

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* has six pages of news including **Business Events News** and a product update from **Travelmarvel**.

## Minor a major win

**ANNE** Wild and Associates (AWA) now represents Minor Hotels in Australian and New Zealand across the Oaks Hotels, Avani Hotels and Elysia Wellness Retreat brands.

Minor's global portfolio comprises more than 530 hotels in 55 countries.

Other AWA travel & lifestyle clients include Norwegian Cruise Line, Visit Lake Macquarie and Myconian Collection.

## Tudehope joins QF

**FORMER** GTI Tourism Account Manager Chris Tudehope has taken a new role as Senior Advisor, Corporate Communications at Qantas.

More appointments on **page six**.

## Flight Centre plots growth

**THE** iconic Flight Centre brand is looking to immediately recruit 500 leisure travel advisors globally to meet current and future demand, with consultant productivity currently well above historic levels according to an investor presentation delivered yesterday by the division's global MD, Andrew Stark.

Looking to Flight Centre's future, Stark highlighted the latest omni-channel strategy which "globalises, standardises and synchronises our legacy architecture and plumbing, bringing together our people and technology to provide customers with a consistent customer experience".

"Omni systematically connects the dots to reorganise and reposition this brand as a modern travel business that embraces the new world of international retailing," he said.

He noted the strong Flight Centre brand assets including

its 3,000 people, 450 shops, air booking engine, supplier network and global customer care team.

The former "lowest airfares guaranteed" mantra will evolve to be a "flights + holidays deals with value" brand platform, Stark said.

Stark also suggested possible future expansion opportunities for the Flight Centre brand in Latin America, Europe, the UAE and Asia Pacific, via a "low-cost entry model".

## New Aurora CEO

**AURORA** Expeditions today announced the appointment of Michael Heath as its new Chief Executive Officer.

Heath joins the cruise sector after an extensive career in the surfing industry, most recently as CEO of Surf Hardware International, a division of ASX-listed Gowings Bros Limited.

More in today's **Cruise Weekly**.

## Travel Daily

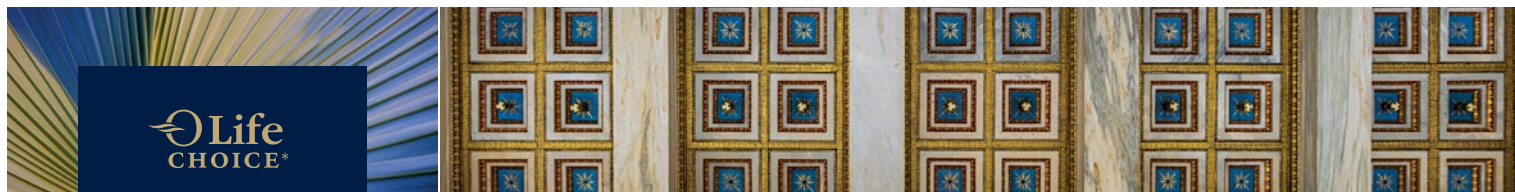
on location in **Barcelona, Spain**

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of **Azamara Cruises**, which today debuts its new **Azamara Onward** on a trip from **Barcelona to Monaco**.

**AZAMARA** Cruises is adding its highly anticipated fourth vessel today, the culmination of a huge effort which marks ongoing expansion of the brand as a standalone cruise line.

*Azamara Onward*, which formerly sailed as *Pacific Princess*, has undergone a huge makeover and upgrade to become a new fleet mate to *Azamara Journey*, *Azamara Quest* and *Azamara Pursuit*.

The ship carries 670 guests, has seven dining venues and itineraries will follow Azamara's famed reputation for destination immersion - see **page 4** for more.



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## Cruise line shuffles deck

**PONANT** has announced a new team structure for its Asia Pacific team, seeing several new appointments made as the line looks to strengthen its position in the local market.

Heading up the list of changes is the promotion of Julie Rogers to the newly created role of Sales Director Asia Pacific.

Rogers will be responsible for managing the Australian and New Zealand sales team, whilst continuing to oversee her portfolio of India, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and other emerging Asian markets.

Meanwhile Annabelle Brown is now Business Development Manager VIC, TAS & SA, replacing Craig Farrell who will depart the business to pursue a new venture in early May.

Western Australian business development has been handed to new recruit Janelle Ramsey, in addition to Qld and NT territories,

while Bianca Bratton has been promoted to the role of BDM New Zealand.

A new National Inside Sales Executive position has also been created, with Charlotte Crauck from PONANT's Customer Service Team promoted to the role.

Karen Smith, who was previously in the caretaking position of Customer Service & Reservations Manager Asia Pacific whilst Kristin Jansson was on maternity leave has now taken on the role permanently, while Kim Herdiana also remains as Team Leader Asia Pacific.

This shuffle will see Kristin Jansson return from maternity leave in Jun to take on a new role for the group's business, set to be announced shortly.

The raft of personnel changes coincides with PONANT resuming cruising in Aussie waters from Darwin to Broome this week on board *Le Laperouse* (TD 27 Apr).

## Air Vanuatu is back

**AIR** Vanuatu has announced its intentions to resume flights from Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney to Port Vila from 01 Jul, coinciding with the country opening its borders to fully vaccinated travellers on the same date.

The carrier plans to operate five flights a week from Sydney, three weekly services from Brisbane, and one flight a week from Melbourne.

## Bench payment deal

**BENCH** Africa has announced the appointment of a new official payment partner, with TravelPay B2B linking with the operator.

The Africa specialist said it is proud to partner with the Australian-owned platform.

"We are excited with the next step in our journey post-COVID and to support our agent partners with this seamless payment method," Groups & Operations Manager Julie De Palo said.

## Oceania unveils 24

**OCEANIA** Cruises is gearing up to launch its 2024 collection of voyages to destinations including Europe, Alaska, Canada, Asia, Australia & New Zealand, Africa, and the South Pacific.

Included in the new suite of global departures is the news that two ships will service the local region, with *Regatta* and *Nautica* scheduled to sail itineraries around Australia and surrounding islands, including four 10-day sailings roundtrip from Papeete.

"We have set a whole new standard for destination innovation with an astounding mix of marquee destinations and exotic new locales, blended together in creatively crafted voyage offerings," CEO of Oceania Cruises Howard Sherman said.

The collection is comprised of 350 itineraries across seven ships and all seven continents, and will open for reservation on 05 May.

A preview of the 2024 collection is available [HERE](#).



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## Complete package EXCLUSIVE

**CRUISE** Traveller has inked a partnership to be the preferred small ship cruise wholesaler for the Australian Travel Agents Co-operative (ATAC), allowing members of the group to access exclusive and unique small ship cruise packages.

“This move will help hundreds of ATAC agents to tap the high-yield margins small ship cruising offers, with interest amongst Australians for boutique and expedition cruises higher than ever now,” Cruise Traveller MD Craig Bowen said.

Under the deal, ATAC members will have the option of accessing product from the 54 cruise operators Cruise Traveller represents, offering cheaper pricing and itineraries with a point of difference in the market.

## Walking the walk

**DANIEL** Walker has been appointed the Managing Director of ski wholesaler Sno’n’Ski Holidays, moving from the General Manager role which he has held for the last 16 years.

Walker replaces David Walker in the position, who will move into the role of Chairman and Executive Director.

“Sales are already back to 70% of pre-COVID levels and we are currently ‘snowed under’ and expect to reach pre-COVID sales early next financial year,” Daniel Walker said.

## Merger hits speed bump

**THE** proposed acquisition of Apollo Tourism & Leisure by Tourism Holdings Limited (THL) (**TD** 10 Dec 2021) announced late last year is in doubt, after the ACCC this morning confirmed the purchase raises preliminary competition concerns.

The consumer watchdog noted the acquisition of Apollo, if approved, would remove THL’s closest and largest competitor for motorised RV rentals in Australia, a determination which follows an informal review launched by the ACCC earlier this year (**TD** 28 Jan).

ACCC Commissioner Stephen Ridgeway said concerns about the purchase relate to the lack of size and legitimate competition outside of the two companies.

“Market feedback indicates that other RV rental suppliers lack the scale to replace the competition

lost by Apollo being acquired,” Ridgeway said.

“Furthermore, our inquiries have not identified that new entry or expansion by other RV suppliers is likely to provide a strong competitive constraint on a combined THL and Apollo.”

The ACCC is also examining the extent to which peer-to-peer platforms compete with traditional RV rental suppliers, which are forums for private RV owners to rent out their vehicles.

“Our review to date has found that peer-to-peer platforms do not currently provide a strong constraint on traditional RV rental suppliers... so far we are concerned that consumers may end up paying more to rent RVs, or receive lower quality and service,” Ridgeway added.

## SQ raises fares

**SINGAPORE** Airlines has increased its fares Business class and Premium Economy bookings from Australia to Europe, the United States and Canada for bookings made on or after 29 Apr.

Economy Class bookings from Sydney/Melbourne to Kochi/Male will also increase from the same date, driven by a formal review by the carrier into its fares from Australia to its wider network.

For all bookings made up to and including 28 Apr, SQ will honour the original fare quoted.

## Extra 5% commission

**CUNARD** is rewarding agents with an extra 5% bonus commission on select domestic “Short Breaks” itineraries when booking guests between 26 Apr and 09 May.



## Window Seat

**AMERICAN** Airlines has copped a spray from Aussie rapper Iggy Azalea which was far more caustic than any of her biting song lyrics, labelling the airline as “lacking compassion” and “unprofessional” for leaving the artist and her son Onyx stranded in Miami.

The 31-year-old claimed the airline sold their seats from Miami despite the airport gate being open, however a witness claimed the star arrived only 15 minutes before her departure.

If true, it would make Iggy’s online outburst not so fancy.



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## OTP averages 78%

**THE** on-time performance (OTP) of Australian domestic airlines suffered during Mar, with 77.5% of flights departing on time, while on time arrivals averaged 78.2%.

The figures were lower than the long-term average, while 2.4% of flights were also cancelled during the month, according to new figures from the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics.

Qantas and QantasLink recorded a combined 81.5% for on-time arrivals, versus a 74.1% OTP rate for Virgin Australia.

A total of 4.3% of QantasLink departures were cancelled during the month, followed by Jetstar with 2.4%, Qantas at 2.2%, Rex Airlines with 1.5% and Virgin Australia having a 1.4% cancellation rate for Mar.

The worst performing route was Armidale-Sydney where just 47% of flights arrived on time, while the best was Townsville-Cairns with 93.1% of punctual flights.

## QDP adds Name Change Fee option

**THE** Qantas Distribution Platform (QDP) has been enhanced with a new capability enabling agents to issue a Name Change Fee for name change requests made by customers.

The enhancement allows travel agents to service clients who are no longer able to fly with Qantas and request their unused ticket to be rebooked and ticketed in another customer's name.

Name Change requests are only permitted for Australian domestic fares, with the platform allowing bookings to be cancelled and a new booking created using the value of the unused ticket as credit towards the new fare.

A Name Change Fee of \$99 will apply, with this charge needing to be issued via an EMD.

Issuing the new fee option via the QDP is dependent on the capability of each agency's approved technology partner.



**THIS** group of Aussie travel advisors enjoyed an impromptu gathering at a rooftop bar in Barcelona last night just off the Las Ramblas pedestrian precinct.

They're all in Spain ready to board the brand new *Azamara Onward* which will set off today for Monaco where she will be officially named early next week.

**Pictured** from left are: Kristina Sambaher, Azamara; Jonathan Hickman, Travel on Crown; Casey

Russell, Clean Cruising; Noriye Oto and Angela Jenkinson from Arrivia; Anna Russell from Clean Cruising; Belle Osmic from Azamara Cruises; Michelle Julius-Baty from Ignite Holidays; and Azamara's Natalie Bax.

## Park Regis Dubai

**STAYWELL** Holdings and Seibu Prince Hotels Worldwide have announced the signing of a new resort-style property in Dubai's Deira Islands to open next year.

It will be the first hotel operating under the new Park Regis by Prince banner, said to be a "significant evolution of the reputable Park Regis hotel brand" which launched in 2006, with the positioning tagline of "The World's Most Thoughtful Hotels".

## DL adds Cape Town

**DELTA** Air Lines has confirmed the launch of a triangular route to South Africa from Atlanta, with the new services landing at Johannesburg and then flying onwards to Cape Town - the first time DL has operated to the city.

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## SAY G'DAY TO AUSSIE EVENTS

**ADELAIDE** based G'day Group has introduced a new dedicated conferences and events brand called Discovery Conferences and Events, which will oversee the company's portfolio of regional event venues across Australia.

The new brand includes events venues at the Kings Canyon Resort, Glen Helen and Rottneest Island (**pictured**), as well as the Adelaide Hills Convention Centre at Hahndorf Resort, the Victor Harbor Convention Centre at McCracken Country Club and Nagambie Lakes Function Centre in Victoria, with the new umbrella designed to help G'day Group take better advantage of the rebound in the events sector.

"Off the back of the launch of our first greenfields resort on Rottneest Island in 2019, we've progressively grown our conferences and events offering through the acquisition of a range of unique and iconic venues



across the country," G'day Group Chief Executive Officer Grant Wilckens said.

"With the rebound of the conferences and events industry in the wake of COVID-19, there's a great opportunity to tap into a hungry market looking to book corporate conferences, weddings and other special events in some iconic regional destinations.

"With strong forward bookings and a steady pipeline of enquiries, we're confident in

this rebound and the appeal the unique destinations our portfolio has to offer and look forward to further bolstering our offering."

The new brand will be accompanied by a marketing push that will include radio advertising, in-office billboards and integrated digital activity, with G'day Group stating that strategic acquisitions it has undertaken over the last two years have set it up well to become a major player in the events space.

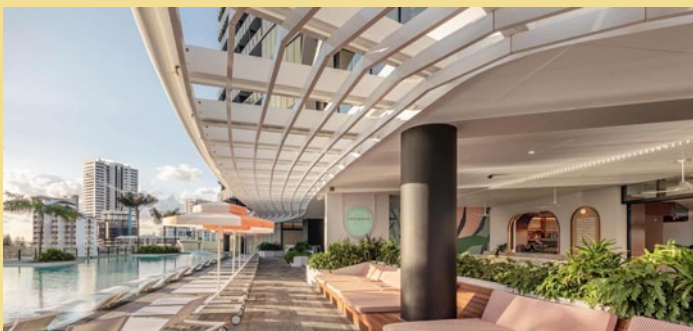
### MCB's milestone

**THE** Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) has reached an important marker in its recovery, securing six international incentive groups from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia & NZ.

When they arrive it will signify the first time Melbourne and regional Victoria have welcomed an incentive group since international border closures in 2020, and is expected to generate close to \$900,000 for the state's economy.

"We're thrilled to once again welcome back international corporate incentive groups - both large and small - to Melbourne, and MCB works to boost hotel occupancy in the traditionally quiet shoulder periods with visitors staying mid-week," MCB's CEO Julia Swanson said.

### Pooling more events appeal



**THE** Star Gold Coast's Isoletto Pool Club and Isoletto Prive space is now open, a dedicated events venue for corporate functions featuring a sprawling lawn, and deck & terrace area.

The Star Gold Coast's COO, Jessica Mellor said the property's latest dining and events offering further showcases the property's dedication to being a leading entertainment destination. "The launch of the Isoletto

Pool Club and Isoletto Prive event spaces is the perfect example of our commitment to helping the Gold Coast remain one of Australia's leading tourism and entertainment destinations for leisure and corporate travellers," she said.

Those looking to relax on the deck can opt for the indulgent poolside package designed for larger groups which includes a bottle of champagne, signature cocktails and fruit platters.

### MeetingPackage appoints leaders

**MEETINGPACKAGE** has strengthened its leadership team, with Chaip Mika Kiljunen recently transitioning to the role of Chief Operating Officer.

"I have been following the company closely as the Chairman of the board, and as I finished my latest project in Asia and relocated back to Finland, it was a brilliant time to join," he said.

Jussi Virtanen has also joined MeetingPackage as Vice President Design, while Ahti Urb will now serve as Engineering Manager.

The trio will help to build sustainable processes for MeetingPackage's growth ahead, as the company aims to have 100,000 venues available by 2025.

### WA pumps up events funding

**THE** Western Australian Government is offering \$100,000 event grants to entice Western Australians to attend gatherings in downtown Perth.

The grants are part of a wider \$12 million package to boost foot traffic downtown, with \$4 million set aside specifically to help the city's events sector recover.

The funding is intended for a wide range of events such as markets, long-table dinners and live music performances.

The grants will be available for 12 months from 01 Jul through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, with applications opening next month.

The announcement follows WA easing COVID rules to baseline measures from tomorrow, which includes dropping mask-wearing and removing the 2m<sup>2</sup> rule.

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## APPOINTMENTS

**WELCOME** to Industry Appointments, *Travel Daily's* Thursday feature which has the latest job appointments from across the industry. If you have just appointed someone to a new position and would like to update the industry email appointments@traveldaily.com.au.

IHG Hotels & Resorts has appointed a "dream team" to launch **voco Melbourne Central**, an IHG Hotel, including General Manager **Erik Stuebe**. Joining him will be Director of Sales & Marketing **Christine Bridge** and Executive Chef **Ian Lee**, as the hotel takes its first day of paying customers today.

Experienced nonprofit organisation executive **Linda Barry** has been appointed General Manager of the **Mary Valley Rattler** heritage railway line. She will take up her position from 23 May, having recently returned to Queensland and settled in nearby Black Mountain.

**Carnival Corporation** Chief Executive Officer **Arnold Donald** is set to depart, and be replaced by Chief Operations Officer **Josh Weinstein**. Donald's last day will be 01 Aug, and after then, he will take up the Vice Chair role, and serve on the board of directors.

**Outrigger Hospitality Group** has hired a new Vice President Design & Construction, **Cesar Herrera**. He will oversee all capital projects in Outrigger's global portfolio of owned and/or managed hotels & resorts. Herrera will be joined by General Manager for Outrigger Waikiki Beach Resort, **Steve Miller**.

## Agents prep for a fresh start



**TRAVELMANAGERS** recently held a two-day refresher training seminar for Victoria-based personal travel managers to update them about systems and brief them on updates processes to ensure they are fully prepared for the current upsurge in travel bookings this year.

Held just three weeks after TravelManagers' Victoria state meeting, the training day was attended by a total of 45 PTMs.

Although the focus of the seminar was to provide attendees with a refresher course on TravelManagers' systems, a product presentation was also provided by Fairmont Singapore Managing Director **Marcus Hanna**, who came bearing gifts, with one night at the hotel won by **Penny Stansfield**, representative for Beaumaris.

"One of our PTMs came all the way from Thurgoona, NSW – a distance of more than 300 kilometres – which really underlines the commitment and

enthusiasm they have for getting back to selling international travel," revealed Executive General Manager **Michael Gazal**.

## Whitsundays success

**THE** Wonders of The Whitsundays tourism campaign has delivered almost \$5 million worth of visitation to the region, according to figures released by Tourism Whitsundays.

On the back of another challenging year, the marketing push helped drive visitation and encouraged dispersal through the low season, delivering a return of around 6:1.

The campaign was delivered in partnership with 13 local operators, and targeted key audiences across NSW, Victoria, and Queensland.

It was delivered through both tactical and inspirational content, keeping The Whitsundays front of mind to tourists, and was voiced by Australia's Siri, **Karen Jacobsen**.

## ETC restarts up north

**EVOLUTION** Travel Collective (ETC) and Scandinavian specialist 50 Degrees North have this week announced the restart of their partnership within the Asia-Pacific region.

From Sun, ETC will again facilitate all of the brand's on-ground representation to the business-to-business market.

50 Degrees North was one of ETC's largest partners pre-COVID, and both parties are keen to pick up from where they left off.

"It's great to restart this next phase with the 50 Degrees North team," ETC Chief Executive Officer **Pete Rawley** said.

"We have been doing some set-up behind the scenes for the past few months and think the APAC

market is now ready for increased point of sale activity".

Founder of 50 Degrees North **Tietse Stelma** said his company was equally enthusiastic, having spent the pandemic focusing on regions which were still able to travel to Scandinavia.

"50 Degrees North has been concentrating on the North America and the UK/EU regions throughout the pandemic, as these markets have continued to travel throughout this period," **Stelma** explained.

"At the same time, we've been working with the ETC team to build the right plan and restart at the right time for this market.

"We know the pent-up demand is there for quality product".





## Discover Europe's Gems

European River Cruising is back, now is the time to celebrate the return with amazing experiences on offer for your clients.

### All aboard the brand-new Travelmarvel Contemporary River Ships

Guests can kick up their heels in one of the 91 spacious cabins onboard. Ranging from 14.2 – 24 square metres, there is ample space to unpack and unwind after a day of exploring, drinking, and dining. Clients will also love Travelmarvel's latest innovative feature, electronically opening windows to create a French-style balcony, perfect for enjoying the fresh air and view.

Each ship boasts expansive public areas, with plenty of outdoor access. On sunny days, guests can head to

the Sun Deck, which features a bar and plunge pool, or they can enjoy an afternoon cocktail with a view at the elegant True North Lounge.

### Delightful dining

From gourmet to pub-grub, Travelmarvel has something for everyone. Looking for a decadent dining experience with a view; Constellations Restaurant boasts a refined menu of local cuisine and floor-to-ceiling windows, and, for a more informal dining experience, there is always McGearys bar, an Irish-style pub serving classic pub-fare and pints daily.

### Once-in-a-lifetime destinations

The benefit of river cruising is visiting quaint, beautiful towns guests would likely miss otherwise. Journeying from Amsterdam to Budapest, Travelmarvel

stops at remote river-side dwellings, where your clients can experience a slice of local life, be it from sampling a regional delicacy or visiting a family. Travelmarvel tours ensure your guests experience all Europe has to offer in style.

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