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INDEPENDENT HOLIDAY PACKAGE EXPERTS

Job vacancies soar

JOB vacancies in the accommodation sector rose by more than 250% between Feb 2020 and May 2022, new figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show.

The surge in unfilled jobs in the accommodation and food services industry was only outpaced by the arts and recreational services sector, which saw a 260% growth.

More recently, accommodation vacancies grew by 12.7% between Feb and May 2022.

VA biz class bites

BUSINESS class guests travelling with Virgin Australia can enjoy a new winter menu offering Aussie classics like chicken parmigiana and pastas including gnocchi with mushroom sauce.

The menu was created using customer feedback and taste-tested by the VA cabin crew, who gave it their tick of approval.

Inflation impacting travel

A **RECENT** survey conducted by investment bank JP Morgan has shown the rising cost of living is biting into Australian travel intentions, with the number of people indicating their next holiday would be a “stay at home one” jumping from 16% in Nov 2021 to 21% in Jun.

The report supplied to *The Australian* also showed that a rise in cost of living expenses saw 65% of Aussies state they would be spending less on travel and holidays during the next 12 months if the current trajectory of inflation persists.

Also of concern was the meagre growth in outbound travel during the same time period of just 2%, hampered by international airlines only managing around 55% of outbound capacity when compared to pre-pandemic times, exacerbated by the virtual absence of Chinese-owned airlines in the country.

Just over 40% of respondents also stated they were “very unlikely” to travel offshore despite an overall drop in anxiety regarding COVID-19 and the reopening of international borders.

Older demographics were found to be the most risk-averse in the latest study, with the 50+ group leading the way by a significant margin when it came to having “no plans” to travel overseas.

Flight Centre shutting up shop

FLIGHT Centre has revealed its entire retail network will close its doors this weekend, the first time it has done so in 30 years.

The travel agency said it was doing so in order to come together for “some much needed connection time” after all the hard work of the last two years.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including **Business Events News** plus a photo page from **Spencer Travel Group**.

Qantas price hike

QANTAS has announced an increase of 4% for Economy and Business fares across the entire Australian domestic network.

The adjusted fare prices will come into effect tomorrow, while today is the final day that bookings at the current rates can be ticketed.

Last chance Arizona

THE sixth and final episode of the Arizona Office of Tourism's new agent webinar series is now up, with agents reminded to complete the series and enter the code word at the end of each video by 13 Jul to be in the running for prizes - **CLICK HERE**.

2023 France River Cruising



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UK terror threat

DFAT has reissued its advice for Australian travellers to the United Kingdom, warning that visitors should now exercise a higher degree of caution due to the threat of terrorism.

MEANWHILE advice for travel to Finland has dropped back to normal safety precautions.

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NINGALOO REEF

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Intrepid reaches out to trade



INTREPID has revealed a renewed focus on nurturing its relationship with the trade, a shift the brand believes will be key to its future growth prospects.

As part of the focus on agents, Abbe Lunn will move into the new Partnerships Manager position, reporting to General Manager of Sales & Partnerships Yvette Thompson.

Lunn had previously been with Intrepid for nine years, working across a range of roles dedicated to supporting Intrepid's industry partners, and most recently enjoyed a stint at Save the Children Australia as its Corporate Partnerships Account Manager.

Yvette Thompson said Lunn's appointment would be just the beginning of Intrepid's push to show even more love for agents.

"We have used the past two years as an opportunity to review how we support agents and Abbe's return is one of several exciting announcements that we

will be making over the coming weeks in regards to how we will be supporting agents better than ever before," she said.

Pictured: Yvette Thompson with new recruit Lunn.

Qantas NZ lounges

QANTAS has refreshed and reopened two of its key airport lounges in New Zealand on the cusp of the school holiday period.

Lounges in Auckland and Wellington are back in operation, with Auckland operating from 4am to 7pm daily, while the Wellington lounge will be open two hours prior to all flights, with both offering beer, wine & spirits.

A new menu has also been introduced featuring local cheeses, salads, Neil Perry's bircher muesli and Kapiti ice creams, while at the Auckland lounge, a new coffee cart will offer barista services from 4am throughout the day.

Cover-More offers insurance guide

GLOBAL travel insurer, Cover-More, has published a new guide to assist Australian travellers wanting more details about how COVID-19 insurance works.

Claiming the mantle as the first insurance company to offer Aussies COVID-19 policies, Cover-More said it had received increased recent demand for information on what travel policies cover, prompting the launch of the guide.

"The aim of launching our COVID-19 Travel Insurance Guide is to get in front of travellers as early as we can in their booking path to show them... how to navigate through all the complexities of travel today, which is very different to pre-COVID," Chief Marketing Officer Chris Noble said.

Answers cover which markets are open and when is the best time to buy cover - view it [HERE](#).

Solomons ready

SOLOMON Islands will reopen its border to international visitors tomorrow after more than two years, and will scrap all quarantine requirements; visitors need to be fully vaccinated and provide a negative PCR test result within 72 hours before arrival.

Tourism Solomons Acting CEO, Dagnal Dereveke, said the country has been "long preparing" for the news and is ready and excited to welcome international visitors again.

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Agents caught in crossfire

AUSTRALIAN Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) CEO Dean Long is reminding Aussies that travel advisors are doing “everything they can” to get their holiday plans back on track in the face of bookings being disrupted by chronic flight shortages.

“The heartbreak of holidays and travel plans going off the rails as a result of flight cancellations is right now a regular occurrence,” Long lamented, adding that “it’s often a costly experience as well, as typically high cancellation fees on hotel accommodation apply by the time an airline cancels your flight.”

Long said travellers needed to remember that where agents are able to find replacement fares, those fares are typically at double and triple the original cost due to the very limited availability and price increases.

“In the current environment,

the only remedy many airlines are offering is a refund, which doesn’t help the traveller at all in terms of getting to their destination and that if agents can actually find a replacement flight for you, it is almost invariably going to mean having to pay more than you did originally,” Long said.

The AFTA chief is also reminding travellers that in the present climate, it is pertinent to build in insurance plans to mitigate against worst-case scenarios.

“When booking flights and accommodation, talk to your travel professional to understand how you can build in flexibility and ensure you have the right travel insurance in place,” he said.

AFTA is reiterating that it is important for Australians impacted by cancellations to always show support and respect for agents who are doing their best to find a workable solution.

The King of cruises

P&O Cruises Australia’s Tribute to The King cruises are back, with new Elvis itineraries ready to shake, rattle, and roll soon from Brisbane and Melbourne.

Following the sold-out Sydney cruise next month, the popular tribute voyage is being offered for the first time from Melbourne in Dec, followed by Brisbane departures in 2023.

The cruise line has partnered with BIG AL’S Elvis World to curate a sensational line-up of tribute artists, with the voyage to feature 14 entertainers, 42 dedicated tribute shows, a movie marathon, 1950s and 1970s dress-up nights, plus themed trivia, and karaoke nights.



TSSC fees cut

FEES have been halved for Cruise Traveller’s small ship sales program, The Small Ship Collective (TSSC).

Helping travel advisors get on board the boom in these kinds of voyages, fees have been halved to just \$90 per month.

Including exclusive supplier training, TSSC was launched last year, and is designed to help agents grow their cruise business, and become the ultimate small ship cruise specialist.

TSSC offers agents a personalised website which are branded with their own logo.

The cruise content platform can also be tailored to feature the cruise lines and destinations each agency chooses, and can include auto price feeds direct from large ship cruise lines, creating a complete solution for independent travel advisors.

For more details, call the TSSC hotline on 1300 561 001.

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NT building tourism

IMPORTANT tourism construction will play a major role in the \$30 billion worth of private sector projects expected to occur within the next five years in the Northern Territory, a new 2022-2030 infrastructure strategy document suggests.

Among the tourism priorities listed in the report are Aboriginal tourism projects, eco-tourism, cruising, national parks, the drive market and the short-stay accommodation sectors.

Central Australia is singled out as being particularly vital in attracting international tourists.

"There is an opportunity to invest in infrastructure such as the National Aboriginal Art Gallery, regional roads such as the Mereenie Loop and parks infrastructure to welcome tourists back to Central Australia," the report noted.

Overall, the NT hopes to create 35,000 jobs through its cross-sector infrastructure building.

Solo adventure on the rise

ADVENTURE travel is seeing a significant shift towards solo travel bookings, according to new data released by Explore Worldwide.

Close to two thirds of the operator's bookings are now from solo travellers, the report showed, with couples and small groups of friends making up the remaining volumes.

Travellers are also showing a greater interest in longer and more immersive holidays that avoid overtourism, with Explore customers seeking "a more gentle pace" of exploration.

Dovetailing into this trend has been a 55% increase in the number of European walking tours booked with the brand, with "easy graded" walking holidays the fastest growing segment when compared to pre-pandemic preferences.

As experienced by Australian agents, Explore Worldwide's

booking data also showed that travellers are booking much closer to departure dates than they did in 2019, with last-minute bookings for the Northern Hemisphere summer up by 23%.

Rail holidays have also proven to be a resurgent seller, with the operator's London to Marrakesh by train and new Fall Colours from Montreal to Boston products being well subscribed.

Explore Worldwide is represented in Australia by Adventure World Travel.

Wales mulls tax

A TOURISM tax on international visitors to Wales is reportedly set to be examined by the Welsh Government in Sep.

The consultation will determine the merits of raising funds to maintain tourism facilities, with no figure on how much the levy may cost as yet revealed.

Boeing green jets

BOEING has committed to delivering commercial airplanes capable of flying on 100% sustainable fuels by 2030.

Contained within a new sustainability report released overnight, the aviation manufacturer said it would focus efforts on supporting the commercial aviation industry's commitment to achieve net-zero carbon emissions for global civil aviation operations by 2050.

The pledge follows the formation of renewable energy partnerships with SkyNRG, Alaska Airlines, Etihad Airways, NASA, Rolls-Royce, and United Airlines.

RSSC trade guide

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) has released a new Travel Partner Guide, offering agents unique selling points, support resources and cruise comparisons to enhance product knowledge.

Read the new guide [HERE](#).



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Victoria funds cultural events

AS PART of the Victorian Government's Multicultural Festivals and Events program, 189 community organisations will share in \$1.2 million of funding to deliver events between 01 Jul and 31 Dec.

More than half of the funding, which aims to boost the state's events industry by promoting social connection and the sharing of cultures and traditions, was allocated towards 85 events that support new community organisations.

Among the events line-up are the Multicultural Ohi Day Celebration organised by the Association of Greek Elderly Citizens Clubs of Melbourne, and the SalamFest Muslim Arts Festival to promote Islamic artistic expression.

VSC EYES MAJOR MICE AMBITION

VISIT Sunshine Coast (VSC) has announced Ali Thompson as its new Business & Leisure Events Manager, where she will help promote the region as a leading MICE destination.

Thompson, whose role replaces the Business Events Manager position held by Maureen Brennan since 2018, has 20 years of experience under her belt, including running her own marketing and events business.

Thompson is also a founding member of Influential Women in Meetings & Events, and has been sitting on the APAC Incentives & Meetings Advisory Board.

Announcing the appointment, VSC CEO, Matt Stoeckel, said Thompson has come on board during a "really crucial time for the destination as we rebuild our business events market.

"With a landscape that is ideal for high-end incentives, the



Sunshine Coast has enormous potential to grow its business and leisure events sector."

The region has already hosted several major national conferences and events this year, including the United in Compassion 2022 Symposium, and the annual Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander Studies Summit.

The Curated Plate, a multi-day culinary festival, is also set to draw a large number of visitors to the Sunshine Coast throughout Jul and Aug.

Pictured: Meetings with a difference - a conference group soaks in the sunshine on a sandbar in Maroochydoore.

Goulburn Duathlon

GOULBURN Mulwaree Council, in partnership with multi-sport event company Elite Energy, is gearing up to host the inaugural Goulburn Duathlon on 16 Jul, after it was postponed several times in 2021 due to COVID-19.

One of the event's three races will be a qualifier for the 2023 Multisport World Championships to be held in Ibiza, Spain.

Ignite Bendigo

THE City of Greater Bendigo is encouraging visitors to the Central Goldfields region with its winter Ignite Bendigo campaign, featuring a line-up of 50 experiences throughout Jun, Jul and Aug.

Highlights include a light show at Rosalind Park, GLOW: Bendigo after Dark; an Elvis exhibition at the Bendigo Art Gallery; and a barrel wine-tasting weekend.

New sustainable event standards

THE Events Industry Council's (EIC) Centre for Sustainability & Social Impact has published an updated version of its Sustainable Events Standards.

Originally created in 2019, the set of eight standards are designed to assess events and industry suppliers in line with environmental and social responsibility.

Updates include a new Foundations Level with extra tools and resources to replace the 'Industry Wide Criteria'; improved criteria offering better flexibility for regional adaptation; new integrated property standard that covers accommodation, venue and food & beverage standards; a new certification model for industry suppliers; and clearly defined roles.

Cairns Convention Centre campaign

CAIRNS Convention Centre has gone to press with a new international digital campaign, supported by Tourism Australia.

The marketing content includes videos and factsheets featuring local industry experts and focusing on key industry sectors, including agribusiness, tropical health, aviation, life sciences, renewable energy, education and tourism.

So far the campaign has reached over 160,000 key

decision-makers, generating over 12 new international business leads.

The centre's General Manager, Janet Hamilton, said the goal was to highlight the knowledge of the region.

"We are very fortunate to be surrounded by the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics Rainforest, but we also have much more to offer business events in regard to our local expertise in a range of areas."

W Melb appoints BE specialist

W MELBOURNE has announced the appointment of Kelly Ferguson in the newly created role of Account Director - MICE, to help meet growing demand for meetings, incentives, conferences and events across the hotel's venues and meeting spaces - for more appointments, see p7.

Tas's Dark Mofo

THE Tasmanian Govt has praised DarkLab for its "spectacular" program of Dark Mofo events this year, which sold 72,000 tickets - 65% of which were bought by interstate visitors - and generated around \$3.5 million in ticket sale revenue.

Spencer rediscovers the joy of travel

Thursday 30th June 2022

SPENCER Travel Group this week hosted two major events back-to-back, combining a showcase for clients with a Partner Celebration to thank suppliers for their support throughout the pandemic. Taking place at the Pullman Hotel Sydney Airport, the gathering saw almost 50 suppliers presenting their wares to key Spencer

Travel clients, followed by a cocktail party where the company raised a glass to those who stood by Spencer Travel over the past two and a half years.



THE Spencer Travel Group team.



PENNY
Spencer chats with Celebrity Cruises' Jess Jones during the supplier showcase.



HEATHER Del Vecchio, Bridget Kroll and Carissa Johnson from Spencer Travel.



THANKING
suppliers for their support over the pandemic.



FIONA Dalton MBA from Virtuoso with Penny Spencer and Virtuoso's Michael Londregan.



TINA Killeen with Vomo Fiji's Karen Marvell and Farid Hacene from Island Escapes.



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.

Accor has appointed **Joleen Hurst** as the new General Manager at **The Porter House Hotel Sydney– MGallery**, which will open later this year. Hurst has worked in a number of general manager positions with Accor over the past two decades.

La Vie Hotels & Resorts has welcomed three new directors to its team, including **Russell Cool** as Group Director of Operations - Australia, **Shellia Chang** as Group Director of Sales and Distribution, and **Nelsy Zreik** as Group Director of Finance - Australia.

Peter Minatsis has been selected by Marriott International as the General Manager of the upcoming **Le Meridien Melbourne**. Minatsis, who makes the move from a five-year tenure at Sheraton Melbourne, will lead the hotel's team as it prepares to open early next year.

Josh Tyler has been named as General Manager of **The Oaks Ranch** in Mossy Point, NSW, which will reopen next month. Tyler has over 20 years of culinary and hospitality experience, and previously managed a team of 76 employees at The Ungasan Clifftop Resort in Bali.

Party's over at Airbnb

A REDUCTION in violence, rule violations and health issues in Australia has led accommodation platform Airbnb to permanently ban parties from being hosted at any of its property listings.

In Aug 2020, the company announced a temporary ban on all parties across its entire network "until further notice", in a bid to deter hosts from not operating responsibly, rolling out several enforcement measures such as a 24-hour safety line.

"The temporary ban proved effective, and today we are officially codifying the ban as our policy," Airbnb said.

"We believe there is a direct correlation between our implementation of the policy in Aug 2020 and a 35% year-over-year drop in the rate of party reports in Australia."

First Nations tour

WARANARA First Nations Tours returns to the Australian Museum this winter, inviting visitors to learn about the knowledge systems and sustainable practices that helped Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people become one of the oldest living civilisations on the planet.

The one-hour tour of the Museum's First Nations Galleries, including the exhibitions Bayala Nura: Yarning Country and Garrigarrang: Sea Country, will be led by First Nations guides.

Visitors will also hear personal stories about the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Australian Museum Director First Nations Laura McBride said the return of the tours is part of a larger vision to prioritise First Nations voices at the facility.

VN phos a fabulous party



VIETNAM Airlines earlier this week held a "Rediscover Vietnam" event at PARKROYAL Darling Harbour, Sydney.

Attendees had a chance to mingle with the Vietnam team, as well as a wide range of suppliers from the country, before hearing a number of product updates.

Also present on the night was Ambassador of Vietnam, Nguyen Tat Thanh, who spoke about the restart of his country's relationship with Australia, now both nation's borders are open.

After the officialdom of the night, guests were treated to dinner at BAKERS at PARKROYAL

Darling Harbour, and a number of lucky prize winners were announced, including Flight Centre Baulkham Hills' Anne Knight (**pictured below**), who walked away with the major prize of a return Premium Economy airfare to Vietnam, two internal flights within the country, five nights of accommodation, and much more.

Thuy Phan Travel's Thuy Thanh Thi Phan and Tran Thi Diem Phuong did not go home empty-handed either, winning prizes of airfares and accommodation.

Pictured above is the Vietnam Airlines team.

