



TripADeal new CTO

QANTAS' online travel agency, TripADeal, has announced the appointment of Melissa Robertshaw as its new Chief Technology Officer.

Robertshaw joins from Coles Group, where she has worked since 2019 as Head of Design & Digital Services, before being promoted to Head of Technology - Store Customer.

She has also held many roles in both the public and private sectors, including the position of Project & Program Manager at EnergyAustralia in 2014.

In her new role, Robertshaw will oversee technology and innovation across the TripADeal business, along with leading the end-to-end technology function.

"Melissa has an engaging and positive energy that we know will inspire change and further connect our business with its people and customers," one of the company's founders, Richard Johnston, said.

TIME for Virtuoso

THE Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) is calling all of its graduates to try and win their way to Virtuoso Travel Week.

The two organisations have teamed up to offer a rare scholarship opportunity for a TIME graduate to experience the conference in-person next year.

Virtuoso Travel Week will celebrate its 35th year in 2023 - for further details on how to apply, [CLICK HERE](#).

Earn double points

TRAVEL advisors can earn double credit on Abercrombie & Kent's (A&K) Northwest Passage cruise for next year, bringing them even closer to its Sell Three, Sail Free incentive.

A&K is now offering agents the chance to earn double credit points on staterooms booked on The Northwest Passage: From Greenland to the Bering Sea 2023 - for more info, [CLICK HERE](#).

DL reduces commission

DELTA Air Lines has become the latest carrier to slash its BSP commissions in Australia, with an update delivered over the weekend confirming the American carrier will be reducing its rate from 5% to 3% on 01 Jan.

The news only arrives seven months after the airline confirmed it would be continuing to support Aussie travel agents by maintaining its current 5% base commission level (**TD** 19 May), with DL's Sales Manager Australia/NZ, Nicole Bennett, at the time telling a Collette Forum in Cairns that the support the

company had received from the trade was crucial during the travel shutdown and it was now time "for payback".

DL follows a slew of airlines following QF in cutting agent commissions, with this year seeing Malaysian Airlines halve its rate from 4% to 2% (**TD** 09 Jun), Singapore Airlines reduce its BSP to 1% from 01 Oct (**TD** 31 Jan), BA slash rates from 5% to 1% (**TD** 01 Apr), and Etihad also dropping the hammer on its commissions to just 1% as well (**TD** 03 Mar).

DL's decision also follows a call by Travellers Choice Managing Director, Christian Hunter, for agents to start charging fees for services, labelling the shift as "no longer optional" (**TD** 29 Nov).

MEANWHILE bucking the trend, Air Tahiti Nui has issued a reminder to travel agents that it continues to pay BSP Commission for Australian point-of-sale and originating flights at 5%.

Since 01 Aug 2022, Air Tahiti Nui has had the rate in place on its published fares ticketed on TN 244 paper.

Goway Talent video

TOURISM Talent has released its latest executive interview, featuring a chat with Kathy Turner from Goway Travel, one of the country's premier inbound tour operators.

The interview showcases Turner's career journey, including positions in online travel, hotels, events and more, as well as her role on the ATEC Board and the pandemic's impact on Goway.

The video is now live online at traveldaily.com.au/videos.

Tender due Wed

THE Federal Department of Finance today reminded the industry that the closing time for its Request for Tender for Travel Management Services for the Australian Government closes at 12pm Canberra time this Wed 21 Dec, with tenderers advised to ensure they allow sufficient time to allow for any troubleshooting.

Intrepid Reynolds

INTREPID Travel has appointed a new Key Partnerships Manager, Leigh Reynolds, who returns to the business with responsibility for servicing and growing sales through Intrepid's key partners.

He will report to GM of Sales & Partnerships, Yvette Thompson.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news.

Air Vanuatu delays

AIR Vanuatu has revealed it is resuming flights to Australia after securing a necessary part for its only Boeing 737.

The component was flown to Port Vila yesterday evening, meaning flights are safe to resume from today after several services were rescheduled.

Air Vanuatu said its customer service staff are doing their best to call all clients affected - for further details about impacted flights, see [HERE](#).

Club Med Kiroro Peak resort opens

FOSUN Tourism Group has opened Club Med Kiroro Peak in Hokkaido, Japan, representing the fifth resort opened by the brand so far this year.

The launch was flagged earlier this year (**TD** 02 Aug), and features 23 ski courses, as well as snowboarding, snowshoe experiences, and a snow park.



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India and NZ top recovery

INDIA and New Zealand are forecast to be Australia's fastest recovering tourism source markets, according to a new report published by Tourism Research Australia (TRA).

While the number of tourists from traditionally strong markets such as the United States, United Kingdom, Europe, and Japan are expected to take longer to recover to pre-pandemic levels, the commencement of new direct flight services between India and Australia have been influential in seeing Indian arrivals return to our shores at a rate faster than any other market in 2022.

Strong growth in Indian tourists

is expected to continue over the next five years, TRA anticipates, with 386,000 arrivals expected in 2023, nearing parity with 2019.

By 2027, close to double that number of tourists from India are expected (608,000), seeing the South Asian nation jump to be Australia's fifth largest market.

Meanwhile, the close proximity and quickly rebounding air capacity is also seeing New Zealand tourists return quicker than most markets, with traffic from across the Tasman already returning to 40% of 2019 numbers in Sep (410,200).

By 2024, 1.4 million Kiwi visitors are forecast to arrive in Australia, representing parity with 2019 numbers, with the number of Kiwi tourists expected to grow to around 1.6 million in 2027.

The news was less optimistic for American tourism however, with TRA's report predicting growth in the number of visitors from the US to "take some time" before recovering to 2019 levels.

Just over 820,000 arrivals from the US are forecast each year by 2025, marking the point at which 2019 is eclipsed, growing to around 950,000 visitors by 2027.

The slow recovery is attributed to only a "gradual" restoration of air capacity between the two countries, with strong ties and a hefty tourism marketing investment to accelerate the pace of growth through to 2027.

Pre-pandemic, the US was one of the largest growing markets.

FJ baggage change

ECONOMY class passengers flying with Fiji Airways on international flights will be allowed one piece of checked luggage (30kg max) on all flights, as part of uniform changes to the airline's baggage policy.

Business class travellers will also be allowed two pieces of checked-in luggage (30kg each), transitioning from the previous policy of one bag (40kg).

Loyalty program members will also benefit from the luggage revamp, with Tabua Club Classic members now entitled to one extra piece of checked-in luggage (10kg), while Tabua Club Plus members get (15kg).

The new baggage policy is effective for bookings made from 15 Dec for travel commencing on or after 01 Feb next year.

Cabin baggage allowance will remain at one 7kg piece for Economy and 14kg for Business.

CZ to launch six

CHINA Southern Airlines will soon relaunch six international air services as mainland China continues to loosen COVID-related domestic protocols after a long period of isolation.

Flights from China to Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Singapore and Turkey have all been flagged for a restart in late Dec and early Jan.

Domestically, China has seen air seat capacity rise to around 1.9 million weekly, an increase from 1.7 million in late Nov.



Window Seat

OVER the last 12 months, Jetstar has served up three quarters of a million cups of coffee and 700,000 plates of cheese and crackers, according to the airline's annual review of its commercial achievements.

The thousands of cups of joe equated to a whopping 136,000 litres of the popular caffeinated beverage, while Qantas' budget airline also handed out half a million of toasties to its passengers.

Close to 150 million kg of baggage was checked in (the volume of lost bags were not included), the equivalent weight of around 1,000 Boeing 787s, while 140,000 babies & 250 service dogs also boarded its fleet over the last year.

As for the most watched program on its in-flight Entertainment, the honour went to Aussie children's favourite *Bluey*.

To round the list off, Jetstar's most popular domestic routes were Melbourne to Sydney and Sydney to the Gold Coast, while internationally it was Melbourne to Bali (Denpasar).



Do you want a chance to win 1 of 3 seats on Jetstar & KTO's famil to Seoul?

The famil will be running from 05/02/2023 to 08/02/2023, with flights on Jetstar, plus transfers, accommodation and tours in Seoul included.

To find out how you can enter for a chance to win as well as the terms and conditions, click here!

[Enter here](#)

Jetstar



New Experience Co CCO

EXPERIENCE Co this morning announced the appointment of Fiona Stillwell as its new Chief Commercial Officer, taking the role vacated by Kathryn O'Brien who was last month named as Air New Zealand's new country manager Australia (**TD** 28 Nov).

Stillwell moves to Experience Co from her current position as GM of Sales & Marketing at Hamilton Island, and will report to Experience Co CEO John O'Sullivan as part of the ASX-listed firm's executive team.

Her career spans more than two

decades of industry experience, including positions with Flight Centre and HRG, and she's also a board member of Luxury Lodges of Australia.

"As the adventure tourism sector continues to grow back strongly from the lockdowns, we are really excited about Fiona joining our team," O'Sullivan said.

"Her appointment comes at an exciting and critical time for our business as we position ourselves for future growth... Fiona has an outstanding reputation and track record in our industry, and I am really looking forward to her contribution to Experience Co."

Experience Co has also appointed Drew Hamilton as Sales Manager NZ, relocating across the ditch from his current role as Cairns-based Director of Sales for AAT Kings.

Also in NZ, Sales Executive Tom Broe has been promoted to the role of BDM.

Viceroy Hotels sale

HOSPITALITY investment group Highgate has announced the acquisition of Viceroy Hotels & Resorts, which currently operates properties in Santa Monica, St Lucia, Chicago, Los Cabos and Snowmass and formerly also featured in Abu Dhabi.

Travellers Choice reunited



THE Travellers Choice team recently gathered to wrap up a successful year and celebrate being back together for the first time since 2019, after the company's annual conference reunited everyone in Melbourne last week.

The team enjoyed dinner at the

Meat & Wine Co on Southbank, after which they headed to Ponyfish Island to swap Secret Santa gifts before checking out the dazzling Christmas display at Crown Towers.

Pictured: The Travellers Choice team ready to tuck into their delicious meals.

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Rafa aces new hotel brand



MELIA Hotels International teamed up with tennis star Rafael Nadal to launch its new hotel brand, ZEL, in Madrid last week.

The new brand of resort and urban leisure hotels will first begin to open in Spain, before expanding to other key destinations in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and America.

ZEL aims to embody “the Mediterranean way of life”, with a focus on a passion for the outdoors, bright and open spaces, local cuisine and the natural wellbeing of its guests.

The ZEL-branded properties will feature “pop-up corners” offering handicrafts, beauty or product tastings with partner brands, as well as offering personal and group fitness activities.

QR Airbus trial splits

DUE to shortcomings in Qatar Airways’ disclosures, Airbus has secured approval from the London court to split an upcoming trial over the skin-paint deterioration issue on the airline’s A350 fleet in two.

Airbus successfully argued that the case would have to be delayed from its scheduled Jun date if the court did not agree to put off the part addressing the amount of damages.

The trial had already been ordered to be expedited in May.

There are currently 20 ZEL hotels planned over the next five years in destinations that attract premium-quality leisure travellers, with the first to open in Mallorca in 2023.

Pictured: Rafael Nadal and Gabriel Escarrer, CEO of Meliá Hotels International at a press conference for the ZEL launch.

Vic in the fast lane

THE Victorian Government has managed to secure Melbourne as host of the Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix for an additional two years, taking its hosting rights contract through to 2037.

Part of the deal will see Melbourne host the first race of the Formula 1 season for at least four years between 2023 and 2037, with the state confident the event will be a major tourist drawcard as demand for next Australian Grand Prix after tickets for the main race day sold out in only three-and-a-half hours.

“Securing the Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix event in Melbourne for the next 12 years...will showcase the state to millions of spectators right across the globe,” Victoria’s Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos said.

This year’s Grand Prix attracted a record attendance of around 419,000 spectators.



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IHG Indigo refresh

HOTEL Indigo has debuted a reimagined visual identity and brand website, with custom illustrations representing each of its hotels.

The brand collaborated with a selection of artists to create the illustrations and as its footprint expands, Hotel Indigo intends to provide a platform for local artists to interpret each hotel’s distinct neighbourhood.

The bespoke imagery includes examples such as Hotel Indigo Brisbane City Centre’s Blue Emperor Butterfly, indigenous to the region.

Visit [Hotellindigo.com](https://www.hotellindigo.com).

EK lounge reopens

EMIRATES celebrated its seventh lounge in Dubai reopening since the pandemic, with the relaunch of the lounge in Concourse C, Dubai International Airport announced this week.

The lounge joins the 30 around the world which have now returned to full service.

Located adjacent to Gate C09, the space offers 265 seats over 1,308m² for travellers to rest and be refreshed, with shower spas, complimentary wi-fi, leather sofas and premium food and beverages.

LHR limitations

SOME airlines will put in place caps on tickets for flights to London’s Heathrow Airport due to planned strikes by border agents over the holiday period.

British Airways and Virgin Atlantic are both reportedly making sure to place limits on capacity in the face of disruptions caused by around 1,000 Border Force staff in passport control initiating industrial action, with BA ceasing the sale of inbound flights on all eight days staff are expected to walk off the job.

Border Force workers are asking airports to suppress demand on days where expected passenger numbers are 70-80% above 2019 passenger levels.

Star Alliance Rome

TRAVELLERS can now pay to use Star Alliance’s lounge at Rome Fiumicino Airport.

All passengers on Star Alliance member airlines can access the lounge, regardless of cabin class or membership status, with vouchers from €45 for three hours and discounts available for members of the alliance’s frequent flyer programs.

Access can be pre-booked, subject to availability.

Rome Fiumicino is the fourth of Star Alliance’s six lounges to offer paid access.

Radisson tanks

THE world’s largest cylindrical aquarium, Aquadom Berlin, located in the Radisson Collection Hotel, Berlin has burst, releasing one million litres of water and 1,500 fish into the hotel lobby and local streets.

The incident occurred at around 6am local time on 16 Dec with falling glass from the 15m aquarium injuring one guest and one team member, who are being treated in hospital.

The cause of the aquarium’s collapse is unknown and the hotel and authorities are looking into the incident, according to a statement from the brand.

Unfortunately the majority of the fish died in the incident.

Cancer complaints

BREAST Cancer Network Australia has reported a rise in complaints about Australian airport security from breast cancer survivors.

Some women who have undergone a mastectomy were asked by airport security to remove their prosthesis.

Director of Breast Cancer Network Australia, Vicki Durston, said the rise in cases was likely a combination of the rising numbers of travellers after lockdowns and the greater use of highly sensitive full body scanners at airports around the country.

Townson to TA

ADAM Townson has been appointed as National Product Leader for Australia at Travel Associates, rejoining the Flight Centre Travel Group brand after two years as Head of Marketing & Events at Tourism Noosa.

Robot butler deployed in NZ



MILLENNIUM Hotels & Resorts is now featuring a new "Butlerbot" at its M Social property in Auckland, with the gadget (pictured) "dedicated to elevating the hotel's services and guest experience".

Nicknamed H.A.R.I., the robot butler is stationed near the front desk - snappily dressed in a bright blue suit complete with a polka-dot bow tie.

Developed by Keenon Robotics, H.A.R.I. is able to use the elevator independently, and is "an integral part of the hotel that provides services to guests at any time of the day or night," according to GM Nigel Edwards.

The robot features two storage chambers that can be divided into four sections, delivering a wide variety of items such as food and beverage from the inhouse Beast & Butterflies restaurant, towels and amenities, or anything else guests require.

The robot can complete four errands in succession, and interfaces with the hotel's elevator and phone systems so it can alert guests to open and retrieve their deliveries on arrival.

Amadeus turns key on mobility deal

AMADEUS has announced an investment in a Spanish mobility start-up called Eccocar, saying the move will help accelerate the development of a "multimodal ecosystem".

Eccocar offers a range of solutions focusing on car-sharing and "micromobility", with Amadeus investing alongside European tech-focused venture capital fund Ninepointfive.

Amadeus VP of Mobility and Travel Protection, Peter Altmann, said "the strength of the Amadeus Mobility Platform has us well positioned to continue to innovate and create more experiences for travel seller customers and mobility content providers."

"Eccocar presents an exciting vehicle for further experimentation, and will help us evolve our offering as new forms of mobility arrive in urban areas," Altmann said.

Colombia-Canada open skies deal

AN EXPANDED air transport agreement has been negotiated between Canada and Colombia, allowing designated carriers of both countries to operate an unlimited number of passenger and cargo flights.

The move is a significant change from the previous arrangement which only allowed 14 passenger and 14 cargo flights per week.

New CHC chief

JUSTIN Watson was today announced as the new Chief Executive Officer of Christchurch Airport in New Zealand.

Watson is currently CHC's Chief Aeronautical and Commercial Officer, and will become CEO on 01 Jan 2023, succeeding Malcolm Johns who finishes up at the end of the month after nine years heading up the key South Island aviation gateway.

Albo hails Rex chief



PRIME Minister Anthony Albanese has formally opened the five-star Branksome Hotel and Residences in Sydney's Mascot, fulfilling a promise to the property's developer Lim Kim Hai, who is also the Executive Chairman of Rex Airlines.

An opening ceremony took place on Fri attended by a host of VIP guests, Federal and State MPs as well as civic and industry leaders, with Albanese unveiling a commemorative plaque (pictured) during the event.

The hotel was actually completed in Oct 2017 - when Albanese was in opposition - but was never officially opened.

Albanese waxed lyrical about Lim's dedication to the local travel and tourism industry.

"Can I congratulate Kim Hai for his extraordinary vision and for being prepared as an entrepreneur to invest here in Australia, whether it's airlines, or the hotel here, and other investments that have taken



place," he said.

"We welcome investment that creates jobs and economic activity...and I know that many of the staff here would come from the local community," the PM enthused.

The Branksome features 152 one- and two-bedroom apartment-style rooms as well as an indoor pool, spa, sauna, gym and 10 meeting rooms, and employs almost 100 full- and part-time staff.

"I am so pleased to be fulfilling a promise I gave to Kim Hai and John (Sharp, Rex's Deputy Chairman) that if I was the Prime Minister I would come back here and make sure I opened these refurbished facilities," Albanese (pictured below with Sharp and Lim) said.



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.



Pleasant Holidays - 2023 Destination Wedding
Pleasant Holidays has released its 2023 Destination Wedding & Honeymoon brochure, which features a world of romantic travel options. The 32-page brochure features more than 100 hotels and resorts in popular destinations around the world, which are ideal for weddings and honeymoons. Many options included in the brochure offer complimentary weddings gifts for the couple, or honeymoon suites and amenities. The brochure also highlights Pleasant Holidays' Wedding Travel Desk, which assists travel advisors with their clients' nuptial needs.



Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours 2024-25 Antarctica
Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours is inviting passengers to experience the voyage of a lifetime cruising throughout the Antarctic region aboard *Scenic Eclipse*. The cruise line's latest brochure features both Antarctica's highlights, as well as its most isolated areas, both of which *Scenic Eclipse* visits. The 2024/2025 season will be the cruise line's fifth in the Antarctic Peninsula and South Georgia, and with the addition of *Scenic Eclipse II*, the brand will also voyage to the seldom-explored East Antarctica and Ross Sea region, available to an exclusive number of guests per season.

Two new boats

TWO new Leopard-model boats are now open for booking through Whitsunday Rent A Yacht, providing a unique opportunity for guests.

Lady Lynne and *Orion* are billed as ideal for a sailing with friends or family, featuring generous living spaces, modern styling, excellent natural light, and more.

Accommodation on each vessel includes a spacious Owner's suite and two double ensuite cabins.

Lounges in each ship's saloon can be converted to accommodate for larger groups.

Thai scams on rise

THAI Police have stepped up measures to protect foreign visitors from a rising number of scam artists and criminals, the Commissioner of the Tourist Police Bureau revealed to *The Bangkok Post* over the weekend.

The rise in tourist-related fraud coincides with an influx of visitor numbers to Thailand, with the majority of the scams involving taxi and tuk-tuk drivers.

In some cases tourists are falsely told that attractions are closed and are instead driven to disreputable jewellery outlets.

Merry Xmas (and happy b'day!)



MW TOURS recently enjoyed its Christmas dinner at Haidilao Hotpot Sunnybank in Brisbane.

The team enjoyed a variety of meals including hand-pulled noodles and a cultural face-changing show at the Market Square Sunnybank institution.

The dinner also served as a belated birthday celebration for MW's much-loved team member Janene Rubens.

Pictured is the MW team: David Reid, Karen Robertson, Rubens, Navy Wang, Jessica Hu, Hailey Klein, Kim Marcon, and Jade Fan.

Malaysian tragedy

MORE than 20 people have died at a holiday campsite in the Malaysian state of Selangor when a major landslide struck a tented site at a farm stay.

The campsite had been operating illegally, local Government Development Minister Nga Kor Ming told Malaysian news outlets, adding the operator had government-approval to run an organic farm but was not permitted to run any tourist camping activities.

Corfu purchase

DOMES Resorts & Reserves has acquired Maison Corfu, adding to the company's current portfolio of eight hotels around the world.

Maison Corfu is an authentic 10-bedroom townhouse in the centre of the island's Old Town, which will introduce a more intimate and personal hospitality experience for both new and returning Domes guests.

It combines the company's concierge culture, elevated gastronomy, art, events, and interior design, with a more bespoke offering.

Dating back to 1903, Maison Corfu is located on one of the island's most historic streets, and is surrounded by verdant gardens.

Maison Corfu caps a year of many openings for Domes.