television, not only healed one heart during the incident, but stole the hearts of many who witnessed the medical heroics.





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Vaccine jabs confidence

THE International Air Transport Association (IATA) has released new figures that demonstrate a growing confidence toward air travel on the back of global vaccination rollouts.

Recent polling carried out by the body showed that four in five travellers would be “more likely” to travel once they were vaccinated, while almost 90% of respondents want governments around the globe to standardise vaccine and testing certificates.

On the same theme, 85% believe that governments should be proactive in setting COVID-19 targets, such as testing capacity or vaccine distribution, in a bid to re-open int'l borders sooner.

Encouragingly, close to 60% of travellers said they expect to be travelling overseas within two months of the pandemic being “contained”, an improvement on the one in two result to the same question conducted last Sep.

Quarantine arrangements continue to be a major

disincentive for travellers, with 84% of respondents suggesting they would not travel if there was a chance of mandatory quarantine at their destination.

The poll also showed strong support for digital health passports, like IATA's Travel Pass which is currently being trialled by Singapore Airlines (*TD 09 Mar*), with four in five travellers saying they would use the technology as soon as it was made available.

Privacy regarding travel data will likely be a major talking point around the implementation of vaccine passports however, with 78% suggesting they would only use a travel credential app if they had full control over their data.

Meanwhile 84% of people said COVID-19 would not be disappearing anytime soon and needed its risk profile managed.

NSW agritourism

THE NSW Government is set to make it easier for the state's farmers to operate new agritourism businesses, with NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Rob Stokes simplifying the rules to create tourist attractions.

Part of NSW's COVID recovery scheme, the slashing of red tape will likely precipitate more farm stays, retreats, roadside stalls and small wedding reception venues across the state's rural areas, stimulating much needed domestic travel and presenting a potential multi-billion dollar tourism opportunity for NSW.

“These changes reflect our commitment to supporting regional communities to rebuild and recover from the devastating impacts of drought, bushfires and the pandemic,” Stokes said.

Other Aussie states like Tasmania has managed to grow agritourism in its sector to \$1.1 billion annually, with NSW confident that with 14 times the population and 12 times the area, the move could be a major asset to its tourism economy.

Sunshine Coast's beautiful blooms



YESTERDAY Visit Sunshine Coast welcomed some of its key industry partners to a highly anticipated in-person gathering at Sydney's Four Seasons Hotel.

The special showcase aimed to highlight the wide array of accommodation, experiences and activities offered by the destination, which is also increasingly accessible as new aviation routes open up.

In fact despite COVID-19, from

next month Maroochydore Airport will have the same capacity as in Apr 2019, including new direct connections from Newcastle and Canberra, as well as connections with Alliance Airlines on to Cairns.

Pictured above with some of the spectacular fruity and floral table decorations are, from left: Jessica Small, TripAdvisor; Emily Zinowki, Visit Sunshine Coast; and Ashley McEwen from Klook.

Startup airline in Jun

A NEW European airline startup is reportedly gearing up to launch to the market in Jun, boasting plans to operate long-haul routes from Dubrovnik and Prague initially using four wet lease Airbus jets.

The ambitious plan has been unveiled by Pragusa.one which is seeking to introduce routes from central Europe to major international air hubs including Beijing, Chengdu, Johannesburg, Kuala Lumpur, Los Angeles, New York, Singapore and Tokyo.

Interestingly, the airline has mapped plans to fly exclusively Premium Economy flights, featuring a reduced 251 seats on board both its A350-900 and A330-300 aircraft.

The company's website also suggests it will be offering seven- and 14-day roundtrip packages and premium onboard services.

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AROUND THE WORLD

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

[CLICK HERE](#)

Travel Daily



Seen it at the movies



TOURISTS who visit the US state of Oregon are typically drawn to its old growth forests, salmon fishing and dune buggy rides, however the state also played host in 1980 to one of the spookiest films ever made.

Based on a book by prolific horror author Stephen King, the

movie takes place on the grounds of haunted Overlook Hotel, where a man with writer's block drags his family along for the ride to be harassed by a band of aggressive poltergeists.

Can you name the movie before somebody says, "Here's Johnny"?

Pub quiz

- In the Netherlands, coffee shops will sell you a coffee with what to go alongside it?
 - Cake
 - Cheese
 - Cannabis
- Is Vientiane in Laos or Thailand?
- Riegelmann Boardwalk can be found in what popular North American tourist destination?
- Cirque du Soleil's *Zumanity* is a cabaret-style show which can be viewed at which Las Vegas hotel-casino?
- Golden Horn Bay is located in what country?
 - Russia
 - USA
 - Australia
 - South Korea
- The Shard is a skyscraper found in what city?
- Glenelg Beach in South Australia opens out onto what bay?
- Which two rivers meet in Launceston to become the Tamar River?
- Peter I Land and Queen Maud Land are territories belonging to what country?
- What is the capital of Poland?

Sudoku

DIABOLICAL

THE aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Numbers can only be used once in each row, column, and 3x3 box.

		3				8	7	
	9	2			5			
				6				9
				4	8			1
	7	9				4	8	
3			1	9				
6				2				
			3			2	4	
	2	8				9		

www.sudokuoftheday.com - visit them and get a new Sudoku every day!

Funnies Flashback



WE'VE trawled through the **TD** Window Seat archives to give you a blast from the past. Here's some gems from 30 Jun 2014:

FORGET SARS, MERS and bird flu - travel doctors should be on high alert for a new syndrome which has been identified in China this week.

So-called "World Cup Fever" has become so prevalent in the soccer-obsessed country that a special clinic has been set up to treat the syndrome in a hospital in Chengdu, in Sichuan province.

Said to combine listlessness, tiredness and insomnia, other symptoms also include stomach cramps, loss of appetite and weakened immune systems.

Physicians are on standby 24 hours a day to treat side effects including psychological issues related to World Cup hysteria.

"This is new territory for us, but there is no getting away from the fact that people have been making themselves ill through football," said one of the doctors at the clinic.

ANSWERS 09 MAR

Celebrity faces: Eyes - Chris Pratt, Nose - Whoopi Goldberg, Mouth - Brett Tollman, The Travel Corporation

Unscramble: fell, floe, flue, fuel, hell, hello, help, helpful, hole, holey, hope, hopeful, HOPEFULLY, hype, lope, loupe, pelf, pole, pule, pulley, yell, yelp

Music to cruise ears

CRYSTAL Cruises has expanded its 2022 offerings with more capacity and new itineraries, including the reintroduction of *Crystal Mozart* for sailings departing from Vienna.

The vessel will offer 38 deluxe window suites dedicated to solo travellers, with no single supplements on all voyages.

Next year will also see *Crystal Mahler* sailing new Rhine, Moselle and multi-river voyages.

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

\$26k charity raise

CRYSTALBROOK Collection has raised more than \$26,000 for mental health in support of organisation Beyond Blue.

The hospitality company launched the give-back campaign in Jul, donating five dollars from every online booking.

The money will directly assist around 552 people seeking mental health relief.

CEO Geoff York said the support was fitting, given what the travel industry had been through.

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.



Marking Radisson Individuals' debut in India, **Classic Grande Imphal**, a member of **Radisson Individuals** has opened, offering 171 uniquely designed rooms in Imphal, the capital city of Manipur. Each hotel joining the Radisson Individuals brand is selected

for their own characteristics and personalities, and Classic Grande Imphal offers views of the Baruni Twin Hills, and is just 6km away from the busy Bir Tikendrajit International.



GMH Luxury Hotels & Resorts is planning **The Chedi Katara Hotel & Resort** for Doha, the capital of Qatar. The 91-key resort will incorporate a heritage design and will open at Katara - The Cultural Village Foundation, a waterfront area with an amphitheatre,

museum & convention centre, as well as shops, eateries and a beach. The resort will be comprised of 59 rooms and suites, as well as 31 chalets, and will be developed by a local real estate consortium.



Hyatt Centric Beale Street Memphis, which is opening later this month, is located centrally at Beale Street & Front, just a 15-minute drive from Memphis International. The 277-guest room hotel consists of a Latin-inspired restaurant; an

open-air whiskey bar with fire pits; private cabanas; and a dedicated stage for live music. The hotel also offers panoramic views of Memphis, and the Mississippi River.

Never mask your pride



VIRGIN Australia's maiden Brisbane-Sydney Pride Flight (**TD** 12 Feb), took to the skies ahead of the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras last weekend, with guests on board including performer Maxi Shield and Corporate Travel Australia's Milling Harpur (**pictured** front).

Other VIPs included Richard Reid, Jack Vidgen, Sophie Cashia and Alli Simpson (**inset**), with the special celebration including a keenly anticipated pre-flight departure party at BNE, as well as a slightly more surprising mid-air marriage proposal.

The one-off flight carried more than 120 passengers and was operated by LGBT cabin crew, with guests enjoying mid-air drag performances and in-flight games, including seat pocket bingo.

With an abundance of glitter, rainbows and sky-high stilettos, the event was hosted by Australian drag royalty and veteran Virgin cabin crew member Penny Tration, who also performed at the pre-flight departure party.

Food and beverages were free flowing, with a Yarra Burn

Prosecco signature cocktail topped with glitter fairy floss, and Streets Golden Gaytimes.

Confectionery company Darrell Lea also played a part in the flight, for the first time in almost 100 years changing the name of its iconic liquorice product, to 'Darrell Lea Loves Allsorts'.

Speaking at Brisbane Airport ahead of the Pride Flight, Virgin Australia Group Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director Jayne Hrdlicka said she was proud of what Virgin stands for.

"It's a privilege to lead a company that celebrates diversity and inclusion in the way that Virgin Australia does, and I'm incredibly proud of our team who have created such a fantastic event for LGBTQ+ people and their allies to celebrate Pride," she said.

"Every year, so many of our guests fly with us for the annual celebrations in Sydney and we wanted to show them how much we support and value the community.

"We also have many in our team who identify as LGBTQ+ and we want them to know they can come to work each day as their true, authentic selves."

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