

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news plus a full page from TAFE NSW.

Thai wellness win

THE Unique Tourism Collection has been chosen to represent a Thai wellness & medical retreat in the local market.

RAKxa is located an hour from both Suvarnabhumi and Don Mueang International airports, and offers a raft of wellness treatments that nurture a traveller's physical, emotional and spiritual being.

Unique will be charged with handling the sales, marketing and media activity for the brand.

El Al confirms direct Aussie plans

EL AL CEO Dina Ben-Tal Ganancia has confirmed the airline's intention to commence services on the direct Israel to Australia route after Saudi Arabia flagged the opening of its air space to all carriers.

Mooted by *Travel Daily* earlier this month (TD 22 Jul), El Al's chief revealed that she was keen to get a Melbourne to Tel Aviv service going, in addition to flights between Israel and popular markets like Ireland & Japan.

While final approvals from the Saudi Government still need to be granted, Ganancia said the carrier "is analysing the potential of new routes" and was looking forward to the exciting opportunities.

QF/Accor improve loyalty

ACCOR and Qantas have added to their loyalty partnership by unveiling the chance to secure complimentary Gold status in the hotelier's ALL program for eligible Qantas frequent flyers who link accounts before 12 Aug.

The latest promotion is open to Qantas loyalty members who hold Silver, Gold, Platinum and Platinum One Status, as well as Points Club Plus and Chairman's Lounge members, with the Gold status in ALL offering travellers a range of convenient benefits, including room upgrades, early check-in or late check-out, and

guaranteed room availability.

Under the latest agreement, Qantas Platinum One members will also receive a special invite to fast-track to ALL Platinum status when they link accounts before 12 Aug, the first time travellers have not needed to stay at an Accor property to achieve the accreditation.

Frequent flyers and ALL members who have already linked their accounts are also eligible for the status match by registering **HERE**.

Both companies forged a loyalty agreement in Nov last year, offering double the points accrual across both loyalty programs (TD 17 Nov 2021).

Honiara connects

SOLOMON Airlines has announced a major schedule expansion which includes ramping up frequencies on its Brisbane/Honiara route.

The airline will increase services between the Queensland capital and the Solomons from twice-weekly to four times a week in both directions from 03 Oct.

Getting around the Pacific island nation will also be made more convenient under the schedule changes, with same-day connections to be made possible to places like Munda, Gizo, Marau, Suavanao and Seghe.

Frequencies will also increase from 01 Aug between Honiara and Choiseul Bay, Rennell, and Bellona, while Honiara to Santa Cruz services will be ramped up from 01 Oct.

Prima excitement

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line's (NCL) *Norwegian Prima* ship is the most in-demand vessel in the company's history, with the line taking delivery of the newbuild today - see **CW** for full details.

A job with a view

WHY not live a more adventurous life and pursue a career in travel and tourism with TAFE NSW, with training being offered across a variety of areas.

Certificates on offer include a Cert 3 in Tourism and a Cert 4 in Travel & Tourism Management.

All courses are taught by industry-expert mentors and are all nationally recognised.

See **page six** for more info.

Hunter on the hunt

THE Hunter Travel Group is currently seeking a range of talented travel workers, with the company recruiting across business and leisure travel management, payroll admin, and sales & marketing roles.

See **page two** for more details.

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Travel Associates campaign

FLIGHT Centre's Travel Associates division has launched a new brand campaign via creative agency BCM Group, in a push designed to increase awareness of the boutique travel advisor group in Australia and NZ.

The campaign is the brainchild of the group's GM of Brand and Marketing, Anna Burgdorf, and will run across social media, performance digital, premium on-line video and direct channels from next Mon 01 Aug.

Burgdorf unveiled a comprehensive guide distilling the "essence of the brand" at the Travel Associates business leaders conference earlier this year (TD 04 Apr), noting that while already strong locally Travel Associates "deserves to be a global brand".

The initial rollout of the campaign invites consumers to "uncover a world of rare travel gems," with Burgdorf saying while things are not yet perfect in travel, "most importantly, we are investing in our future".

"With so many travel agents and agencies unable to survive the impact of the pandemic, there is now, more than ever, a need for a trusted, expert travel advisor



to help clients navigate this new world of travel," she said.

"International travel is now more complex than ever and our advisors have the experience and connections to design unique experiences for travellers, with a concierge-style service offering."

BCM Group said the digital-first campaign would "precisely target premium travellers, presenting a new and unique proposition for Travel Associates".

Jetstar's A321neo

JETSTAR has taken delivery of its first A321neo from Airbus, in a 232-seat configuration and extra fuel tank which enables it to fly to all domestic destinations, as well as South East Asia including Bali.

It's the first of 38 A320neo family aircraft on order for JQ.

New Azamara Sales Director for ANZ

AZAMARA Cruises is set to shortly confirm the appointment of Victoria Chigwidden as Director of Sales for its local operations, replacing the brand's long-standing chief Belle Osmic.

Chigwidden will take up her role early next month, with Osmic departing to join her husband in their Osmic Productions business.

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

SA hotel newbuilds

ADELAIDE-BASED developer Thrive Construct has announced plans for two international hotels in South Australia, in a move described as representing "the largest single tourism infrastructure investment in the state's history".

The properties will be located in the Adelaide CBD at 187 Victoria Square, and on the Whyalla foreshore in regional SA.

The new Victoria Square property will be the "tallest hotel in the world manufactured from cross-laminated timber," featuring 324 rooms and 22 apartments, while the Whyalla hotel will have 164 suites and 49 apartments.

Apollo, THL extend

APOLLO Tourism & Leisure Ltd has agreed with Tourism Holdings to extend the final date of their proposed Scheme Implementation Deed through until 15 Oct 2022.

The companies said they are continuing to work with the ACCC and NZ Commerce Commission on obtaining clearance for their proposed merger.

They have undertaken to divest some assets to Jucy Rentals in response to competition concerns and said they expect a decision from the regulators in late Aug or early Sep.

EY profit take-off

ETIHAD Airways overnight unveiled a "record-breaking first half profit," reflecting the fruits of its transformation program.

A US\$296 million core operating profit was a huge reversal from the previous corresponding period when EY lost US\$392m, with the result achieved despite fuel costs rising almost 60%.

Ethihad carried 4.02 million passengers in the six months to 30 Jun, more than 3 million more than last year, with an average seat factor of 755.

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With a network of 38 stores in most states, the Hunter Travel Group (HTG) is one of the largest family and privately owned travel groups in Australia and we're excited to be adding to our amazing teams with roles available right now in Business Travel, Leisure Travel, Finance, Administration and Information Technology in our **Newcastle, Maroochydore, Canberra, Melbourne, Hobart** and **Perth** locations.

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JetBlue buys Spirit

THE collapse of the proposed merger between US low-cost carriers Spirit Airlines and Frontier Airlines (**TD** yesterday) has opened the door for rival bidder JetBlue, which overnight confirmed a US\$3.8 billion merger acquisition of Spirit.

Spirit had urged shareholders to accept an offer from Frontier because its Board of Directors believed the JetBlue deal is likely to face antitrust issues, but that was rejected in a vote.

At this stage “nothing is changing” the carriers said, with each continuing to operate independently until the transaction is finalised.

The combined airline will have a fleet of almost 460 aircraft.

UK tourist killed by Greek chopper

A 21-YEAR-OLD Briton has tragically died after reportedly being hit by a spinning helicopter rotor while allegedly taking a selfie at a heliport in Athens after he landed on a transfer from a holiday on Mykonos.

Accounts of the incident vary, with authorities ordering an urgent judicial inquiry into why the blades were not a standstill when passengers were allowed to disembark from the aircraft.

Silversea 2024/25

SILVERSEA Cruises has confirmed it will deploy three vessels in Australasian Waters in 2024/25, including the first of its new Nova-class vessels, *Silver Nova* alongside local mainstay *Silver Muse* and a first-time Kimberley operation for expedition vessel *Silver Cloud*.

The 2024/25 program also includes the inaugural season of *Nova's* first sister ship which is to be named *Silver Ray*.

The Nova-class vessels have capacity for 728 guests, with eight restaurants and butler service for every suite.

Dean and Don discuss departures



AFTA CEO Dean Long has been making the most of the return of Federal Parliament this week, meeting alongside AFTA's Head of Advocacy, LJ Loch in Canberra with key MPs and other stakeholders to further elevate awareness of travel sector issues.

Meetings included a get-together with Minister for Trade & Tourism Don Farrell (**pictured**), as well as newly appointed Agriculture Minister Murray Wyatt, Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek and Opposition Trade & Tourism spokesperson Kevin Hogan.

“All of these Ministers and Shadow Ministers have been long-term supporters of the travel sector, advocating for the establishment of the Consumer Travel Support Program while in opposition and Government,” Long told **Travel Daily**.

AFTA also connected with as well as officials from Treasury, the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade and Austrade, with all of the discussions focusing on the upcoming Jobs and Skills white paper, continuing to raise the profile of the recently renamed Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) (**TD** 19 Jul) and the current threat of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD).

AFTA will host a special webinar on FMD next Wed 03 Aug at 2pm AEST, with the entire industry invited to take part.

“We must work together to

keep the border open and our country safe, and we have learnt what the impacts of closed borders have on our sector.

“We encourage everyone - AFTA member or not - to ensure all of you teams register to join the webinar,” Long said.

The session will provide advice on what information to pass onto travellers particularly those heading to Indonesia, as well as highlighting what travellers can do to make their return to Australia as smooth as possible.

CLICK HERE for the webinar link.



Window Seat

LANDSCAPE maintenance company Toro has a solution for travellers worried about the rising cost living, offering the chance to stay at some of the United States' most stunning properties while trimming the rental fees down to zero.

So what's the catch we hear you thrifty beasts ask?

Well, all visitors have to do to grab a free rate on accommodation is undertake a bit of yard work.

Let us introduce to you mowbnb, a limited time property booking platform featuring one-of-a-kind houses in popular summer vacation destinations, including the Hamptons, Austin, Miami, San Francisco and Charlotte.

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CORPORATE UPDATE

Travel with a conscience

THE Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) has announced the relaunch of its charitable arm, the GBTA Foundation, a philanthropic initiative that focuses on sustainability programs, diversity, and other talent-related topics via education and advocacy.

The division was founded in 1989 and entered a hiatus in 2018, with the relaunch seeing its first board meeting in four years held this week to discuss what should be the strategic areas of focus for 2023.

A new board has been appointed, comprised of leaders across the travel sector, such as CEO of American Express GBT Paul Abbott, Hilton's Senior Vice President, Global Head of Public Affairs Erica Gordon, United Airlines CEO Scott Kirby, and Hyatt's Senior Vice President, Global Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Tyrone Stoudemire.

"We are excited to re-establish the GBTA Foundation within a fine-tuned scope around the theme of 'people and planet,'" GBTA CEO Suzanne Neufang said.

"It's an important moment in GBTA's 54-year history, as we renew our commitment to creating lasting, positive impact.

"The GBTA Foundation, along with its newly appointed board of directors, will focus on making a positive impact in our industry and beyond," she added.

Banyan eyes remote workers

IN A bid to cater to the changing work habits of employees who are increasingly travelling while working, Banyan Tree Group has introduced Habitat, an exclusive pass allowing guests to purchase blocks of 10 or 20 nights.

The new Habitat option also offers savings of up to 40% for longer stays, and applies to all resorts in its property portfolio across 23 countries.

With data showing that close to three quarters of workers will be compiling their work remotely at least five days a month by 2025, Banyan is hoping to capture some of the predicted upswing in corporate traffic.

Corporate travellers can choose their preferred class tier before purchasing unit blocks of accommodation, which extend across luxury, premium, comfort or standard, with travellers able to redeem a stay of 10 nights in multiple properties in the same tier, valid for 12 months from the time of purchase.

"With workplaces offering greater flexibility than ever before, people are eager to step out and rediscover the world, so we've designed Habitat to provide travellers the freedom to work and explore the world simultaneously," Banyan Tree Group Head of Customer Insights Michelle Ng said.

Work out of the Blue

THE Blue is a new hotel concept in Bondi Beach designed to appeal to an emerging class of travellers, including corporate clients seeking a more digital-savvy accommodation experience.

Workers can take advantage of high-speed internet access, a specially designed Blue Space co-working area, a desk and chair in hotel rooms, as well as cafe credits to keep energy levels going during meetings.

Room options include the penthouse (pictured), king suites, balcony suites and group suites.



It's your shout HAL!



HOLLAND America Line's guests and crew recently marked one year since the line returned to sailing after the disaster of the pandemic, with more than 300 travel agents involved in the well-earned frivolity (pictured).

Advisors were recently escorted on three self-hosted famils with Holland America Line, with one group going to Norway and the rest to Alaska.

Many agents brought family

and friends and used the event to celebrate occasions that occurred during the pandemic, such as honeymoons and a mum's 70th birthday to name just a few of the magical reasons.

HAL's ships have restarted in a variety of destinations around the world, including in the waters of Canada, the Caribbean, Hawaii, the Mediterranean, Mexico and Europe, and before the end of the year, the cruise line's vessels will return to Australia and NZ.

Yotel's Tokyo hotel

UK HOTELIER Yotel has flagged plans to open its first property in Japan, with the 244-room Yotel Tokyo slated to launch in 2024.

The property will offer guests a 24/7 fitness centre, multiple meeting space areas, as well as outdoor terraces.

EK converts deal

EMIRATES has extended its agreement with World Rugby to be the sport's Rugby World Cup Worldwide Partner.

Under the freshly inked deal, the airline will be the premier sponsor of the World Cup 2023 in France and the Rugby World Cup 2027 in Australia, with passengers on its flights also having access to both Rugby tournaments live and on-demand on board flights.

Emirates has been a proud sponsor of Rugby World Cup since 2007.

Time to Breakout!

MAT McLachlan Battlefield Tours has launched a new four-day Cowra Breakout tour, departing Sydney on 28 Oct exploring the area where a famous prisoner escape occurred.

Led by Mat McLachlan himself, the trip will retrace the steps of Japanese prisoners who staged the largest prison break-out in modern history, when around 1,000 prisoners charged the camp's fences armed with improvised weapons.

Prices for the military history adventure starts form \$1,599 per person, twin share, with a single supplement fee of \$250 in place for solo travellers.

The new tour is the perfect accompaniment to Mat McLachlan's new book called *The Cowra Breakout*, available to purchase at \$39.99, **CLICK HERE** to find out more.

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

The Standard, London is asking travellers to stay 'your way' through its new Stowaway Package promotion. The hotel is offering discounts of up to 20% on rooms, room upgrades, 20% off food and drinks, as well as two complimentary cocktails under the deal. The offer is available for stays until 31 Dec. More information accessible [HERE](#).

There are only three days left to get up to 40% off every single sailing with **Virgin Voyages**. The deal also includes up to US\$4,000 in onboard credit. [CLICK HERE](#) to view more details.

Air North is about to kick off its 44th Birthday Sale, offering discounts on flights between 31 Jul and 05 Aug. Travel periods are from 05 Sep to 11 Dec 2022 and 06 Jan to 31 Mar 2023. The sale will go live [HERE](#) on 31 Jul.

Pandaw is offering people who book a double occupancy cabin aboard its seven-night Mekong expeditions for select departures in Oct and Dec the chance to save money on the second passenger. The second guest will be charged only US\$500 under the promo. [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

ADL adds 100 miles

ADELAIDE Airport will soon welcome a new restaurant to its site, with Emirates Leisure Retail concept eatery 100 Miles opening to the public tomorrow.

Operating within the hub's newly expanded domestic and international terminal, 100 Miles will offer visitors locally inspired, regionally sourced food and beverage options.

"100 Miles promises a focused menu that changes with the seasons, and features fresh produce sourced from within 100 miles of the venue," Emirates Leisure Retail ANZ Managing Director Justin Scotti said.

Adelaide Airport's terminal expansion also includes a new international hall featuring a second, longer baggage belt, expanded screening facilities, and a larger duty-free precinct.

Tassie rolls out mats

THE Tasmanian Government has joined several other states and territories in protecting itself against the threat of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), revealing plans to roll out sanitation mats at many of its air and sea ports.

The mats, which have already been implemented at a number of Aussie air hubs (*TD* 07 Jul), will be introduced "as soon as possible", Tasmania's Minister for Primary Industries Jo Palmer said, adding the state would also be ramping up an extensive communications campaign to increase traveller awareness.

The Federal Government has already allocated mats to be delivered to Tasmania's Hobart International Airport, but the state is taking no chances with FMD, confirming they will be in ubiquitous use for travellers.

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events@traveldaily.com.au

Qld sets new record

QUEENSLAND Airports Limited busted through a new milestone in Jun, marking the highest number of passengers ever recorded by the group through its airports.

Just over 650,000 travellers were recorded passing through the Gold Coast, Townsville, Mount Isa and Longreach airports, surpassing the previous record of 642,366 set in 2017.

483,650 passengers were facilitated at Gold Coast Airport, while Townsville Airport accounted for 143,000, Mount Isa Airport saw 20,431, and 3,492 passengers were facilitated at Longreach Airport.

The airports were around 2.5% ahead of pre-COVID volumes.

USA is number one!

AMERICAN airports have dominated the list of the world's busiest air hubs in 2021, according to new data published by trade body ACI World, with the US claiming eight of the top 10 spots on the list.

The rankings, which were dominated by China before the pandemic, saw Atlanta (ATL) crowned the most bustling airport, recording 75,704,760 travellers for the year.

Dallas (DFW), Denver (DEN), Chicago (ORD) and Los Angeles (LAX) rounded out the top five, with only Guangzhou (CAN) and Chengdu (CTU) making the top 10 from China, while Delhi (DEL), Istanbul (IST) and Mexico City also made the top 20.

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