

Crompton to leave Cover-More

EXCLUSIVE

JUDITH Crompton has resigned from her role as Asia Pacific CEO of Cover-More Travel Insurance, with her departure effective 31 Dec precipitating a number of changes in the business.

According to an internal company update obtained by **Travel Daily**, Todd Nelson will become Cover-More MD Australia with responsibility for local distribution partnerships and operations, while Will Ashcroft will be MD New Zealand, with added responsibility for strategic business development in both Australia and New Zealand.

Crompton joined Cover-More in 2016 to lead the group's global retail travel and airline business.

Flight Centre profit push

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) is targeting a return to monthly profitability in both its leisure and corporate operations by the end of Jun 2022, but says the exact timing of the recovery is uncertain and "remains largely in government hands".

CEO Graham "Skroo" Turner told the FCTG Annual General Meeting this morning that the recent easings in restrictions both locally and abroad would potentially deliver "material benefits" to the business, having already given rise to a surge in enquiries.

Turner said the UK, USA and Fiji were emerging as hotspots, with bookings to Fiji via Flight Centre's Ignite Travel Group deals business already in line with pre-COVID levels in Oct 2019.

International leisure bookings have now surpassed domestic bookings in Australia for the first time since the start of the pandemic, almost tripling between Jul and Sep, he said.

The company is already returning sales staff to full-time roles to ensure there are enough people to service the demand, and also enhancing capabilities across other sales channels, including online, to reduce the immediate pressure on Flight Centre's shop network.

Dedicated Flight Centre COVID support desks are also being developed to help customers navigate any post-pandemic travel complexities, Skroo added.

In the three months to 30 Sep Flight Centre generated almost \$1.6 billion in gross TTV globally, more than double the previous quarter, but operating cash outflows amounted to about \$40 million per month, partly due to a "significant investment ramp-up ahead of an anticipated surge in demand when borders reopen and travel returns".

Some of Flight Centre's overseas operations are now profitable or approaching breakeven, including South Africa, the UAE, Mexico and France, while Turner said Singapore should also quickly return to profitability with the implementation of Vaccinated Travel Lanes with key countries.

MEANWHILE Flight Centre Chairman, Gary Smith, today also confirmed plans to initiate a search for an additional female independent non-executive Director, taking the Flight Centre Board to six people to "incorporate new thinking, new areas of expertise, and to allow us to better manage our business and geographic diversity".

Lindblad purchase

LINDBLAD Expeditions has acquired a majority stake in US-based luxury cultural walking tour operator Classic Journeys, further building its experiential offering after the Mar 2021 purchase of DuVine Cycling Adventure Co and Off the Beaten Path LLC.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news.

NSW accom offer

NSW Premier Dominic Perrottet today revealed an investment of \$530 million to get tourism and events back on track, including a \$50 voucher for all NSW adults to redeem at accommodation premises across the state.

The funding package also includes a \$60m Aviation Attraction Fund to incentivise international airlines to restart flights to Sydney, \$10 million for a Recovery Marketing Campaign and an Event Saver Fund to provide immediate support to organisers if any events are disrupted by public health orders during the 2021/22 summer.

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TG to halve Australian staff

THAI Airways International is reducing its local workforce by almost 50%, with the carrier confirming a number of voluntary redundancies in the coming months including long-time Marketing Manager Sue Marr who will leave at the end of 2021.

Despite the staff cuts "we remain committed to working as quickly as possible to assist all travel agents and customers," the carrier said, with most of the redundancies effective 01 Nov.

"Essential processing will continue Mon-Fri from 9am to 5pm on 1300 651 960 or via email," the airline said, noting that passengers with flights cancelled by TG are now entitled to claim an extended travel validity until Dec 2022.

TG is also now processing "a small volume of refunds" worldwide each month, with the carrier previously blocking all payouts due to it undergoing restructuring under a bankruptcy proceeding (**TD** 17 Sep 2020).

The update also detailed new thrice weekly non-stop flights between Sydney and Phuket effective 08 Dec (**TD** breaking news yesterday), along with four weekly Sydney-Bangkok services as operations begin to ramp up.

Thai flights are now scheduled beyond Bangkok to London, Paris, Zurich, Frankfurt, Munich, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Milan, Brussels, Hong Kong, Singapore, Manila, Seoul, Taipei, Osaka, Tokyo, Nagoya and Jakarta, while operations to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are planned to resume from Jan 2022.

Special fares are on offer under a sale valid for bookings from today until 31 Oct, for travel 31 Oct-26 Mar 2022, while TG also confirmed that flights between Melbourne and Bangkok are currently scheduled to restart in Apr next year.

Airlines, airports plot reopening

AUSTRALIA'S domestic airlines and airports have laid out a joint approach to help travellers know what to expect as state borders reopen in the coming months.

With varying roadmaps and restrictions, the unified approach will see the industry provide links to the latest state travel info on airline and airport websites.

Customers may be sent SMS and email reminders pre-travel of entry requirements and permits, and will be asked to declare eligibility for travel at check-in.

Declaration of vaccination status may also be required in compliance with Government travel requirements, while QR codes will be mandatory for lounge access.



More US adventures

G ADVENTURES' United States of Adventure collection has expanded, as the US reopens.

The new trips offer value, culture, and guaranteed park access, ahead of the United States' reopening to international travel from 08 Nov.

The 13 newly developed tours double the size of the collection, which was initially launched in Feb for domestic travellers.

It now offers 28 trip options to national and Navajo Nation parks in the United States.

The new small-group trips have been developed with the traveller experience and local communities top of mind, including important indigenous-led experiences in places such as Monument Valley, where a local guide will share their background and connection to the land - the new range can be found **HERE**.

Vic quarantine trial

VICTORIA will trial home quarantine for vaccinated overseas travellers next week.

Passengers booked on a special flight from London to Melbourne arriving next Wed will be allowed to isolate at home for seven days instead of being locked in a hotel room for a fortnight.

The trial follows New South Wales' announcement that from next month, international travellers can arrive in Sydney without having to quarantine.

Aurora sustainability

AURORA Expeditions has been certified 100% carbon neutral as part of its ongoing active sustainability plan, a key milestone achieved in partnership with leading emissions reduction project developer South Pole.

The "Climate Neutral Company" certification has been achieved by a combination of key sustainability initiatives across Aurora's business operations - more details in today's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.

More fed support

MEMBER of the Australian Parliament for Kingsford Smith Matt Thistlethwaite has savaged Prime Minister Scott Morrison's decision to end support for the travel industry.

Speaking in the House of Representatives yesterday, Thistlethwaite said until international travel normalises next year, an ongoing financial lifeline is critical to the 30,000 Australians working in travel and 3,000 travel agencies and businesses who employ them.

"Australia's travel agents and businesses need ongoing support, including round three funds from the COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support Program," he said.

"The government must release those round three funds."

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WA ticks Qld travel

QUARANTINE-FREE travel from Queensland to Western Australia will start from this Fri.

WA said it would continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation in Queensland for possible changes, which is set to transition to a "very low risk" rating shortly.



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Agent recognition platform

A **NEW** global travel agent recognition program has launched this week with the goal of establishing itself as the only wholly-verified network of top performing advisors from every region and across all travel types.

Founded by industry veterans Tim Morgan and Jeff Sirota, formerly with Virtuoso and Small Luxury Hotels of the World respectively, "The 1000" will aim to provide better recognition, rewards, and relationship-building for travel agents based on their individual sales efforts and unique business needs.

The new recognition program provides participating advisors with the ability to see how their sales record stacks up against other consultants in their local area, country, or the global average, with this data able to be promoted and help drive

new sales opportunities or be marketed to existing clients and partners.

"As a new travel industry emerges beyond the pandemic, it is more important than ever that advisors understand how powerful their influence is and that they are receiving recognition that is relevant to them, their clients, and their supplier relationships," Morgan believes, adding that the post-COVID era will require that kind of approach.

The new program was formed with the input from a global travel advisor committee, which included Voyages Indigenous Tourism, Australia CEO Matt Cameron-Smith.

Free applications are open to all advisors until 05 Nov - see [HERE](#).

Fiji resorts reopen

AHURA Resorts has announced the reopening of Malolo Island Family Resort Fiji and Likuliku Lagoon Resort.

Malolo Island will reopen to international guests on 20 Dec, followed by Likuliku Lagoon on 01 Feb 2022.

"We have waited and worked hard towards this day for a long time," said owner and Managing Director Tony Whitton.

"There are probably not enough words to explain the feelings of excitement, relief and joy we have, that we can finally get our staff back to work".

Come learn & win

DESTINATION Webinars is inviting agents to its latest BYO Coffee Cluster Series which kicks off this Thu 21 Oct at 12pm AEDT and features short updates from Singapore Tourism Board, Oasia Resort Sentosa & Dream Cruises.

Attendees will be in the running to score a range of prizes including a \$50 Prezzy card, one of three STB gift hampers, a two-night stay at Oasia Resort Sentosa, as well as Dream Cruises merchandise.

Register to attend [HERE](#).



Window Seat

TRAVELLING the world can be heaven for birdwatchers, with so many bright and unusual looking feathered friends inhabiting every corner of our amazing globe.

But perhaps one place you wouldn't expect to discover an exotic new species is on the well-trodden roads of Haddenham in the United Kingdom, where recently locals thought they had made a major avian discovery.

On the side of the A41 road near the motorway, a passerby spotted a fluorescent orange bird that looked somewhat like a rare breed of seagull.

The bird, which was unable to fly, was taken to a nearby hospital for assessment, where it was discovered he was nothing more than a generic seagull covered in vindaloo.

It seems this fella with the Trump tan **pictured** below had simply got too enthusiastic with the curry scraps he had discovered, with hospital staff bathing him clean and fittingly calling him Vinny after his culinary misadventure.



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Meet the new Intrepid

INTREPID Travel has unveiled a brand refresh that is designed to communicate a clearer vision focused on empowering communities, protecting the planet and creating more equitable travel experiences.

As part of the revamp, the majority of Intrepid's trips now have a renewed focus on wildlife and environmental conservation, disability support, indigenous traditions, gender equality and empowerment, in a process that was kicked off 18 months ago.

Of the 880 multi-day tours the company offers, more than 20% didn't exist before Mar 2020.

Intrepid said its new mission would be supported by an ambitious growth trajectory, with the aim of becoming the



first \$1 billion dollar adventure travel company, to enable it more influence in touring and create a more purpose-driven culture in the space.

As part of the rebrand, the company has also launched a new logo (pictured above), as well as a special launch video [HERE](#).

But while the visual refresh of branding symbolises a change in purpose for Intrepid, the company's CEO James Thornton has emphasised the pivot runs much deeper than simply launching new visual collateral.

"Intrepid's new brand identity is so much more than a new logo and look," he said.

"We've reflected on the past 18 months and leveraged our strengths, purpose and ambition to look to a brighter and more connected future. I couldn't be more excited to see joy brought back to travel - while renewing our focus on advocating for our planet and its people."

Intrepid is also on the hunt for new partnerships and acquisitions with travel and hospitality companies to expand its offerings over the next few years.

Explorer is back

SEVEN Seas Explorer has marked its first sailing since Regent Seven Seas Cruises' voluntary pause in operations due to COVID travel restrictions.

The sailing departed on 15 Oct and explored the waters of Italy, Croatia and Greece.

RSSC will next see *Mariner* return on 18 Dec, *Navigator* on 06 Jan 2022 and *Voyager* set sail again on 15 Feb 2022 from Barcelona, Spain.



Aiden Darling Harbour debut



THE Best Western-affiliated Aiden Darling Harbour hotel will open in Sydney on 01 Dec after originally being scheduled to open last month (**TD** 08 Jul).

Boasting 88 rooms, the hotel offers guests free wi-fi, mobile check-in options, and dining options at the Wayfarer's Bar and Cafe on the ground floor.

All rooms (pictured) are equipped with convenient living amenities such as a Dyson Supersonic hairdryer, Rituals bathroom products, kettle and coffee pod machine, JVD garment steamer/iron, mini fridge and TV

casting.

"Aiden Darling Harbour has been designed for travellers by travellers to deliver everything you need in a hotel and nothing you don't," the hotel's General Manager Michael Sharp said.

"So you can enjoy a smart, sophisticated, locally-connected travel experience with personalised service in an excellent location at an affordable price," he added.

The launch marks the debut of the Aiden by Best Western boutique hotel brand in the Australasian market.



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It's time to embrace your inner artist with NCL's mindful adult colouring book, "**Colour Your World**".

Because wellness means different things to different people, during NCL's Walk for Wellness challenge this October, the line has partnered with *Travel Daily* to encourage readers to take a moment for mindfulness.

Simply colour your favourite illustration from the new colouring book and submit it for your chance to go into the running to win a \$200 wellness hamper.

Request your complimentary copy [HERE](#)

Download pages from Marketing HQ: [HERE](#)

SUBMIT ENTRIES

#NCLMindfulMoments
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Show us your best New Years Eve Photo!

Rediscover Australia and Unique Cruises are partnering with *Travel Daily* this month to offer readers the chance to win a ticket on the **NYE Hits on the Harbour Cruise**, as well as offering \$100 and \$50 gift vouchers for 2nd and 3rd prize by providing your best picture of your past New Years Eve celebrations.

This ticket gives you access to:

- 6 Hours Sydney Harbour Cruise on Journey Beyond Cruise Sydney's *Spirit of Migloo*
- Continuous premium food
- Unlimited beverages including premium sparkling wines and beers - For more information on what is offered [CLICK HERE](#)

To enter send a picture of your best New Years Eve along with, in 25 words or less, what made it so memorable.

Entries to competitions@traveldaily.com.au

Where in the world?



©Jason Charles Hill

THESE towering cliffs hold the title for tallest sea cliffs in the southern hemisphere and stand at a height of over 300m, the same as that of the Eiffel Tower.

Although the cliffs are made of hexagonal columns, like those of the Giant's Causeway, they are not located in Northern Ireland.

Made of dolerite, the cliffs

can be visited on foot or by boat and are known by some as "the scariest cliff in the known universe".

To access the cliffs on foot, travellers need to do a three-night hike but the track is well maintained, with hut accommodation along the way.

Do you know where this is?

Answer: Cape Pillar Sea Cliffs, Tasman National Park, Tasmania

Max arrest made

A MAN has been charged with fraud for allegedly withholding vital safety information from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) during certification of the troubled Boeing 737 Max.

Mark Forkner led the 737 Max flight technical team and was responsible for providing accurate information to the FAA about differences between the Max and other versions of the 737.

Forkner faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

Thais not on board

MOST Thais (60%) are against the reopening of their country to travel, fearing tourists will bring in new COVID-19 cases, according to a recent poll.

Conducted by Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, the survey asked almost 1,400 respondents what they thought about Thailand Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha's plan to open the country up to fully vaccinated foreign tourists from the start of next month.

Did you know?

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



Silversea offers \$12k

SILVERSEA Cruises is inviting travellers to learn and win a share of \$12,000 as part of its Tea Time with Silversea Series Two.

The second program will provide knowledge and information to help drive high-value sales and prepare for travel.

It will also teach how to leverage Silversea's marketing and booking tools, and introduce some of the cruise line's most intriguing destinations.

CLICK HERE to register.

Hilton privileges

HILTON'S loyalty program has created a Like a Member offer across a range of participating restaurants and bars in Australia.

Hilton Honors members can receive exclusive access to attractive perks and privileges at Hilton restaurant and bar establishments.

The promotion includes discounts of up to 25%, as well as opportunities to earn bonus points across an extensive range of restaurants and bars.

ACCOMMODATION

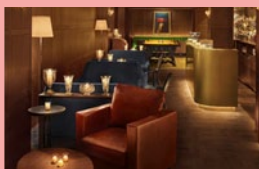
WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



The Centara Mirage Beach Resort Dubai has opened its doors this week - a joint venture with developer Nakheel, which is the creator of the Palm Jumeirah. The latest resort features 607 rooms and suites and various water attractions including a kids' fun water play area, waterslides and cliff jumping points. The hotel also boasts multiple kids' clubs, a colourful candy-themed children's spa, as well as a dedicated Mirage Family Lounge.



The Sofitel Adelaide will open a new French restaurant on 04 Nov called Garçon Bleu, offering guests an extensive wine wall and an oyster and raw seafood bar. The 90-seat venue also features an open kitchen area and plenty of large windows let in natural light. Highlight dishes include twice-baked cheese soufflé with mushroom velouté & pickled shimeji mushrooms, as well as chicken liver parfait with house-made brioche rolls.



The Barcelona EDITION has reopened its speakeasy-inspired bar concept called the Punch Room. The hotel's relaunched intimate lounge highlights local spirits and ingredients with a curated cocktail menu offering modern and traditional specialty punches, served individually or in vintage silver bowls to share in groups. The revamped menu also includes its signature punch, created with jasmine tea and a subtle hint of wood from the oak moss.