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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages packed with all the latest travel industry news plus a photo page from TIME.

Airport staff critical

AIRPORT staff have been added to NSW's critical list in order to ease travel chaos.

The addition will exempt airport workers from COVID-19 isolation requirements, in a bid to ease the delays that plagued Sydney Airport last week.

Waiting times to drop baggage at SYD have blown out in the lead up to Easter, with lines of travellers spilling to the outside of the terminal.

One-in-five airport workers have been forced to isolate recently under COVID rules, SBS reported.



News TRAVEL NETWORK Jul - Dec 2022
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VIEW HIGHLIGHTS

News Corp Australia

AFTA plays both sides

THE bipartisan political lobbying approach taken by the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) is likely to put the industry in good stead, with the 21 May election announced by Prime Minister Scott Morrison yesterday set to be a tight contest.

In the event that Labor wins, Federal Shadow Tourism Minister Don Farrell has confirmed his commitment to helping rebuild Australia's travel sector.

Farrell spoke to AFTA members late last week as part of the Federation's regular member webinar program, with his travel and tourism advocacy making him a "longstanding champion of Australia's travel agents," according to an AFTA update.

"[The Senator] has consistently worked behind the scenes and on the floor of parliament to refine the government's support mechanisms for the sector," according to AFTA CEO Dean Long.

Farrell's recent relentless questioning of Austrade officials in a Senate Estimates Committee hearing (**TD** 02 Mar) led to the shock admission that more than \$70 million of grants available under the COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support Program had not been paid out, simply described as "funding that wasn't needed".

That claim, which outraged industry businesses struggling to survive after two years of the

government's border and cruise restrictions, led ultimately to the release of the \$75.5 million third round of the program.

From Labor's point of view, Farrell told the AFTA webinar "we're currently having our own internal discussions on what the industry needs and will make some announcements about that in due course".

"But what I have done in the last 18 months or so is listen to the industry to get a sense of the things that will really help in the recovery," Farrell added.

"We are well aware of the struggles the travel sector has gone through and AFTA has been very active in this regard.

"I don't think there's any other group in our community that's done it tougher than you," he said.

Long noted that AFTA had consistently and deliberately engaged with key decision makers across the Liberal, National and Labor parties as well as selected independents, with Farrell's webinar participation part of an ongoing process inviting key decision makers to hear from and respond to members.

New BNE base

BRISBANE Airport Corporation today announced plans to deliver a \$72 million Queensland Regional Aeromedical Base.

To be located between BNE's two runways in the Airport North Precinct, the multi-tenanted facility will house the Royal Flying Doctors Services, LifeFlight and Queensland Health offices, and is scheduled to open in Apr 2023.

New state-of-the-art hangars will feature, along with a medical base for regional patient and donor transfers.

BNE CEO Gert-Jan de Graaff said with over half of Qld's population living outside greater Brisbane, the new base would "play a critical role in connecting and supporting the regions".

Pacific Explorer returns next Mon

P&O Cruises Australia has confirmed its flagship *Pacific Explorer* will arrive home in Sydney on Easter Mon to lead the restart of cruising in the country.

Explorer will return home after an absence of more than two years on 18 Apr, with P&O Australia inviting Sydney's boaters to sail alongside the ship when she enters through the Heads, and escort her as she makes her way up the Harbour to the Overseas Passenger Terminal at 10:30am.

The ship's first cruise will be a four-night round trip to Brisbane departing on 31 May, with Carnival President Australia Marguerite Fitzgerald saying *Explorer's* return will mark the start of rebuilding cruise tourism.

More details in today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

QR appoints Amy

QATAR Airways this morning announced the appointment of Amy Stainlay as its new Marketing Manager for Australasia and North Asia.

Stainlay has previously held travel industry roles at Journey Beyond and APT Travel Group and has also led campaigns for brands including Mercedes Benz and Lendlease based both in Australia and Canada.

RCI's new Utopia

ROYAL Caribbean International has revealed that the name of its sixth Oasis-class vessel will be *Utopia of the Seas*.

A steel-cutting ceremony to launch her construction took place in Saint-Nazaire, France over the weekend, with *Utopia* set to launch in the second quarter of 2024.

She will be the first Oasis-class vessel to be powered by LNG.

Namesake *Oasis of the Seas* launched in 2009 as the world's then largest-ever passenger ship.



Window Seat

“WHO put that in there?”

That was the reaction of a passenger passing through security at Boston Airport last week, after officials discovered a long blade concealed inside his walking stick.

The Transportation Security Administration posted an image of the offending article (**pictured**) which was highlighted when the man’s cane passed through a scanner.

The passenger “had no idea the blade was in there,” the TSA said, and after questioning and surrendering the weapon he was cleared to continue his trip.



QF adds new NDC partner

INDIAN software firm Verteil has been added as an Approved Technology Partner for the Qantas Distribution Platform (QDP), with QF saying the move extends its ability to distribute QDP content and offers to travel agents and their customers.

Verteil joins other providers such as Amadeus, Travelport, Sabre, Aeronology and TP Connects, with Verteil described as an NDC-aligned “direct connect selling platform for agencies to access airline content via Universal APIs and web applications”.

Currently Verteil’s platform is used by travel distributors in about 15 markets globally, with the new QDP partnership complementing other NDC integrations it offers with carriers such as Singapore Airlines, Emirates, Cathay Pacific, American Airlines, Air Canada, Qatar Airways, Lufthansa, Finnair, United Airlines and more.

Effective immediately Qantas

NDC content is now available on the Verteil platform, following a successful integration via IATA’s NDC standards-based XML APIs.

The QF content includes personalised offers and enhanced servicing functions, with travel service providers able to access Qantas NDC content and the rest of Verteil’s airline offerings via a front office tool or integration through a Verteil Universal API.

Qantas Executive Manager, Global Sales & Distribution, Igor Kwiatkowski, said “our agency and technology partners are a key part of the expansion of our NDC program and we’re pleased to be welcoming Verteil”.

“As we continue to launch new features through the QDP, this partnership will enable us to deliver special offers, richer content and a better booking experience to more of our customers and agency partners,” Kwiatkowski said.

NZ Apollo ruling deferred

THE NZ Commerce Commission has requested an extension to its statutory timeframe for a decision on the clearance of the proposed merger between Apollo Tourism and Leisure (ATL) and NZ-listed Tourism Holdings Ltd (THL).

The revised date for the ruling is now 28 Apr, aligning to the timeline for the announcement of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission’s (ACCC) findings in relation to the deal.

ATL had previously requested a delay until the end of the month (**TD 31 Mar**) to allow additional time for the parties to provide further information.

The proposed merger (**TD 10 Dec 2021**) would see Apollo shareholders together own 25% of THL, which would list on the Australian Securities Exchange as a motorhome rental powerhouse with operations in Australia, the UK, NZ, North America & Europe.



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Fiji check-in deal

FIJI Airways and Sheraton Fiji Golf & Beach Resort have teamed up to “revolutionise the check-in process”, in a first of its kind partnership in the Pacific.

The new Resort Check-in is available exclusively to guests at both Sheraton Fiji Golf & Beach Resort and Sheraton Denarau Villas, offering guests remote check-in capability for their luggage, maximising the time spent around the resort.

Excluding United States flights, the new service also offers complete flight check-in capabilities up to 90 minutes before departure, including the issuing of boarding passes, seat allocations, upgrade purchases, excess baggage purchases, as well as Airport Lounge access at discounted rates.

Eden cruise feedback

CONSULTATION with local stakeholders will commence this week regarding plans to expand the Port of Eden.

“With Eden strategically located between Sydney, Melbourne and New Zealand cruise destinations, we know there is an appetite for increased cruise visits and modifications would allow larger vessels,” NSW Minister for Transport David Elliott said.

The proposed modifications include an increase to the current limit of 60 vessels a year, permission for ships up to 370 metres long to berth (6,700-passenger vessels), and sanctioning cruise ships to stay overnight seven days a week.

Eden is expected to see growing cruise ship visits generate \$48.4 million for the local economy.



Travel Daily

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TravelManagers brings it in



THE TravelManagers family reunited at in-person state meetings last month, the first held since Nov 2019.

While there have been regular virtual meetings throughout the pandemic, this series of Mar State Meetings were the first held on a national basis since the onset of COVID-19.

More than 160 Personal Travel Managers attended the events across five states, as did TravelManagers’ National Partnership Office and the company’s supplier partners.

As well as providing updates and training, the meetings were also a chance to present certificates to those PTMs who have achieved the milestones of five, 10 or 15 years in partnership with TravelManagers.

Each state also celebrated TravelManagers’ 17th anniversary with the cutting of a cake.

Pictured are PTMs Liza Beylerian and Di Yates receiving their 15-year certificates from Executive General Manager Michael Gazal and House of Travel Finance Director Grant Campbell.

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Maldives promo

EXCLUSIVE savings are available on a family friendly stay with Addicted to Maldives.

Vakkaru Maldives is giving Australian travellers an offer of five nights for two adults in an Over Water Villa from US\$6,200, complimentary half-board, \$100 in resort credit, a complimentary and shared seaplane transfer for two adults.

Two kids under the age of 11 can also stay and eat for free - [CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

Naked ambition

SCOTCH whiskey cut Naked Malt is giving Aussies the chance to win a trip to one of three locations around Australia, including to Uluru, the Hunter Valley and the South Coast.

Upon purchasing a bottle of Naked Malt from, consumers will receive a unique code to enter the promotion - a quiz about their ultimate "Live Naked" experience.

Tourism rallies in Jan 22

DOMESTIC tourism spend in Jan improved by \$2.8 billion when compared to Dec last year, with Aussie travellers spending \$8.5 billion on overnight trips alone for the month.

The latest figures from Tourism Research Australia suggest the driving force behind the month-on-month increase was a further loosening of restrictions, Jan being a popular holiday period, and a broader acceptance among Aussies that we must learn to live alongside COVID.

While there was some optimism with regard to spend, the hangover effect of the pandemic continued to impact numbers overall, with overnight trips down 13% on Jan 2020.

Jan 2022 also saw spend down 9% (\$803 million) to \$8.5 billion and an 8% decrease in the total number of nights stayed when contrasted with early 2020.

From Mar 2020 to Jan 2022, the total toll of the pandemic has cost Australia's interstate domestic tourism sector \$54.4 billion, as well as a \$2.8 billion deficit in intrastate travel.

The country's capital cities continue to bear most of the pandemic brunt, TRA's report showed, with a 31% fall in overnight trips and a 34% plummet in spend on pre-COVID volumes, clocking up 2.7 million overnight trips and a spend of \$2.6 billion respectively.

While regional tourism was also down, overnight trips for the month were only down 4% on Jan 2020, while spend actually rallied to increase by 10%.

Meanwhile Victoria is lagging behind the rest of the states and territories when it comes to the recovery of domestic overnight trips and spend, still down 49% and 54% respectively.

Pullman \$40m reno

THE new Pullman Melbourne On the Park has been unveiled, following a major \$40 million renovation.

Located opposite the Melbourne Cricket Ground and the Sports & Entertainment Precinct, the 419-room hotel has been revamped by design architects DKO.

Upgrades include a new Executive Lounge featuring velvet sofas and a large flat screen TV, as well as refreshed decor in rooms.

EY Miles on the Go

ABU Dhabi Airports and Etihad Airways have teamed up to launch Etihad Guest's 'Miles on the Go'.

Launched at Abu Dhabi International, Etihad Guest members can now instantly earn and spend Miles when shopping at participating merchants located at the airport by simply downloading the application.

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Melia appoints RM

RM Asia Pacific, also known as Randall Marketing, has been appointed as the new Australian and NZ representative for Melia Hotels International.

Melia operates more than 380 properties in over 40 countries, with RM Asia Pacific Executive Director Randall Lui saying many of the hotels are located in destinations popular with Australian travellers.

"Melia Hotels International is a family business with strong Spanish heritage and values...I will be leading this new chapter offering unconditional customer support, warm hospitality and marketing services within the Oceanic travel arena," he said.

VS defers HKG

VIRGIN Atlantic will not resume flights between the UK and Hong Kong until Sep at the earliest, with the carrier telling *Bloomberg* it had "taken the careful decision to extend the pause in operations".

VS ceased flying to HKG in Dec, and the deferred restart comes despite the destination easing flight restrictions this month.

Discover Qatar role

JESSICA Shelton-Agar has been appointed as Regional Sales Manager for Discover Qatar.

Based in Doha, she is now responsible for the Qatar Stopover program, which was recently launched in Australia by the Inspire Collective's Debra Fox and Susan Haberle.

Shelton-Agar joined Qatar Tourism after five years as Head of Sales with APT Travel Group in the United Kingdom.

Canada cruise open

HOLLAND America Line's *Koningsdam* is the first cruise ship to make a port call in Canada in more than two years, with the ship visiting Victoria, British Columbia last weekend before arriving in its new summer homeport of Vancouver.

New protocols were confirmed for Canada cruising last month (*CW* 08 Mar), with Cruise Lines International Association CEO Kelly Craighead acknowledging the work of officials who had worked tirelessly with cruise lines, ports and communities to facilitate a responsible return of cruise tourism to Canada.

QF: why do we wait?

OPINION

Robyn Sinfield is the co-owner and manager of Home Travel Company.

Got an opinion to share? Let us know in up to 400 words via email to feedback@traveldaily.com.au.



I READ with fascination last week's apologies by Qantas CEO Alan Joyce and Chief Commercial Officer Stephanie Tully about the long wait times being experienced by their customers when they ring the call centre.

As an industry veteran of 38 years and a loyal agent to Qantas, it's hard to believe the number crunchers inside the airline haven't already worked out that the agency distribution system is the cheapest way to offer Qantas to the Australian travelling public. Because we do all the work including the waiting. Anecdotally, agents across the country will stop-sell airlines who

do not sufficiently remunerate by 01 Jul, (not that we will as we live on an island!)

And if a formal apology has been made in Apr it will be a doozy from Jul onwards when the phones will probably implode.

If Qantas was our business we would reverse the decision on commission and support the agency network and take the pressure off what is an appalling direct service model.

Agents would have the back of the airline like we've had for many decades. Recently I witnessed a check-in issue at Sydney Airport for a Platinum flyer - an error made by Qantas. The QF check-in team member had to phone reservations and it was the same phone line that all of Australia was on hold to - an absolute debacle where those flyers nearly missed their flight due to no error on their part.

“It's hard to believe the number crunchers haven't already worked out that the agency distribution system is the cheapest way to offer Qantas to the Australian travelling public”

The airline that supports the industry will win the business and loyalty of the Australian travel community and indeed the travelling public.



Discover the World Marketing are looking for a QLD Sales Executive to represent Expedia TAAP

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travel restarts,” she said.

Guests included Julie O’Grady from Exclusively Cruising, Journey Beyond’s Ines Inestia, Bernadette Dennis of BD Concepts, Unordinary Italy’s Monica Moruzzi and Michelle Radnidge from Discover the World (right).

The next Vic TIME event will take place on 08 Jun at the offices of Reho Travel on St Kilda Rd.

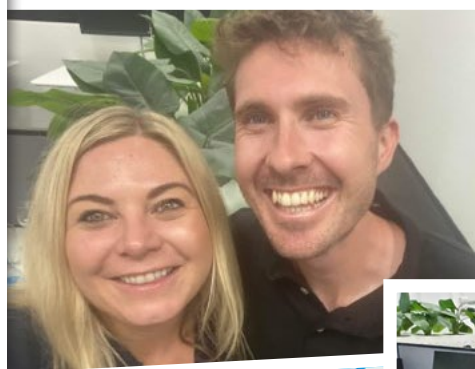
THE Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) held its first face-to-face event in Melbourne in more than two years recently, with attendees including TIME graduates, current mentees, mentors and industry peers gathering to hear from guest speaker David Hughes, Entourage Travel Group MD.

The event took place at the Entourage Travel Office and was sponsored by Evolution Travel Collective, with MD Ingrid Berthelsen - also a TIME Graduate and Vic State representative for the organisation - emceeing.

“With half a dozen brand new faces at the event it was great to see word starting to get out about the benefits TIME can bring, particularly right now as



ABOVE: Dave Hughes, Entourage Travel Group; Ingrid Berthelsen, Evolution Travel Collective; and Andy Buerckner, Platinum Travel Corporation.





Jetlines to take off

STARTUP airline Canada Jetlines is planning a launch in the northern summer, using Toronto's Lester B. Pearson International as its base, rather than the previously indicated Vancouver International

The leisure-focused airline has not revealed specific routes, but said it will operate an all-Airbus A320 fleet on domestic routes, as well as to international destinations in the Caribbean, Mexico, and the United States, such as Miami and Fort Lauderdale.

Balkans update

AUSTRALIAN passport holders require a negative COVID test, a vaccination certificate, or proof of recovery from COVID to enter Croatia, Smartraveller is advising.

The Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade advises travellers exercise a high degree of caution in Croatia due to COVID-19.

MEANWHILE, Aussie travellers can enter neighbouring Serbia with a negative PCR test not older than 48 hours, but Australians are advised to reconsider their need to travel to Serbia due to its COVID-19 situation.

Stranded tourists

A GROUP of travellers claim they were left stranded by a tourism operator in Central Qld after the company's owner got involved in a physical altercation with the tour's bus driver.

Reef N Beyond Owner Charlie Sturgess allegedly deserted the travellers after the incident, ABC News reports, leaving the group in Longreach without transport.

However, Sturgess has denied the claims, stating he intended to continue the tour but that the group "wanted nothing to do with" him after the fight.

He also said he intends to give everyone involved a full refund.

LATAM sets targets

LATAM has outlined a range of new sustainability objectives, including achieving zero-waste-to-landfill by 2027, offsetting 50% of its domestic emissions by 2030 and to be carbon neutral by 2050.

The South American carrier said that through this latest announcement, it is giving a clear call to action to the market and highlighting its strong interest in buying SAF in the region.

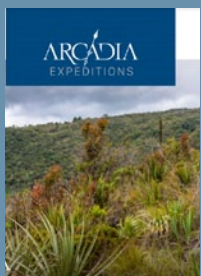
LATAM is also calling on government authorities, private companies, academia and the other players in the airline industry to collaborate and expand SAF production.

BROCHURES

WELCOME to Brochures of the Week, *Travel Daily's* Monday feature. If your firm is releasing a new brochure you'd like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description summarising its features and itineraries, including a PDF of the front cover, and contact details to brochures@traveldaily.com.au.



Imagine Holidays - A World of Wonder Awaits
Discover Imagine Holiday's latest collection of land holidays, or return to the seas with one of its new cruise offers, all detailed in the new 'A World of Wonder Awaits' brochure. From an extraordinary Uluru experience with a magical Outback concert to a memorable music festival featuring Jessica Mauboy in Fiji, and an all-inclusive Antarctica cruise paired with an Iguazu Falls adventure, Imagine's latest brochure showcases its vast collection of holidays. For cruise lovers, one of the brochure's highlights is a trans-Atlantic sailing on board one of Cunard Line's queens.



Arcadia Expeditions - Colombia
Arcadia Expedition's new Colombia brochure features its new 'Conquistadors: The Legend of El Dorado' itinerary. The 11-day trip travels with a maximum of 16 travellers, and follows the incredible story of the conquistadors and the legend of El Dorado, in the company of distinguished historian Fernando Cervantes. Among the trip's highlights, guests will explore the Colombian city of Bogota through the eyes of the indigenous Muisca people, and view their gold ornaments during a private visit to the Gold Museum, Bogota.

Travel Daily Events PRESENTS **AN EXECUTIVE INTERVIEW**

with publisher Bruce Piper and Joel Katz, Managing Director, Cruise Lines International (CLIA) Australasia and Jill Abel, CEO, Australian Cruise Association.

The Tide Turns For Cruise

After more than two years of international cruise ships being banned from Australian waters, the local cruise sector has finally received a green light to recommence operations. Join us at this special event as we chat with Joel Katz and Jill Abel. They will discuss all things cruise including their journey during the pandemic, the current state of the start-up, protocols, destinations and much more.




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