

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news plus a full page from Abercrombie & Kent.

Be quick for NTIA!

TODAY is the final day to submit nominations for the 2022 National Travel Industry Awards.

The initial stage requires completion of a simple online form, with nominees to be contacted next week via email to confirm their eligibility.

The nominees will then be publicly announced, and on 05 Aug a "submission portal" for the Individual categories will open (categories 1-10 and 30).

A week later the submission portal for Supplier and Business Categories (11-18, 20-29 and 31) will be opened.

After evaluation, the finalists will be announced in late Aug at which point the judging will proceed for individual categories based on virtual interviews.

Finalist submissions for the Business and Supplier categories will be assessed by an industry panel of judges, while a two-week voting period will take place from late Aug for categories 21-27 and 30 which recognise outstanding performance and industry support by Tour Operator, Wholesaler, Tourist Office, Travel Support Service, Accommodation, Air and Cruise industry suppliers.

Full details, how to enter and more information about the nomination and judging process are online at afta.com.au.

Glimmers of normality

CONSUMER travel behaviour is stabilising and becoming more predictable, according to Tourism Australia (TA) Managing Director Phillipa Harrison.

Speaking during a webinar earlier today, the TA boss revealed the barriers for an international trip to Australia have "intersected", with financial impediments to travel Down Under once again taking over from COVID-related barriers, landing the country back in "familiar territory".

Harrison said while demand is still down compared to pre-pandemic levels, planning for the immediate term and predicting future growth has become easier.

"We are seeing some really good growth from our short-haul markets...Singapore is currently sitting at 163% of 2019 bookings, and this is actually down from an extraordinary high of 226% in Apr...Malaysia is also in positive territory now with a 10% increase on 2019," she explained

"Given the levels of demand around the world, these are quite extraordinary results.

"On the bottom line, we've seen some really strong growth, to reflect that there's been some great increases in capacity from Italy, and also India," Harrison added, referring to an uplift in air capacity to the two countries in recent months.

Of importance to Australia in the immediate future is rebuilding the country's aviation

sector, and creating urgency for travellers to take a trip Down Under this year, not the next.

Central to this goal is telling "the depth and the breadth of the Australian story," Harrison said, adding it is important "we continue to broaden perceptions of what Australia is like, and build associations with the current but also the future drivers of demand," such as indigenous and sustainability pillars.

Virtuoso reaches for the stars

GLOBAL travel network Virtuoso has announced a strategic partnership to make a limited number of seats for Virgin Galactic's spaceflight experience available to its global client base.

The partnership will give Virtuoso travel advisors exclusive access to a limited number of reservations within Virgin Galactic's first 1,000 seats, priced at \$450,000 per person.

Luna welcomed

EMERALD Cruises' newest Star Ship *Emerald Luna* was christened in Amsterdam yesterday.

American travel industry advocate and educator Vanessa McGovern took the honours as Godmother during the official ceremony's proceedings.

Emerald's ninth river ship will sail on the Rhine, Main and Danube rivers in Europe.

Rocky bulks APAC

TONY Soden is returning to the travel sector after having been appointed as the new Regional Sales Manager - APAC for Rocky Mountaineer.

His most recent industry role was Head of Sales & Customer Relations at Club Med, and he also spent eight years with Royal Caribbean and prior to that with Scenic and Evergreen.

Rocky Mountaineer has also named Neryl Chambers as BDM, joining the rail specialist from her former position as an advisor at Helloworld Drysdale.

Rocky's Regional Director of Sales, Amber Wilson, welcomed the appointments which come amid increasing demand for the Rocky Mountaineer experiences in Canada, as well as the new Rockies to the Red Rocks route between Colorado and Utah.

Treasures webinars

TREASURES of the South Pacific have announced the return of their popular travel advisor seminars next month, after a two-year COVID-induced hiatus.

The sessions will feature 10 idyllic destinations including Fiji, the Cook Islands, New Caledonia, Norfolk Island, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tahiti, Vanuatu and the "Hidden Treasures".

Taking place in evenings between 08 and 16 Aug, seminars will be offered in Brisbane, Gold Coast, Melbourne, Sydney and Parramatta - see tosp.com.au.

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El Al plots Australia route

DIRECT flights between Australia and Israel have become a distinct possibility, with the opening of airspace above Saudi Arabia this week putting a new non-stop route firmly on the agenda for El Al Israel Airways.

The carrier hailed the change which will significantly cut travel time to Israel from a range of destinations, with services from India currently taking almost eight hours to be reduced to just over five hours.

Flight time from Tel Aviv to Bangkok will move from 11 hours to eight and a half, while the carrier said the change was “also an opportunity for us to grow and reach new, exciting destinations including to our friends in Australia”.

El Al flights to Australia were firmly on the radar prior to the pandemic, even with the Saudi airspace restrictions in place at the time, with the carrier plotting

three trial ultra long-haul non-stops between Melbourne and Tel Aviv (**TD** 28 Nov 2019).

At that point the expected flight time would have been just under 18 hours from Australia to Israel, but the changes to Saudi airspace will reduce this to more like 15.5 hours - and even shorter on the return sector.

Qantas currently has a codeshare partnership with El Al, with the QF code on selected routes including flights from Bangkok and Johannesburg to Tel Aviv (**TD** 17 Aug 2017).

Luxury mag sold

INDESIGN Media Group, the Sydney-based publisher of several architecture-focused magazines, has purchased Luxury Travel Media from its former owner Gary Allen, with the move seeing Katrina Holden return to her role as Editor of the publication.

QR orders 25 MAXs

QATAR Airways has finalised an order for 25 737 MAX jets from Boeing, following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in Jan between the two companies to increase the carrier’s single-aisle fleet.

Qatar Airways currently operates 120 Boeing planes.

Crooked appoints

SARAH Arane has been appointed the new Relationship and Solutions Manager for Crooked Compass, signalling a return to the travel sector after an 18-month absence.

Her last role in travel was Sales Manager at Quark Expeditions, with Arane’s new brief to incorporate sales, operations, customer service.

“Travelling Crooked Compass style is such a ‘wow experience’ that when the opportunity came up to join, it was an adventure too good to pass up,” she said.

Rex dovetails to zero

REX Airlines has unveiled future plans to convert turbine-powered aircraft into zero emissions electric planes, partnering with an electric aviation disrupter on a new pilot scheme.

Sydney-based Dovetail Electric Aviation, owners of Sydney Seaplanes, will take possession of a Rex aircraft under the partnership to test the logistics of how conversions of planes at scale will work, with Rex Deputy Chairman John Sharp indicating regional airlines will be among the first to pioneer such tech.

“Regional airlines operating short sectors...will be the early adopters of electric battery propulsion and Australia, with its large number of aircraft capable of conversion a perfect incubator for the electric aviation industry,” Sharp said.

When certifications and IPs are granted, Dovetail plans to open conversion centres in Australia, Europe and Singapore.

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Window Seat

ICELANDAIR is reportedly putting its own baggage handlers on flights to Amsterdam Schiphol to prevent its passengers' luggage from piling up.

Taking a novel approach to curbing the mountains of luggage building up around the world, the airline's baggage handlers will be on every Icelandair flight between Reykjavik Keflavik and Schiphol this week, and next week if necessary, "to ensure smooth handling of luggage," a spokeswoman for the carrier told a local news outlet.

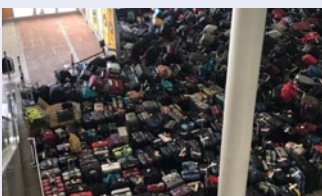
Crew members are also helping to load aircraft, while the carrier has leased an additional aircraft to cover any delayed services.

"We will have to see how it develops and whether we carry this on, and even maybe to other destinations," it stated.

The build up of baggage is not only a problem for the Icelanders, with poms at Heathrow Airport reporting a rancid smell in recent weeks as a result of the luggage pile-up.

Weather the offending whiffy items are multiple pairs of unwashed socks or some sneakily concealed durian fruit, the result was an awful pong that many travellers took to Twitter to let off some sweeter smelling steam.

"It literally smells like poo," one traveller posted, while another compared the smell to "festering bush meat", adding the bags "stink like a sun-roasted dumpster".



Caravan park sold for \$27.5m



THE NRMA Agnes Water Holiday Park in Qld has been purchased by G & R Kratzmann Property Investments for \$27.5 million.

The 35,700m² site, located between Rockhampton and the Sunshine Coast, is home to caravan sites, cabins, villas and camping sites across 133 lots, with new owners Gary and Ann Kratzmann no strangers to the caravan space.

The couple formerly owned Kratzmann Caravans, which retailed caravans on the north side of Brisbane, before being sold to Apollo RV four years ago.

"We are excited about this acquisition; after years of being in the retail caravan park industry, it has always been an ambition of ours to own a park ourselves," Mr Kratzmann said.

Dr Dr, come to Fiji!

TOURISM Fiji has created a new campaign starring New Zealand's outgoing Director-General of Health, imploring him to take some time out in the tropical destination for his family.

The quirky video features Dr Ashley Bloomfield cutting loose among some of the country's most sought after attractions, a far cry from the serious figure he cut every day on NZ TV updating the public about the COVID-19 situation on the ground.

"I feel privileged to be able to secure one of Australia's best caravan parks, that my family will enjoy for generations to come."

CBRE's Paul Fraser, who spearheaded the sale of the popular Qld holiday park, said the site commanded "record interest" from buyers, stating it "signified the true strength of demand for quality regional accommodation assets in Queensland."

Pictured: An aerial view of the Agnes Water grounds.

HAL agent famils

HOLLAND America Line (HAL) has hosted more agents this year than ever before, with over 300 agents partaking in escorted and self-hosted famils hosted by HAL Australian BDMs, including three famil adventures to Norway and the rest to Alaska.

The most recent group famil took place this week in Alaska, with 15 agents and their plus-one guests hosted on *MS Koningsdam*.

Alaska Airlines plays tag with pax

ALASKA Airlines has announced it will roll out electronic bag tags in an effort to speed up the airport check-in process for customers, a move the carrier said is a "world first" in aviation.

The tags will enable passengers to skip printing baggage tags on check-in and instead be able to activate the tags via a mobile app up to 24 hours before a flight.

After arriving at the airport, customers can touch their phone to the display tag and pick up baggage within seconds.

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CORPORATE UPDATE

CWT pilots NDC program

TRAVEL management platform CWT has launched a new pilot program that will allow its travel counsellors to make live NDC bookings for customers, via its global distribution technology partners.

Singapore Airlines and Air France-KLM will be the first airlines to access CWT's booking and servicing capabilities for NDC-enabled content, through its Amadeus Travel platform in Aug.

The pilot includes unique NDC-enabled content, such as special discounted fares with Singapore Airlines, and Air France-KLM's continuous pricing offers, as well as corporate negotiated rates.

The pilot will be expanded to include other airlines on both the Amadeus and Sabre platforms throughout the rest of 2022, CWT was able to confirm.

CWT's Vice President of Product Management, Travel Content & Connectivity, Erik Magnuson, said, "there is still some way to go before NDC can be adopted at scale and its full potential is realised, but we are excited to be at the forefront of this transformation".

Egencia adds Amex GBT services

CUSTOMERS of global B2B travel tech platform, Egencia, can now access now access American Express Meetings & Events (M&E) and Global Business Consulting (GBC) services.

The updates mean Egencia customers can utilise a wider range of GBC solutions, including program strategy, commodity management, and outsourced travel management, as well as the full suite of M&E solutions, with the ability to customise services to any event size or format.

The announcement comes after Egencia was acquired by American Express Global Business Travel (Amex GBT) in Nov 2021 (TD 05 Nov 2021).

"Our customers are already beginning to reap some of the benefits, while still keeping their core travel program priorities intact."

MEANWHILE, CWT has announced the appointment of Judy Hendrick as Chief Financial Officer effective immediately.

Prior to her appointment, Hendrick was Interim CFO at CWT, and previously retired as CFO and Chief Growth Officer of Aimbridge Hospitality at the end of last year, following 13 years in the role.

Marriott AMEX

MARRIOTT International has introduced a raft of changes to its Marriott Bonvoy Business American Express Card to help small business owners generate rewards from their business expenses.

New and existing card members can now access a 7% room rate discount on eligible bookings at hotels participating in Marriott Bonvoy, in addition to earning 4 Marriott Bonvoy points at restaurants worldwide, and gaining complimentary Gold Elite status, on top of the card's existing benefits.

Marriott Bonvoy is offering eligible new card members 125,000 points after they spend \$5,000 in eligible purchases on the card in the first three months - **CLICK HERE** for details.

WebBeds, SkipTax

B2B travel intermediary, WebBeds, has linked up with SkipTax, a mobile app that gives shoppers a quick and simple way to reclaim value-added tax (VAT) on purchases made in France.

The partnership will allow WebBed clients, including tour operators and retail travel agents, to provide SkipTax to travellers who live outside of Europe, and to earn an incentive on qualifying claims for up to five years.

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Tiny house, huge dreams



TINY Away has widened its portfolio with the addition of Wallaby Cabin, a new eco-conscious tiny house overlooking Porcupine Rocks in Crackenback, nestled in the heart of the NSW Snowy Mountains.

The off-grid cabin joins the company's collection of over 150 tiny houses, featuring a well-equipped kitchenette, queen-sized bed, en suite bathroom with a waterless eco-friendly compost toilet, hand basin and gas-heated shower, as well as air-conditioning and heating.

Guests staying at the tiny house will be surrounded by green pastures in spring and snow-dusted mountains in winter, which offer some of the country's best skiing and snowboarding slopes.

Wallaby Cabin is also positioned close to restaurants, cafes and shops including Crackenback Restaurant Farm and Wild Brumby Distillery, which offers locally crafted drinks and live music sessions.

Portarlington is back

PORTARLINGTON Grand Hotel on Victoria's Bellarine Peninsula is preparing to reopen its doors this Aug, after undergoing an intensive multi-million-dollar renovation since Mar 2021.

The reinvigorated hotel features a restored facade and grand staircase inspired by the golden age of Port Phillip Bay, 18 new heritage-inspired boutique rooms, with many offering balconies and bay views, as well as two fully accessible rooms.

Several dining spaces have been refreshed, including the front bar, bistro, and The Atrium and The Lawn, which have been decked out with picnic tables and umbrellas and offers a full bistro menu, including sea platters and signature cocktails.

Bookings can made after 01 Aug, with overnight rates starting from \$250 - **CLICK HERE** for more information.

Tourism WA update

TOURISM WA has opened up seller applications to attend the Australia Marketplace UK and Europe 2022 event, which is being held in London from 14-15 Nov.

The event gives Western Australian tourism industry representatives the opportunity to develop business relationships with key qualified travel agencies and tour operators from the UK and Europe - **CLICK HERE** to apply before 12 Aug.

MEANWHILE, Tourism WA has released a series of new update videos, where its in-market representatives discuss key insights into the state of their markets, including market-specific audience profiles, recent activity and what each international team has planned - the videos can be viewed **HERE**.

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MH doubles DOH

MALAYSIA Airlines has announced plans to double its daily flights to Qatar due to high demand, the carrier said.

The move arrives only a few months after MH started daily Airbus A330-300 services from Kuala Lumpur to Doha, building on an expanded codeshare relationship with Qatar Airways, which was signed earlier this year.

Twice-daily frequencies will commence from 10 Aug.

Anantara in Brazil

ANANTARA Hotels, Resorts & Spas will open the Anantara Mamucabo Bahia Resort in Brazil in 2025, with construction to commence next year.

The property, which will be located on the northern coastline of Bahia, will feature 116 guest rooms, suites and pool villas, as well as three restaurants, two outdoor swimming pools, a beach club and water sports area, and a kids' club area for infants.

There's no place like Oz



DUST off your ruby slippers and click your heels three times, because a Wizard of Oz precinct is coming to Movie World on the Gold Coast in 2024, serving as the theme park's first major attraction in five years.

The \$40 million dollar world-first precinct will offer "an experience like no other", and will feature two new family-friendly rides and an immersive experience.

Guests will be able to travel along the yellow brick road, surrounded by thematic elements including projection mapping, stunning sculptures and facades.

Families can get their thrills on the Suspended Family Coaster, which is a 454-metre track as high as 19 metres and reaching speeds of nearly 70km/h.

Guests can also feel the rush on the Family Boomerang Racer, which will have two 220-metre racing tracks that will hit 60km/h.

The precinct is expected to become a major drawcard for interstate and international tourists, providing a much-needed post-COVID boost to the city's visitor economy.

Indochina relaxes

DFAT has revised its advice for Australian travellers entering two popular Indochina markets, with Laos and Cambodia being rolled back to normal safety levels.

Both countries have also recommenced their Visa-on-Arrival programs, with proof of vaccination required on entry, as well as a negative test result for those who are unvaccinated.

Hotel pipeline down

THE total number of hotel rooms in the final planning phase for the Asia Pacific region was down by 30% in Jun, according to the latest figures from STR.

However, the number of rooms under construction in the region was up on last year, representing a 2.1% increase on Jun 2021, with China and Vietnam accounting for the bulk of new activity.

In Europe, Germany and the UK led the way in Jun for hotel construction, while in the Americas, the US, Mexico and Canada inked the majority of hotel developments.

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

All Nippon Airways' new "Inspiration of Japan" Economy class sale offers Sydney to Japan one-way promotional fares leading in from \$1,009. The sale is from today until 04 Aug for travel from today until 06 Dec. View more details about the promotion [HERE](#).

Singapore Airlines' Asia Explorer sale from Perth is for departures from 01 Aug to 30 Nov. Refer to AGENT 360 [HERE](#) for fare sheets and a list of all destinations on sale.

Escape winter with 15% off p7 international parking at **Sydney Airport**. Use the promo code "EURO15", but hurry, only limited space is available. Book now [HERE](#).

Aurora Expeditions' last chance Antarctica deals for 2022/23 offers up to 20% off all voyages for the season, for bookings before the end of next month. To assist in planning Aurora has released a digital Antarctica mini-brochure, featuring all of its upcoming voyages between 2022-24 - [CLICK HERE](#).

Blast off with **Novotel Sydney Darling Square's** "To Infinity & Beyond" family package to celebrate the launch of the movie *Lightyear*. Enjoy overnight accommodation in a Superior room, breakfast for two in Pier St. Grill, a *Lightyear* space rock cake, galaxy lighting in-room, and Buzz activity packs and art cards from just \$289 per room per night. This package is valid for stays until 30 Sep. For bookings or for more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

A new 2023 Kimberley package with Heritage Expeditions, offering a saving of \$2,999 for solos and \$4,580 couples, is available for bookings by the end of next month with **Cruise Traveller**. [CLICK HERE](#) for more.

For confidential tip offs, connect with *Travel Daily* via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click [HERE](#)



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