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That's why we are excited to share Outback Spirit is now commissionable for travel in the 2023 season and beyond.

We will continue to create and develop new and exciting experiences and endeavour to share special places and shape lasting memories for all our guests.

FIND OUT MORE



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has four pages of news plus a cover page from **Outback Spirit**.

The Outback Spirit

JOURNEY Beyond's Outback Spirit brand is offering fully integrated and commissionable bookings for agents on its tours departing in 2023.

Dates for next year have been released early in response to a nearly sold out 2022 season for Aussie outback adventures, so that guests can be assured of securing their preferred dates.

Earlybird savings of up to \$750 per person are also on offer - see the **front page**.

Fiji scraps PCR test

THE Fijian Government has announced that travellers can now present a negative RAT result on arrival instead of organising a PCR test, as part of a raft of loosened COVID protocols.

Fiji has also dispensed with its curfew times, use of the Care Fiji app, QR codes, and caps on the numbers of gatherings.

Public transport has also moved to 100% capacity, which includes buses, mini-buses, carriers and taxis, however face masks will still need to be worn on board.

The Fijian Government said the moves were part of a plan to move "in a new direction" after Omicron, with the population now boasting 92.8% of adults being double vaccinated.

CATO establishes SETO

A NEWLY formed not-for-profit will lead the charge in promoting the benefits of conducting more travel in the education sector.

Established under the Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) umbrella, the new peak body called the Student Educational Travel Organisation (SETO) will champion the message of "education outside of the classroom", leading governance and advocacy to encourage more students to enjoy experiential learning through travel.

Key targets for dialogue will be educational travel tour operators, suppliers, teachers, schools, and universities, with SETO to act as a conduit between the needs of the travel and education sectors.

CATO chief Brett Jardine will personally head up the new organisation as its first Managing Director, stating the plan to launch the body had been in the pipeline for close to two years.

"COVID has allowed us the time to appoint a SETO board of directors that reflects the niche

Lift the cruise ban

A RALLY to lift the cruise ban will take place at the Overseas Passenger Terminal in Sydney on 13 Mar at 12pm midday.

So far 587 people have flagged their interest in attendance, an event organised by *Cruising With Honey* founder Honida Beram.

More details on the plight of the cruise sector on **page two**.

market of educational travel and they have worked tirelessly on bringing the idea to fruition," Jardine said.

Exploration outside the classroom includes programs such as study tours, sports tours, ski trips, music and performance tours, language immersion trips, expeditions, and service tours.

Educational Adventures MD David Walker has been appointed Chairman, while GET Education Tours' Anne-Marie Mitchell, Student Horizons' Jamie Wansey, Sundowners Overland's Liz Anderson and World Challenge's Pete Fletcher have been named as founding members of SETO.

Membership applications are now open - see www.seto.net.au.

Tourists from Mar?

PRIME Minister Scott Morrison has confirmed that determining a date to open the country's borders up to international tourists would be a top priority this week, with a decision to be made as soon as today.

"I really do believe that isn't far away," the PM said yesterday, adding that because the previous opening up of the borders to certain groups had "gone very well", he was looking forward to being able to welcome all visitors back to Australia again as soon as it was safe to do so.

Mar has been reported as the most likely month for the borders to reopen to tourists.

Splendor exits too

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has decided to cancel its planned visits Down Under by *Carnival Splendor* from 10 Jun through to 26 Sep, as the line continues to deal with "continued uncertainty of cruising in Australia".

The ship will be repositioned to the United States as it scrambles to ensure maximum occupancy of its fleet during Australia's continued ban on cruising.

The move follows a recent call by Carnival to redeploy *Carnival Spirit* from its local season to the United States (**TD** 02 Feb), with the line confirming Aussie dates will be blacked out between 05 Jun 2022 and 05 Oct 2023.

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

QF to Broken Hill

QANTAS has added Broken Hill to its domestic route network for the first time, with the airline to commence direct flights from Sydney from 08 Apr.

The carrier will operate two weekly return flights using its 50-seat Q300 aircraft, with a surge in interest in outback holidays helping to motivate the launch.

"We know many Australians are eager for their next holiday destination and the outback...this new route will make it easier for travellers to experience Broken Hill's rich history and growing cultural scene," QantasLink CEO John Gissing said.

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Travel Daily

Monday 7th February 2022

It's time to pay up: CLIA

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia has called on the Federal Government to release urgent support funding to a range of businesses adversely affected by the pause of the cruise sector in Australia.

In its latest pre-budget submission, CLIA argued its case by highlighting the \$5 billion a year lost to the Australian economy since cruise operations were halted close to two years ago, as well as the major impact the ban has had on the bottom lines of travel agents, tourism operators, industry suppliers and other local businesses.

"[CLIA's submission] supports calls by AFTA and ACCI for financial assistance for travel agents and other local businesses that will be essential in our cruise revival, and for the removal of Australia's Passenger Movement Charge to help stimulate international tourism once

borders fully open," CLIA said. "Cruise lines are not seeking financial assistance for themselves, but for the thousands of businesses that have been cut off from cruise tourism through no fault of their own," the industry body added.

International cruise ships are currently banned from entering Australian waters until 17 Feb, with a decision on whether to extend the human biosecurity emergency period under the *Biosecurity Act* to be made by that date at the latest.

In addition to funding support, CLIA also reiterated the need for the govt to provide the cruise sector with certainty by finalising plans for a local resumption of cruising as soon as possible.

However, CLIA MD Australasia Joel Katz conceded that even if cruise lines received permission this month, ships would be able to return by Jul at the earliest.



Hail to the Chief

VISIT USA President Lucy Rowe has resigned from her role as President after four years.

Rowe joined Visit USA in 2014, and has been an advocate for the American travel industry in her roles as a committee member, Treasurer, VP and President.

Through her tenure in Visit USA's oval office, the organisation has grown its membership by 20%, increased its financial stability, and updated its brand and digital strategies.

A replacement will be announced in Mar.

I love my caw-fee

I LOVE New York has linked up with Expedia TAAP to offer travel agents exclusive specials and deals on hotels stays.

The promo will run until the end of Feb, with advisors who book the most room nights in NY State (not NYC) via Expedia TAAP in the running to win a coffee machine.

Saucy US learning

BRAND USA Australia and Oklahoma Tourism have launched a flavourful new trade incentive, offering agents a chance of winning one of ten bottles of Oklahoma BBQ sauce.

To score a bottle of yummy condiment, advisors need to complete the new Oklahoma Specialist Badge on the USA Discovery Program, which provides up-to-date info about the state's best music spots, accommodation options, and must-do adventure activities.

The incentive kicks off today and will run for four weeks, with winners to be announced from across Australia & NZ on 07 Mar.

CLICK HERE to register.

ALUla for Flydubai

BUDGET carrier Flydubai will start flying to the Saudi Arabian city of AlUla for the first time, revealing plans to fly twice weekly from Dubai from 02 Mar.

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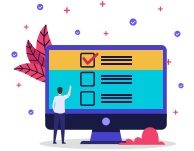
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Travel Daily
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Rex calls NSW home

REX Airlines has announced plans to construct a Boeing flight simulator centre at its Sydney headquarters, as well as build a new aircraft hangar and boost the capacity of its Orange call centre.

The expansion ambitions were made possible by the NSW Government's \$250 million Jobs Plus program, with Rex Airlines Deputy Chairman John Sharp thanking the government for incentivising the carrier to make NSW its headquarters.

"Without the Jobs Plus Program assistance, Rex's expansion plans in the state would never have materialised in this pandemic climate," Sharp said.

The expansion is expected to generate around 2,500 new jobs.

Duo of ships in Dec

MSC Cruises will offer 21 ships sailing to 85 different countries as part of its newly unveiled northern hemisphere winter collection for 2022/23.

Highlights of the new program include the launch of its first LNG-powered vessel, *MSC World Europa*, as well as the introduction of *MSC Seascape*, both of which will make their debuts in Dec.

Key cruises on offer for its Mediterranean season include seven-night sailings from Genoa, exploring Rome, Palermo, Valetta, Barcelona and Marseille.

Sales are open for all ships except *Preziosa*, *Splendida* and *Bellissima*, which will open soon.

NZ plan doesn't stack up

EXCLUSIVE

NEW Zealand's recently announced five-stage reopening plan (*TD* 03 Feb) fails to provide a logical road map to connecting with the rest of the world, AFTA CEO Dean Long believes.

Speaking with *TD* on Fri, Long (*pictured*) said despite the jubilation that New Zealand had set the wheels in motion, allowing Aussies to travel across the Tasman from Jul, the absence of a specific relaunch date was very damaging to the travel ecosystem.

"A month is not a date, a month is a period of time," Long said.

"A date allows airlines to make scheduling decisions, it allows hotels to ramp up staff, it allows travel agents to say to their consumer 'you can book on this date' because the border is going to be open on this date.

"A period of time is not helpful because it won't allow us to sell in any meaningful way."

Long was also very critical of the timeline for New Zealand's reopening plan and the scant supporting detail provided during the announcement.

"The lack of explanation on why there is a five-month delay for tourism from markets which have pretty much an identical COVID penetration rate in the community is illogical," Long said.

"This appears to be a political road map rather than one which is seeking to prepare New Zealanders for a re-engagement



in a world where there is now a new disease or virus that will be endemic," he added.

The AFTA chief also lamented the plight of New Zealand's visitor economy, which craves certainty at a time when they typically experience strong bookings.

"You've got all these other destinations that have similar ski experiences, which the Australian community will have a significantly higher level of trust that they'll be able to book and be able to carry out their travel."

Seek a different NT

TOURISM NT has launched three new TVCs in its "Seek Different" marketing campaign, encouraging Aussies to undertake a domestic trip to the Top End.

While highlighting the territory's iconic attractions such as Uluru, Alice Springs and Darwin, the commercials also push the opportunity to reconnect with family and friends.

The launch of the campaign coincides with the final weeks of the NT Summer Sale, offering savings of up to \$1,000 per package until 31 Mar.



Window Seat

WHILE on holidays, service is a pretty big deal for travellers - especially at hotels or on flights.

But just how accurate and attentive would you like your next flight attendant or hotel staff member to be?

With automation set to impact many sectors including travel over the next 20 years, it may be of interest to know China has developed an industrial robot that can read the human mind with a 96% degree of accuracy.

The robot not only monitors brainwaves to understand what people are thinking, but its inventors also claim it can harvest electric signals from muscles to predict what its human co-workers desire in the way of tools or components.

Collaborative robots, or "cobots" as they are referred to in the biz, could accelerate the pace of assembly lines or service-based processes in any number of industries such as travel and tourism.

But before you start dreaming of the next time a robot hands you a pina colada by the resort pool before you even asked for it, it's important to note that the robots' ability to recognise human intention is still "often inaccurate and unstable", according to a Chinese paper working on the research.

 HURTIGRUTEN EXPEDITIONS

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Princess rejigs Aus sales structure

PRINCESS Cruises' Australian team has solidified its operations across its Sales, Marketing, and Customer Service teams, with Nick Ferguson to serve as the department's Senior Director.

He will oversee and manage all of Princess' pre- and post-cruise customer touchpoints to strengthen the line's service excellence.

Head of Customer Service & Experience Michele Olivier will now report directly to Ferguson to help optimise Princess' omnichannel contact experience.

Octantis sets sail

VIKING'S latest expedition ship *Viking Octantis* has set sail on her maiden voyage to Antarctica.

The vessel has been custom-designed to voyage to remote locations such as the White Continent, and boasts The Hangar, an industry-first, in-ship marina that allows guests to comfortably embark on smaller expedition craft away from the harsh wind and waves.

After completing her maiden voyage, *Octantis* will sail to The Great Lakes for a series of voyages during the northern spring/summer, before being joined by sister *Polaris* in Aug.

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.



Travelmarvel - 2023 Europe River Cruising

Travelmarvel has released its extensive Europe program for 2023, with earlybird offers and flights included. The cruise line will deploy a new Croatia coastal cruise itineraries aboard the 36-passenger ship *Princess Eleganza*, while the program also features Travelmarvel's flagship 15-day European Gems river cruise from Amsterdam to Budapest. Starting at just \$5,495 per person twin share with flights included, savings of up to \$1,000 per couple are available on the European Gems cruises.



Unique Cruises - 2022/2023 Vietnam & Cambodia

Unique Cruises has released its Vietnam & Cambodia cruise program. Celebrating Tet, one of the most important celebrations in Vietnamese culture, Unique's Vietnam and Cambodia river cruises feature sister ships, *Jahan* and *Jayavarman*. One lucky travel advisor will even win a seven-night cruise on one of the ships, with two nights in Ho Chi Minh City and Siem Reap, pre- and post-cruise. Advisors receive an entry into the draw with each cabin they book on the ships with Unique.

Where in the world?



SITUATED on a hill at the highest point overlooking the city, this church is the second-most visited monument in the city, as of 2018.

It was built in response to a large-scale defeat of troops in a war, after a secular uprising within the country, with the

hope that its construction would "expiate their crimes", while also increasing the role of the church.

The church was completed in 1914 and features many French national symbols including Joan of Arc and King Saint Louis IX.

Do you know where in the world this is?

Answer: Sacre-Coeur, Paris, France

A Soneva pitch for the planet

LUXURY resorts operator Soneva has revealed the full extent of its environmental efforts for 2021, including the diverting of 100,000kg of recyclable items from landfills.

Initiatives were conducted through the company's Soneva Foundation, with the sustainable efforts also seeing 50 children taught to swim in the Maldives, a rare Hornbill species reintroduced to Koh Kood, and its regeneration

program create \$US427,000 in value, underpinning Soneva's waste-to-wealth concept.

Around 90% of resort waste is recycled or reused through Soneva's waste-to-wealth facilities, while organic gardens in each resort deploy permaculture principles, irrigated by greywater, and nourished by compost from the company's kitchens.

Pictured: The team cleaning up plastics in The Maldives.

