

Truman promotion

MELANIE Truman has been named as Senior Marketing Executive at Journey Beyond, with a focus on the group's rail brands such as The Ghan and Indian Pacific as well as Darwin Harbour Cruises.

More appointments on **page 7**.

Comm cuts go mainstream

THE travel industry is being urged to read and comment on a story about airline commission cuts in *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* today, with the aim of further raising awareness.

The report cites Encounter Travel's Justine Waddington, after an *SMH* writer picked up a media release she distributed relating to reductions to agent remuneration and soaring complaints about airline customer service.

The 01 Jul commission cuts "come amid travel chaos," the report states, also quoting Kylee Ellerton from Ballarat's Frank Ford Travel warning airline customer service teams will be under extra pressure from clients who book direct due to being deterred by travel agency service fees.

"Without us, they're going to get busier and busier and there's going to be no customer service whatsoever," Ellerton said.

"Why are we going to bend over backwards and help them out

when we're not getting paid by the airlines?" she added.

The report also quotes an AFTA spokesperson saying it was disappointing some carriers had wound back commissions, but commended others still paying commission such as Qatar Airways, Delta Air Lines, Air Canada and more which "continue to take a shared approach with travel agents and businesses in supporting travellers".

The topical issue of airline service this week saw the newspapers' *Traveller* section publish a special page dedicated to "reader correspondence about Qantas" after being inundated with complaints about the carrier.

See today's articles online at smh.com.au and theage.com.au.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including **Business Events News**.

Indigenous training

TOURISM Australia is inviting travel advisors to its Adelaide gathering as part of its Aussie Specialist training program.

Join the Explore Indigenous Experiences immersive event on 26 Jul, from 9:30am-12pm

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JB on track for big year

EXCLUSIVE

JOURNEY Beyond (JB) guests are returning to the company's Rail Expeditions product "enthusiastically," according to the division's Executive General Manager, David Donald.

Rail Expeditions is seeing significant demand across all of its products, crucially from both new guests and those whose journeys were disrupted during border closures, who are now looking to rebook, Donald told *Travel Daily's* sister masthead, the new-look *travelBulletin*.

Commenting on the revival of the rail industry, Donald said that key to the division's success, which now includes a wider demographic of customers, was the company's continued operation around state border closures and restrictions, whenever it was possible.

"We also ran a one-day, limited-edition experience called Taste

of The Ghan that took guests from Adelaide on an epicurean adventure to the Clare Valley and gave them a taster of our multi-day journeys," he explained.

"Since then, we've seen our audience stretch to include younger guests and more multi-generational families, who perhaps would have travelled overseas prior and are now choosing adventures closer to home," he added.

Donald also noted that among Rail Expeditions' continually evolving product, the division has recently introduced a new rail and sail package, partnering with Ponant to create extended adventures through the centre of Australia and into the popular Kimberley region.

CLICK HERE to read the full feature, and subscribe to the new-look *tB*, which is now delivered twice-weekly in email format, and is available online.

Avani Aussie debut

A **NEW-BUILD** property in the Qld suburb of Mooloolaba on the Sunshine Coast will be the first Avani-branded hotel in the country when it opens in 2025.

Minor Hotels' 180-room Avani Mooloolaba Beach Hotel will offer guests four restaurants, meeting & conference facilities, a kids' club, an AvaniSpa, and a rooftop pool/bar/restaurant area with accompanying wedding venue.

"We have been keen to add an Avani hotel into our Australian portfolio for some time...we feel confident this property ticks all the boxes for travellers seeking the upscale, contemporary experience," Minor Hotels CEO Dillip Rajakarier said.



Get on the Express

EXPRESS Tickets said the rollout of its new ticketing platform powered by Aeronology has already achieved a strong takeup, with more than 220 of its travel agency partners already actively ticketing on the system and more now being invited to join.

"Not only is Express Tickets designed from the ground up to help travel agents save time and work more efficiently, our proven and experienced internal support team ensures agents are also receiving world class service post setup," Express Travel Group MD Tom Manwaring explained.

He said the platform was positioning Express Tickets even more strongly as a "market-leading air consolidation option for independent travel agents".

The system offers an efficient point-and-click interface with full ticketing, refund, revalidation and reissue functionality via NDC, GDS and direct API connections - see expresstickets.com.au.

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Oklahoma blowin' in the wind



THE Bob Dylan Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma has officially opened to the public, with the state's tourism board confident its exhibits displaying over 100,000 items from the American singer-songwriter's career will be a major drawcard for travellers.

The three-storey facade of the dedicated museum, located in the heart of Tulsa's growing art district, features a mural depicting a rare 1965 image of Dylan.

Fans of the music legend can also lay eyes on handwritten manuscripts, notebooks and correspondence, artworks, memorabilia, and musical instruments, as well as listen to

unreleased studio and concert recordings.

The Bob Dylan Center now features on Oklahoma Tourism's music-inspired itineraries, as part of the Oklahoma Music Trail.

Finnair partners with TPCConnects

FINNAIR has partnered with the Flight Centre majority-owned (**TD** 14 Mar) TPCConnects to launch an NDC-based agency booking portal, Finnair Agency Sales Tool (FAST).

The rollout enables the carrier to introduce new and better products to customers, including ancillaries and personalised exclusive offers, distributed by modern technology that is easily accessible by travel advisors.

Travel agencies using FAST are also exempt from the €12 one-way surcharge Finnair has now implemented via traditional EDIFACT channels, with Finnair the first airline to announce it will stop using that technology to sell tickets and ancillary air products by the end of 2025, from when it will move to an all-NDC distribution model for agency channel sales.

Finnair also recently signed new partnerships with Sabre (**TD** 12 Jul) and Amadeus (**TD** 13 Jul) to distribute NDC content.

Japan hotel group increases reach

HOTEL M's Co in Kyoto Japan has chosen Sabre technology to help improve inbound tourism as the country prepares to relax its travel restrictions for international visitors.

Sabre's SynXis platform will now power Hotel M's Co's distribution strategy as the company grows its geographical appeal with travellers, enabling the hotel chain to list its inventory in front of hundreds of thousands of travel advisors globally across all major global distribution systems through Sabre.

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Globus drops Monograms

THE Globus Family of Brands has confirmed plans to "sunset" its longstanding Monograms independent travel brand, with the offering to be replaced by a new Independence by Globus program.

The company's Chief Marketing Officer, Steve Born, said "while the name Monograms is going away, many of the itineraries are not," with Independence by Globus promising "the expert planning that comes with group travel - without the group".

The change will see Globus offer new 'Independent City Stays in Europe, South America and Asia, as well as 'Independent Tours' in a range of popular international destinations.

Monograms will be phased out from 01 Jan 2023, and clients with existing bookings are being offered the option of rebooking under any Globus brand.

Most current reservations will line up with one of the new Independence by Globus options, the company said.

Born said Independence by Globus offered the freedom

to "enjoy the many benefits of touring, untethered and unscheduled".

The new offering features hand-picked accommodation with daily breakfast, optional excursions, transportation between cities and the services of local experts.


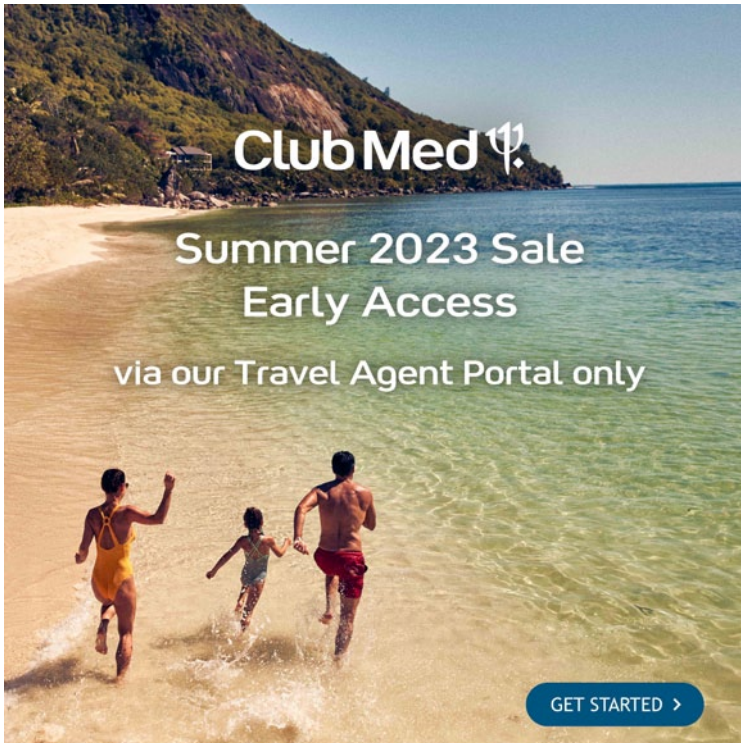
"For travellers who love Globus but want to venture further, enjoying the world their way, without the group, Independence by Globus ensures our guests enjoy 'I' time on vacation," Born enthused.

MEANWHILE Globus CEO Scott Nisbet has also confirmed the sale of the company's headquarters in Denver, USA after more than 30 years.

Nisbet told the *Denver Business Journal* that the pandemic had created a new way of working.

"People suddenly had to go home and work from home back in Mar of 2020, and we proved that it can work," he said.

The company is on the hunt for new Denver premises, about a third of the size of its current building, to support the new hybrid working model.

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Antarctic New Year

ANTARCTICA Flights will for the first time this year offer two New Year's Eve services, one each from Sydney and Melbourne.

The expansion is part of a just-released new program for the upcoming season which also features departures between Nov and Feb from Hobart, Brisbane, Perth, Canberra and Adelaide.

Prices start at \$1,199pp - more at antarcticaflights.com.au.

SIXT into Canada

SIXT Car Rental has confirmed plans to launch in Canada, with new outlets in Vancouver and Toronto as part of a North American expansion program.

Sixt now claims to be the fourth largest car rental firm in the US, and last year expanded its presence into Australia through NRMA after the expiry of the motoring group's former Thrifty deal with Hertz (**TD** 02 Dec 2021).

CLIA confident in cruise

CRUISE Lines

International Association (CLIA) Australasia is urging the industry not to be concerned about this week's sensationalised mainstream media reporting of COVID-19 cases aboard *Coral Princess*, with MD Joel Katz saying that "health authorities are confident, and cruisers can be too".

"This week we're all feeling the effects of renewed attention on cruising, but years of hard work and planning mean our industry is prepared," he told **TD's** sister publication **Cruise Weekly**.

"As we've seen all over the world, cruise line health protocols have shown to be effective in mitigating the risks of COVID-19 and have allowed cruise lines and health authorities to respond swiftly when cases arise," he said.

Some of the reporting about the onboard cases has made hysterical claims harking back to the early days of the pandemic, but Princess has noted that the infections are "overwhelmingly among crew who were isolated on board in line with the protocols that have effectively supported the resumption of cruising since May".

The *Coral Princess* cases were found in a routine full screening, with the affected crew isolated, not in contact with any guests and are either asymptomatic or have mild symptoms of COVID-19.

Katz noted that although cruising was once again in the headlines, "our most important message holds true - no setting



is immune to COVID-19, but we have processes in place for dealing responsibly with the virus...that is exactly what is under way".

"Importantly, health authorities and political leaders have shown confidence in the protocols and have spoken publicly this week about their role in the new environment we all live with, now that COVID-19 is endemic in our communities," he said.

Interest in the story was such that **TD** Publisher Bruce Piper was called in to comment on the situation on Channel 7's *Sunrise* earlier this week (**pictured**).

Katz noted that the testing and vaccination requirements implemented by cruise lines, along with on-board measures, enhanced medical facilities and detailed response plans "are still the most extensive to be found anywhere in tourism, and go much further than those you will find in most settings on land".

NTIA extension

AFTA this morning announced a week-long extension to the nomination period for this year's highly anticipated National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA).

Nominations must now be submitted by 11.59pm AEST on Fri 22 Jul, with the measure part of the ongoing refresh of the event and recognition of the heavy workload that the industry is currently experiencing.

"We have simplified the NTIA awards process and revamped the entrant criteria to recognise excellence in customer service and industry support through COVID," an update noted.

Both self and peer nominations will be accepted and all nominees will be contacted to confirm their eligibility - more details on the simplified process at afta.com.au.

HA rejigs network

HAWAIIAN Airlines has confirmed the cessation of its non-stop flights between Honolulu and Orlando, Florida.

The twice weekly route had been in operation for just over 12 months, servicing a pandemic-driven uplift in demand for domestic travel in the USA.

The carrier said it was realigning the operation in the face of the "resurgence of international travel," with the A330 flying to MCO likely to be better utilised on the relaunch of flights to Japan including the 01 Aug return of daily services to Haneda.



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Singapore marches to new beat



THE Singapore Tourism Board (STB) has unveiled a new TikTok campaign in partnership with Australian comedy trio, Swag on the Beat, which will highlight some of the destination's best experiences through 17 videos over the next four weeks.

The fun social media pus uses wordplay on one of the city's biggest events, the Singapore Grand Prix, featuring three grandmothers, or "grans" (pictured) enjoying some of the best attractions on offer.

Aussies will also have the chance to win a free trip to the Singapore Grand Prix by following all the action of the campaign.

"By using local Singaporean grandmothers, we hope to touch the hearts of Australians in a fun and refreshing way," the STB said. View the campaign [HERE](#).

Sisters want air link

CHRISTCHURCH and Adelaide Airports have signed a new mutual agreement to pursue direct flights between the two 'sister cities'.

Christchurch Airport Chief Commercial Officer, Justin Watson, said discussions have been in the works for some years, and the time was now right to make air links a reality.

"Traffic between the two cities was on a steady rise before COVID, and annual traffic between Christchurch and Adelaide is currently more than 25,000 passengers," he said.

"We realise this service might take a couple of years to come to fruition, but the deal signals definite interest in getting it across the line," Watson added.

LH raises GDS fee

THE Lufthansa group of carriers is once again increasing the surcharge it applies for bookings via traditional GDS platforms.

The controversial "distribution cost surcharge" for travel agencies booking through their reservations systems was initially implemented in 2015 as a €16 per booking impost, and then increased to €19 two years ago in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (**TD** 15 Sep 2020).

The latest change, which applies to bookings on Lufthansa, as well as partner airlines Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, SWISS and Air Dolomiti, sees a shift to a sliding scale based on the GDS platform used.

Amadeus bookings will cost about €18.50; the fee for Sabre rises to €20.50 while Travelport, Galileo, Apollo and Worldspan tickets will have a €24 fee applied.

"The adjustment is in line with the Lufthansa Group airlines' policy to increase transparency by reflecting GDS cost accurately," the carrier said in an update to its industry partners.

The non-refundable, non-commissionable fee does not apply to bookings made via the Lufthansa group direct NDC API, the SPRK web-based booking tool and travel agent online portal, and each carriers' individual direct websites.



Window Seat

SOME things should just go without saying, but then again, here we are.

On the occasion you are hiking around the crater of an active volcano like Mount Vesuvius and happen to drop your phone into its fiery cone, please, for the love of mercy, don't go plunging in after it.

This was the painful and near-fatal lesson an American tourist recently learned while checking out the impressive monolith in Italy, who sustained burns and gashes after falling into the volcano trying to reclaim his smart device.

The man was winched to safety and thankfully he escaped serious injury, but now local authorities are weighing up whether to press charges against the man and his friends, who were using an illegal hiking trail at the time of the incident - talk about landing in hot water!



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The APAC head office is in Melbourne and this role is best placed in Melbourne or within an agreed territory.

To learn more visit

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Perth eyes major revamp of centre

REDEVELOPING the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre was high on the agenda of Western Australia's recent Developing Destination WA summit.

Refurbishment plans namely include how the city's prime events venue can engage more actively with the riverfront.

The plan for the convention centre will form part of a wider strategy to improve the visitor appeal for Perth, especially for families.

Qld events asked to mask up

QUEENSLAND Deputy Premier Steven Miles has encouraged the state's residents to wear masks in crowded places, such as at major events, as the latest wave of COVID-19 spreads across the country at breakneck speed.

Miles said the government would "continue to monitor the situation" and will communicate any new updates as they occur, stopping short of issuing a mask mandate.

UNIVERSITIES TARGET MEETINGS

TERTIARY institutions around the country will increasingly target the meetings sector in order to boost revenue and growth, according to Australia-based professional conference organiser, ICMS.

Owner and Managing Director of ICMS Australasia, Emma Bowyer, said the lack of international student numbers due to the pandemic is driving colleges and universities to seek more opportunities to bid for and host meetings.

Bowyer said the opportunities were "almost limitless", highlighting the 18th International Conference on X-Ray Absorption



and Fine Structure, which is expected to attract more than 300 in-person and virtual attendees from 40 countries this week at the University of Sydney (pictured).

Bowyer believes that meetings offer tertiary institutions "the

chance to demonstrate their expertise in a particular area of specialisation", which could lead to "recruitment and increased research grants through collaboration with international peers".

Aus & NZ secure 24th IAGG

AUSTRALIA and New Zealand have won a joint bid to host the largest global conference on aging.

The 24th International Association of Gerontology and Geriatric World Congress will be held at ICC Sydney, while Queenstown, New Zealand will host the pre-Congress Leadership Summit.

The events will take place in 2029/2030, and are expected to attract 5,000+ delegates.

Singapore MICE

ITB Asia has announced it will partner with the Singapore Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers & Suppliers (SACEOS) to host the Singapore MICE Forum on 20 Oct at Marina Bay Sands Expo & Convention Centre.

IHG Syd revamps

INTERCONTINENTAL Sydney is enhancing its MICE offerings as part of a \$110m transformation, including 14 flexible meeting & event spaces, revamped food & beverage experiences, a new private dining area, & an on-site AV specialist team.

BEIA Meetings 2023 and event guide

BUSINESS Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA) has announced it will stage Meetings 2023 at the new Takina Wellington Conference and Exhibition Centre in Jun 2023.

The event is expected to attract 400 buyers, including 110 from Australia, with more than 200 stands to be in operation for visitors.

"Following a hugely successful Meetings 2022, held at Te Pae Christchurch, our attention is now focused on debuting the second of New Zealand's brand new

convention centres, Takina," BEIA Chief Executive Lisa Hopkins said.

MEANWHILE, BEIA has gone to press with the 30th edition of its New Zealand guide for event planners, available in print and online.

The 180-page flipbook showcases all 22 regions of Aotearoa with images and detailed information, along with event planning resources and tools, including contacts for the regional convention bureaux, maps, and a supplier index - **CLICK HERE** to view.



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Mel hotels update

MELBOURNE'S hotel industry recorded an occupancy rate of 61.1% for Jun, according to new figures from STR, down by 72.2% on 2019 levels.

The revenue per available room for the month was \$128.72.

Chubb links with RB

INSURANCE company Chubb and Royal Brunei Airlines have announced a partnership to offer travel insurance to passengers.

The cover, which will offer protection against accidents, unexpected overseas medical expenses (including COVID-19), and lost items such as luggage and travel documents, will be rolled out to various countries in a phased approach.

Insurance will also offer travellers access to Chubb Assistance's 24-hour hotline.

Bagging bonuses

TAIWAN'S China Airlines will offer its customers an increased free checked baggage allowance on international routes flown by China Airlines/Mandarin Airlines from 02 Aug.

Economy class pax can check in two pieces of baggage weighing up to 23kg each, while Premium Economy can have two pieces weighing up to 28kg each, and Business class travellers can have two bags weighing 32kg each.

QF stuck in the mud

QANTAS' capacity concerns have not been helped by one of its QantasLink Boeing 717-200s becoming bogged in mud at Rockhampton Airport.

The jet became stuck on Mon evening after it was taxied off the runway following a flight from Brisbane.

Brushing shoulders in Rome



SENIOR Travel Consultant at Bonaventure Travel, Brian Conway, recently had the chance to catch up with WA Premier Mark McGowan (pictured) and Qantas Chief Executive Alan Joyce in Rome, with the advisor aboard the first non-stop flight between Italy and Australia.

Perth-based Conway said he was afforded the chance "to talk all things travel and tourism" with senior stakeholders during a special evening meeting in Rome.

Mystery luxury ship

AN UNNAMED "international customer" has signed a €1.2 billion contract with the Fincantieri Group for a new ultra-luxury cruise ship.

The vessel is set to be delivered by the end of 2025 and comes with the option of adding two more vessels, subject to formal access to financing.

While the shipyard is tight-lipped about who submitted the order, speculation in cruise circles suggests the buyer may be Marriott International's Ritz-Carlton brand.

The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection has experienced multiple delays in the launch of its debut *Evrima* vessel, which has been knocked back several times since its initial announcement (**TD** 02 Mar).

Interestingly, the fledgling cruise brand announced plans to introduce two more ships as part of ambitious growth plans earlier this year (**TD** 18 Mar), despite the ongoing issues with *Evrima*.

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.

Belinda Montgomery has started a new role as Partnership Development Manager at **Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia**. Montgomery said she is delighted to return to the industry, and looks forward to building purposeful partnerships.

Stephen Forshaw is taking on a new role with **Airbus** as its local Chief Representative. Forshaw said he is looking forward to joining Airbus, supporting the businesses and its customers, and helping its communities to build a greater understanding of the breadth and depth of the firm.

Joanne Cullen is starting a new position as Commercial Manager Victoria/South Australia at **Viking**. Cullen said she can't wait to get out among the industry and catch up with its travel advisor partners.

Evolution Travel Collective (ETC) has expanded its growing team, announcing the appointment of **Michelle Daniels** to the position of Business Development Manager. She will be charged with continuing ETC's growth in business and sales.