

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news.

Jack is back!

AFTER a year out of the travel and tourism sector, former Tourism Holdings Limited National Sales Manager, Jack Brown, has been appointed as Manager, Global Sales Australia & NZ for Wyndham Hotels & Resorts.

In his new role Brown is responsible for maximising the exposure of Wyndham's franchised and managed properties to corporate, TMC, consortia and domestic hotel booking agents and meeting planners.

As well as previously working at THL, Brown was also formerly a National Product Manager at Flight Centre Travel Group.

QF Holidays rejigs value

Qantas Loyalty has announced major changes to redemption rates for Qantas Hotels and Qantas Holidays package bookings, with a significant reduction in the number of QF Frequent Flyer points required.

Effective immediately, members of the scheme will need 30% fewer points when booking accommodation on the Qantas Hotels portfolio of more than 440,000 global properties, and 45% less points when combining accommodation with QF or JQ flights in a single booking, across all Qantas Holidays packages.

Qantas Loyalty CEO Olivia Wirth said the permanent improvement in value will deliver significantly more per point for the program's 13 million members.

"We're increasing the power

of a point when booking hotels and holidays because we want to reinvest in a program that has performed extremely well during COVID," she said.

"Members have remained highly engaged despite the low levels of flying over the past two years, shown by the fact they've kept earning points on the ground and then redeemed in record numbers," Wirth added, noting that more than seven billion points were used to redeem flights in four weeks following the Nov border reopening.

"We want to keep that momentum going by making points go further for hotels and holidays, which in turn encourages members to keep earning with our partners and with the airline."

On top of the better value redemption rates, frequent flyers will also require 20% less points when using Points Plus Pay on flight bookings made before the end of Apr, for travel through until Apr 2023.

Wirth said the reductions would "help our growth into the hotel and holiday booking market, especially online, which is expected to rebound in the coming months".

Example packages include five nights for two adults in a Guest Room King at London's Pan Pacific along with return Economy QF flights ex SYD, which was previously 908,000 but now costs just under 500,000 QF points.

QR ups baby fares

QATAR Airways yesterday advised its travel industry partners of a 50% increase to infant (without seat) fares.

Effective from 07 Feb, infant fares will be charged at 15% of the adult fare, rather than the current 10%.

There is no price amendment on airfares for infants with seats, with agents advised to ensure all current bookings are ticketed by 06 Feb to avoid the increase.

Scenic takes a dive

SCENIC Luxury Cruises & Tours is claiming a world-first after its *Scenic Eclipse* conducted the first submersible dive from a passenger vessel in South Georgia.

Earlier this week the onboard *Scenic Neptune* submarine was successfully able to take guests on an underwater exploration in Stomness, as part of the vessel's current 21-day Antarctica & South Georgia trip.

The milestone moment came more than two years after the application process commenced, with Scenic the first operator given approval to dive submersibles in the location.

"After working closely with the authorities to gain permission, we'd like to thank them for placing their trust in us to operate these dives," said Captain James Griffiths, Scenic's Director of Marine Operations.

More of the latest cruise industry news in today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

Travel Daily

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Perth Airport shuts terminal

PERTH Airport has announced that it is temporarily closing its T1 Domestic terminal while the state's draconian border restrictions continue to impact travel volumes to the city.

The closure will commence 07 Feb and see all Virgin Australia services relocating next door to Terminal 2, a decision the airport said was a "sensible and responsible" choice in helping to reduce operational costs.

Terminal 3 will also see its hours of operation reduced, cut to Mon to Fri between 3.30am and 8.00am only.

CEO Kevin Brown said thus far the airport had "done the right thing by WA by keeping our runways and terminals operational" to ensure the resources and freight sector could continue to operate, despite the state's border closures forcing massive losses.

"Last financial year it cost us

more than \$6 per passenger to keep our airport open...our shareholders, who represent the retirement savings of around 8 million Australian workers, cannot be expected to continue to bear this cost," he said.

Last month Perth's Terminal 1 handled just 4,000 passengers, compared to almost 50,000 for the same period pre-COVID.

This morning Qantas CEO Alan Joyce blasted the ongoing closure of the WA border, saying there was "something fundamentally wrong" with one state being able to close borders indefinitely.

"I think we should all be enraged by the fact that [people in Sydney and Melbourne] can get to London, but you can't get to Perth...we're supposed to be all Australians and you can't even travel around your own country," he fumed.

The Qantas CEO added that with the WA Government having given no indication of plans to open up "it's starting to look like North Korea...it's gonna be closed indefinitely at this stage".

Lizard Island deal

THE Tailor is offering a special upgrade deal for stays at the five-star luxury lodge, Lizard Island and Crystalbrook Riley.

Prices for the deal start at \$7,355 per person, twin share, representing savings of up to \$2,290 per couple, and the offer (ex flights) is commissionable.

The offer is valid for travel between 12 Mar and 17 Jun, with room upgrades subject to availability - for more travel specials see **page six**.

Qatar BNE boost

QATAR Airways is increasing its Brisbane frequencies, moving to a daily standalone service to and from Doha effective from 01 Mar.

The B777-300ER flights to the Qld capital complement QR's other Australian services including daily MEL and SYD flights and thrice weekly PER and ADL frequencies.

Packing the pooch is paw-fect



CRYSTALBROOK Bailey Residences has rolled out the red carpet printed with doggie bones for owners in need of a holiday, making special canine packages available as an add-on for an additional \$95.

The special offer includes food and water bowl, a yummy doggy treat on arrival, as well as a complimentary 'Dog-tini' cocktail.

Crystalbrook Bailey General Manager Lisa Brown said its new doggie promotion would be perfect for travellers to the Cairns-based property who plan

to embark on a road trip through the Sunshine State but can't stand the thought of leaving their best friend behind.

"Now there's no need to find a pet-sitter and wave goodbye to those big puppy-dog eyes, get ready to pack the pooch and let them enjoy a luxury holiday or staycation with you," she said.

Ecotourism leader

ELISSA Keenan has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer of Ecotourism Australia, replacing Rod Hillman in the position.

Keenan has previously held executive roles in the tourism & aviation sectors, and starts 07 Mar.

Russian restrictions

DFAT has reminded travellers that entry into Russia remains restricted for Australians, with only residents, close family members of Russian citizens, members of diplomatic missions, and essential workers allowed through its borders.

Aussies allowed to enter Russia for work purposes or who intend to stay over 90 days may be subject to biometric fingerprinting and regular medical check-ups, DFAT added.

Rangelands
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Dinosaur Country Winton

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AIME for knowledge

ASIA Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) has unveiled its line up of speakers who will take part in its 2022 Knowledge Program.

The event will be hosted by Australian journalist Mimi Kwa and include presentations by CEO of the profit-for-purpose toilet paper company Who Gives a Crap Simon Griffiths, as well as respected futurist and tech entrepreneur Steve Sammartino.

The three core themes driving this year's Knowledge Program at AIME are business innovation, driving engagement and human connection.

The event will commence in person on 21 Mar and continue with the Ideas Academy on 22 and 23 Mar.

Drop tests to US

THE International Air Transport Association (IATA) has joined forces with 28 aviation and travel groups in calling on the US Govt to drop pre-departure testing for fully vaccinated int'l arrivals.

"The vaccinated traveller population adds no additional risks to the domestic US population," IATA said.

Increased immunity levels, the pervasiveness of COVID-19 in all 50 US states, rising vaccination rates and new therapeutics, all point to removing the testing requirement for fully vaccinated travellers, the group added.

IATA also cited moves by EU nations to dismantle testing.

Leisurecom platform grows

LEISURECOM Group, the operator of Discover Queensland, eCruising.travel (TD 18 Feb 2020) and travel partner of The Entertainment Book (TD 22 Oct 2021), has announced the launch of Discover Holidays, described as "a new-to-market travel retailing solution" offering a range of all-inclusive packages.

Initial destinations will include Japan, Hawaii, Fiji, Singapore, Bali, New Zealand, the USA, Europe and Alaska, along with fully customisable domestic deals across Australia.

Blue Mtns festival

BLUE Mountains Tourism has unveiled the details of a new festival kicking off in Mar that blends music, food, art and the region's natural environment.

The Equinox – Autumn Celebration of the Senses event will span the whole Blue Mountains area and include bush walks, live concerts, beer tasting, arts and crafts and more.

"After an unsettling past two years, it's time to emerge and immerse yourself in the wonderful bounty of life here in the Blue Mountains," Blue Mountains Tourism President Jason Cronshaw said.

The new event was made possible through \$2.6 million funding from the Federal and State Governments' Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund announced in Jul last year.

CEO Franc Zvonar said "the travel industry has focused, in recent years, on booking online standard packages without the reassurance or personalisation that takes a holiday from great to memorable".

"We want to showcase the options available to travellers and give them ideas of what they could do, but also provide them with a full concierge service where they can customise their trip to turn it into the ultimate dream holiday," he said.

Zvonar said customers would be offered cost-saving deals with the flexibility to add-in, take away and adapt their package "without being penalised or having to pay a fee to do so".

See discoverholidays.com.au.

New WA trade role

TOURISM Western Australia has appointed Annabelle Molina to be its UK Trade and Marketing Executive to promote the European destination to travel agents and operators.

Molina said the tourism body had "plenty of exciting plans lined up" for agents in the coming months, including its spotlight Aussie Specialist Program.

She joins Tourism WA with close to 10 years of experience in the education and events sector.

Tourism Western Australia will also hold an "Adventure Awaits" roadshow in the summer and a famil trip later in the year.



Window Seat

NOW that's finger lickin' flying!

Fans of KFC can now have their favourite meals take a whole new travel route, with the brand partnering with Australia's first on-demand drone delivery service Wing, to start flying machine deliveries in Qld.

The pilot scheme, an Australian-first for KFC, will initially be available to a limited number of homes in the suburbs of Kingston, Logan Central, Slacks Creek, Underwood and Woodridge.

With the prospect of fast food flying around Australia's skies tipped to increase in the coming years, it's certain to make residents in WA jealous who remain grounded indefinitely.



New staffing report

SINGAPORE-BASED ACI HR Solutions has released the tenth edition of its annual Salary & Employment Trends report, surveying over 800 travel industry workers including about 60 in Australia about their salaries and satisfaction levels - to download and view [CLICK HERE](#).

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Find out more

CORPORATE UPDATE

Serko warns of virus hit

LISTED corporate travel technology provider Serko Limited yesterday issued a trading update, saying that while the company continues to execute on its strategy, “the rapid spread of Omicron and related restrictions has reduced business travel volumes in key markets”.

The company said that in turn would impact its expected revenues for the full year to 31 Mar 2022, noting that while corporate travel normally dips in Dec and Jan due to seasonal holiday impacts, this year that decline had been exacerbated due to the rise of the new variant.

“The potential for volatility in revenues due to the ongoing influence of COVID and its variants was one of the reasons for Serko undertaking a capital raise in 2021, which was focused on ensuring Serko had sufficient

capital to continue to innovate its global offering, acquire new customers and support its existing customers,” the firm told investors.

Interestingly, business in both Australia and NZ was in line with expectations up to the end of Dec, but then dipped in Jan, and “while we are seeing some early signs of recovery in Australia, demand in New Zealand has been significantly affected”.

Through the seasonal holiday period Serko’s volumes through the Booking.com for Business platform were also significantly affected, but over the last week had recovered to about 90% of Oct 2021 volumes.

Serko has adjusted its revenue guidance downwards, and is now saying its full year sales would be between NZ\$18m and \$20.5m, compared to previous forecasts of \$21m-\$25m.

The company’s average monthly cash burn is expected to be close to NZ\$4 million.

Accom security accreditation

A NEWLY launched Security Accreditation scheme for serviced accommodation and corporate housing aims to address the increasing focus on risk management for travel buyers.

London-based International Serviced Accommodation Accreditation Process (ISAAP)’s new security offering will cover single or multiple apartments in a mixed building; providers that operate an entire block which is unstaffed; or complete accommodation such as an apartment hotel.

The addition of security accreditation builds on ISAAP’s portfolio which also covers key areas such as comfort and quality as well as compliance with a range of industry standards.

ISAAP MD Stephen Martin said the rollout of the new ISO 31030 global standard for travel risk management had “thrown a fresh focus on accommodation security”.

Boom is forecast

SAP Concur has released details of a new industry survey which found more than half of US corporate finance managers say a “business travel boom” within their industries is either “very likely” or “extremely likely” by the end of 2022.

The optimism was even greater among corporate travellers, with 73% saying they expected a significant increase in travel overall, and 62% stating they were likely to travel more this year than in 2021.

The poll, conducted in early Jan by Wakefield Research, surveyed 100 US finance managers with titles of VP and above, as well as 1,000 US business travellers.

A whopping 88% of the finance managers surveyed said that having employees being unable to travel had caused a revenue loss within their businesses.

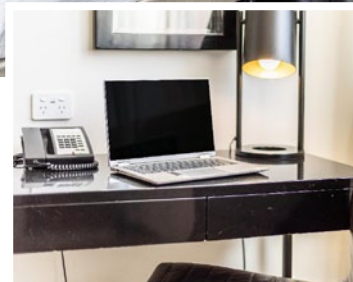
Bring the brand to Bondi



THE Holiday Inn & Suites Sydney Bondi Junction in Sydney has opened its doors after rebranding the property from the former Quest Bondi Junction identity.

IHG Hotels & Resorts has confirmed the hotel will now undergo a series of renovations to its guest rooms, lobby and guest spaces that it believes will showcase an “innovative next-generation design and guest experience”.

The 82 suite hotel currently offers guests a gym and has



flagged plans to open an all-day dining restaurant following the refurbishment.

“We are thrilled to extend our reach across Sydney and complement our stable of hotels in the Eastern Suburbs, which already includes Double Bay, Coogee and Potts Point,” IHG’s Director of Development for Australasia Jael Fischer said.

The property will be operated through a partnership with La Vie Hotels & Resorts.

Pictured: One of the property’s 82 suites.

Qld nature session

TOURISM Australia will run a 30-minute webinar on 08 Feb to showcase the wide array of wildlife and nature experiences on offer for travellers in Qld, guided by Addie Brooks from Tourism and Events Queensland.

Attendees will also have until 28 Feb to convey in 25 words or less about what Queensland region they can’t wait to visit and why, for a chance to score two nights stay at O’Reilly’s Rainforest Retreat, Thala Beach Nature Reserve or Tangalooma Island Resort - register [HERE](#).

Celestial steps up

CELESTIAL Cruises has introduced a new reservation platform for travel agents, designed to provide more fully integrated, customisable software solutions for the travel sector.

Developed in partnership with software company Versonix, the new Seaware Platform gives advisors access to a larger range of pre- and post-packages, rule-based pricing, payment and cancellations schedules, shore excursions, onboard experiences, wider booking ranges and more.

NSW tourism gongs

TARONGA Western Plains Zoo, Dubbo, Oakvale Wildlife Park and Tweed Eco Cruises were just a few of the 2021 NSW Tourism Awards winners announced by Destination NSW yesterday.

The awards recognised finalists in 29 tourism categories including tourist attractions, festivals and events, ecotourism, marketing, and accommodation.

“It’s been an extremely challenging period for the NSW visitor economy and, after a break in 2020, the return of the NSW Tourism Awards demonstrates the renewed energy of the visitor economy,” NSW Tourism Industry Council Executive Manager Greg Binskin said.

Winners in the award categories will represent the state at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards to be held on 18 Mar (**TD** 03 Feb) - view the full list of tourism winners [HERE](#).



Be prepared. Not scared. Four templates to follow

OPINION

Max Najar
is Director of
Adelaide's Axis
Travel Centre.

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



FOR THOSE travel agents who are still doing their best to survive amongst the complexities and confusions of COVID, I think it is a perfect time to sell travel based upon a series of new templates.

TEMPLATE ONE:

Read and focus on the ex Australia and inbound rules pertaining to PCR or RAT or if not required. Prepare yourself and staff and focus on each airline, cruise and transit point regulations. Have a dedicated staffer or do it yourself, and relay what needs to be done for the entire agency.

Do not advise any client of what you know until you adopt and they agree to Template Two!

TEMPLATE TWO:

Introduce and adopt a new service fee, and apply that to both domestic and international travel bookings that encompasses the effort, time and protocols that need to be followed before, during and after travel.

Remember that you as a travel agent/advisor are legally liable for what you advise a client of, so you might as well levy a fee to cover your professional services.

Maybe add a fee (lets call it a DUTF-Data Upload Transfer Fee) of \$33+ per person for domestic and \$77+ per person for international, in addition to your standard booking and ticket issuance fees. These fees should be non-refundable.

It is critical that you make clients aware that you must spend time, to input and receive confirmation of their passport, DOB, names and COVID status that you must submit via your CRS. Also advise

pax that rules and protocols can change daily and that time, effort and keeping ahead of legal updates are all encompassed within this DUTF.

Most clients respect and know how complex and ever-changing things are, whilst those clients who do not appreciate what you are doing for them should not be handled. Walk away.

Note also that some airlines are now issuing ADMs if an agent does not input all data, so you better do it properly, with clients aware of what is being done.

FYI, most OTA sites and airlines do not ask for all the information nor have knowledgeable staff

to do exactly what is required to satisfy government health protocols or offer travellers the most updated information. A professional travel agent has the ability to do it all.

TEMPLATE THREE:

After being prepared, please do not get scared about marketing your services and knowledge to now proceed to book travel.

I know there may be reluctance to even offer travel to clients, but be confident and do what you are qualified and good at doing.

Your expertise, your connections, your CRS toolkit of keyboard entry skills, your ability to reply to calls and emails swiftly, your ability to save so much time for clients, your industry experience and your ability to sort through the complex maze of travel conditions, fare rules, government and health department requirements easily overrides what a consumer can ever do or have the ability to know.

As an example, our agency has comfortably embraced what is required, and continues to

market our travel services with a new array of travellers who are now regarded as clients of ours as they have "given up" attempting to decipher the wall of travel requirements, complexities and travel booking conditions.

It is so unfortunate that many good agencies and advisors have departed our industry, which means that the Australian population has less humans to rely upon as COVID travel confusions continue.

TEMPLATE FOUR:

Sell yourself against airlines and any other supplier that pays no commission or directly markets against your agency.

Do not stay silent. Do not follow their ridiculous strategies. Be your own leader.

You can start by advising clients that you are paid no revenue to sell the airline

or supplier product and that you do not condone their direct marketing approach.

Use relevant analogies with clients who may be in business - give a retailer the analogy if they buy wholesale and sell wholesale or do they add a margin, or how would a lawyer or accountant or plumber feel if they gave advice, did paperwork and did call-outs 24x7 for free? Real-life examples and relevant analogies tend to drive the message home!

Most airline and supplier sales reps are nice people but are instructed, as their jobs are at stake, to follow HQ directives -even if they personally dislike what is being done.

Airlines and some suppliers are NOT OUR FRIENDS. They are ruthless business entities that want us to promote and sell their product but will on the same day

sell direct - smiling at you as they destroy your selling avenues.

This is not a relationship based on friendship. It is a corporate battle and the sooner our industry associations adopt this Template strategy the better.

The sales reps can remain our friends, but the suppliers must be treated differently.

First and foremost, support the airlines and suppliers that support yourself via commissions, marketing monies or other means with solid reasons to sell their product - otherwise use them only if necessary. Always add your appropriate service/booking fees and explain to clients why your fee(s) are added - such as your professional advice, your expertise, your credentials and the ongoing human, contactable travel services that you offer.

Do not stay silent. Be bold. Be confident. Be truthful.

The accountants who try and run these airlines or suppliers are using the word "commission" when the word should be "marketing subsidy or expense". They are using the wrong semantic in saying they paid us a commission, as we market and sell their product for free!!!!

I have been saying this since 1978 and I say it again: "No airline or supplier on earth can offer the same personalized human services, 24x7 contacts, industry connections, CRS skills, empathy, sincerity, experience, expertise or knowledge that a professional travel agent or advisor can offer and most importantly - deliver in a timely manner. If a travel agent cannot add value to the travel equation then that agency should not exist and a traveller should not use them".

Be prepared. Do not be scared. Offer, advise, sell and extend back-up travel services to your current clients and watch as a new breed of travellers will slowly seek your expertise and become your clients!

“
If a travel agent cannot add value to the travel equation then that agency should not exist and a traveller should not use them
”

Air NZ buoyed by plan

AIR New Zealand has hailed the Kiwi government's recommencement plan (TD 03 Feb) as "incredibly exciting news", confirming plans to have 300 flights available between New Zealand and Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane & the Gold Coast in Mar.

"Once we have a clearer view as to the level of demand, we will adjust the schedule accordingly, but we're confident there will be seats available for those who need them," the carrier said.

"We have seen strong demand following the announcement with our first flights on the 28 Feb almost sold out."

Air New Zealand added that it was currently working through the required changes to its international schedule to align with 14 Mar for New Zealanders

wanting to return home from the rest of the world.

"We've kept our operation ready for this," Air NZ said.

"In the last few months, it's been great to bring back some of our pilots, with some cabin crew returning to training from 28 Feb, as we anticipate a return to global travel and we're looking forward to welcoming the tens of thousands of Kiwis making plans to board our aircraft soon."

Travellers will need to show proof of full vaccination to board the airline's flights.

Yesterday New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern outlined the country's five-stage plan to travel normality, which included allowing Australians to enter the country "from Jul at the latest", with a view to being even sooner.

TRAVEL SPECIALS

WELCOME to Travel Specials, *Travel Daily's* Friday feature. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of, send the details to specials@traveldaily.com.au

Savings of up to \$1,714 per couple are on offer for travellers booking a spot on Tradewind Voyages' grand tall ship *Golden Horizon* as she explores Greece in 2023. The promotion applies to the Grand Grecian Getaway package and bookings must be made via **Cruise Traveller** before 31 Dec. Call 1800 507 777 for details.

Travellers booking a spot aboard the famous **Rocky Mountaineer** can enjoy discounts of \$1,140 when they book before 28 Feb. The deal applies to travel in Apr, May, and Oct for Canadian routes and Apr, May, Sep and Oct on USA routes. More details **HERE**.

APT is giving travellers the chance to save up to \$1,000 per couple on a European voyage through the Balkans between May and Nov this year. Discounted packages are priced from \$7,295 per person, twin share, with the 15-day sailing to explore the Danube and the Black Sea, visiting Belgrade, Bucharest and Bulgaria. Prices include flights, 41 onboard meals, transfers and port charges. Call 1300 278 278 for more details.

Icon under a microscope



THIS landmark is iconic and easily recognisable when you see the whole picture, but can you identify it from this small portion of the image?

These ornate roofs form part of a palace complex in this city,

which was the imperial palace and winter residence of the emperor between 1420, when it was constructed, and 1924.

It consists of 980 buildings and is built in traditional Chinese palatial architectural style.

Answer: Forbidden City, Beijing, China

Andaz Thai debut

HYATT Hotels Corporation has announced that it will debut its Andaz brand in Bangkok in 2023, with the property to offer guests 244 luxury rooms.

The Andaz One Bangkok hotel will target both leisure and corporate travellers and feature a rooftop restaurant & bar, as well as premium work spaces.

avid Florida plans

IHG Hotels & Resorts' avid hotels brand has opened a new property in Florida, only minutes away from Ft Lauderdale - Hollywood International Airport.

The 101-room avid hotel Ft Lauderdale Airport - Cruise, the third in the state, features all the mod cons, a 24-hour gym, parking and free wi-fi.

Great Southern acts

THE NSW Government's Great Southern Nights live music initiative, running from 18 Mar to 10 Apr, has added 30 new acts to its line-up.

The newly-revealed names include Kate Ceberano, Marcia Hines, MONTAIGNE Sheppard and The Jungle Giants, with the collaboration between Destination NSW and Australian Recording Industry Association designed to provide the state's regional visitor economy with a much needed boost following tough travel restrictions.

"This will create jobs for artists and crew, revenue for venues and drive visitation to large parts of regional NSW that have done it tough over the past few years," NSW Minister for Tourism Stuart Ayres said.

Got a confidential tip? Contact *Travel Daily* via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click **HERE**