# Travel Daily First with the news



#### Wednesday 11th May 2022

#### Earn Disney bucks

**DISNEYLAND** Park tickets are now available to book through The Travel Junction.

Fully commissionable, multi-day tickets are available through the company, including one park per day and park-hopper.

Travellers can also be upgraded with Disney's Genie+ service for speedier access to all the wonders on offer.

For more information on the tickets, see page seven.

#### Step into a postcard with NCL

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line (NCL) is offering Australian travellers the chance to step into their own postcard at great prices, offering up to 35% discounts on cruises, free beverage packages, and US\$200 of free onboard credit.

Interested travellers must hurry to take up the offer, as the promo ends next Thu, 19 May.

For more info, see page eight.

# FCTG unveils "FCB 4.0"

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) last night celebrated its 40th anniversary with an event in Sydney where CEO Graham Turner unveiled "bold plans for Flight Centre Brand (FCB) 4.0".

The new platform was described as "an industry-first blended ecosystem of technology and traditional booking systems", linking together all the different ways clients book travel including in-store, on mobile or desktop, over the phone or via an app.

A soon-to-launch global website will offer "world-class booking functionality", showcasing a standardised global brand but with regional and in-store functionality for bookable travel products, pricing and promotion.

"We've used the past two years to right-size the business and reinvent Flight Centre after taking stock of our future ambitions," Turner said.

"Without leaving our core

assets behind, we're moving from a world of complexity to one of simplicity for our customers and consultants," he added.

The FCB 4.0 model aims to deliver a consistent Flight Centre client experience, with dynamic and globalised pricing, the Helio booking system with automated best deal search, a refined customer sales management tool called CustomerOne, and a singleview display of all booking data of the end-to-end journey for both clients and consultants.

Flight Centre brand Global MD, Andrew Stark, was also present, revealing online bookings had grown from 5% of TTV pre-COVID to 20% now, and forecasting an increase to 40% by 2025.

The overall strategy is to be a "leading global travel retailer, famous for flights plus holidays, underpinned by people and technology," he said. More from FCTG on pages 4 & 5.

Number of nights stay

Kings

Canvon

N T

Ormiston Gorge

Kings Creek

Station

Standley

Cha

#### Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news, a product profile from Australian Pacific Touring, plus full pages from: • The Travel Junction Norwegian Cruise Line

#### NZ to fully open up

**NEW** Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has announced the country's borders will fully open to all tourists and visa holders two months earlier than planned, revealing 31 Jul as the key resumption date.

The announcement also included confirmation that cruise ships will finally be able to return with the opening of New Zealand's maritime border.

"The suspension of int'l cruising over the past two years has had a huge impact on the New Zealand travel industry and we now have an opportunity to work on a revival." CLIA MA Australasia Joel Katz said - more in **CW** tomorrow.

Alice

Springs

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Outback Spinit





## Virgin, Qatar Airways deal

QATAR Airways and Virgin Australia yesterday unveiled a major new strategic partnership (*TD* breaking news), with the deal said to "significantly expand both airlines' networks, lounges and loyalty programs".

The pact was announced at the start of the Arabian Travel Market in Dubai, and will include a comprehensive bilateral codeshare agreement giving VA passengers access to the QR global network of over 140 destinations.

Qatar Airways passengers will be able to fly to 35 destinations in Australia with Virgin Australia, connecting through from QR services into Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth.

Reciprocal loyalty benefits will see members of both airline's rewards programs able to earn and burn points on either carrier, along with tier-based benefits such as lounge access, additional baggage allowances, priority check-in and priority baggage delivery.

Qatar Airways Group CEO, Akbar Al Baker, said "we have a strong, longstanding relationship with Australia, and this agreement with Virgin Australia comes at a time when it is needed the most".

"This partnership will give Australian passengers access to the world that they have so acutely missed these past two years, to be able to reconnect with family and friends, and keep the wheels of trade moving...we hope many of them will stop over in Doha to enjoy the wonderful tourism industry that Qatar has to offer," he said.

Virgin Australia CEO Jayne Hrdlicka said the deal would open up Europe, Africa, the Middle East and beyond to VA customers.

The move is intriguing, given that Qatar Airways is also a member of the **one**world alliance which means it offers similar tier benefits such as lounge access and points accrual to Qantas frequent flyers.

Virgin Australia is currently seeking Australian Competition and Consumer Commission authorisation to allow it to offer existing fares from partner carriers such as United Airlines and now Qatar Airways, rather than a traditional "arms-length" arrangement (*TD* yesterday).

#### **QDP NZ discount**

**TRAVEL** advisors who shop for their customers via the Qantas Distribution Platform can currently access a \$150 discount on published base fares on eligible return economy and Business class flights from Australia to New Zealand.

The offer is available from today until 17 May, for travel 12 Jul-22 Sep 2022, 04 Oct-04 Dec 2022; and 10 Jan-28 Feb 2023. The deal is only available to point of sale Australia agencies.



UNIW≋RLD

## New role for Farrell

**CRAIG** Farrell has been appointed as a Director of La Collection, a new hotel representation business in partnership with Lea Seguier.

Farrell, who moves into the hospitality sector after over a decade in cruising, most recently with Ponant (*TD* 28 Apr), will work alongside Seguier on clients such as the Myconian Collection, the Alpina Gstaad, the Domain de Murtoli, The Belles Rives, le Domaine des etangs and as preferred partners of Hotel du Cap Eden Roc and Chateau St Martin.

Seguier remains the sole and exclusive representative of her founding accounts, Singita and La Reserve Hotels.

Farrell told *Travel Daily* he was excited to join Seguier in representing some of the best properties in the world.

"I have admired Lea's business for years, so when the opportunity arose to partner I jumped at the chance," he said.

"We see huge potential to expose our hotel partners to a wider audience, and to expand the portfoilo...we now have a footprint in Sydney and Melbourne which is a big advantage," Farrell added.

For more information on the group and its luxury portfolio see leaseguier.com.

#### MSC loyalty revamp

MSC Cruises has replaced its Voyages Selection with Voyagers Exclusives, in a big shake-up of the line's MSC Voyagers Club loyalty program.

The restructure will see members automatically benefit from a minimum 5% discount for any cruise booked at any time, replacing the old regime which only applied to select sailings.

Additional benefits will also see members obtain more discounts and rewards points the earlier they book based on the various membership tiers available.

## Travel Daily on location in Denarau Island, Fiji

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Tourism Fiji, which is this week hosting its Fijian Tourism Exchange on Denarau Island.

**TRAVEL Daily** is in Fiji for the Fijian Tourism Exchange, which will take place at Denarau Island Convention Centre.

First up will be an Opening Ceremony at the Sheraton Fiji Golf & Beach Resort, followed by an opening function at Sandy Point.

Tomorrow will begin the hectic schedule of industry and media events, so stay glued to *Travel Daily* this week for coverage from FTE.

#### **Travel hits record**

**TRAVEL** spending reached a new record high in Apr and exceeded its pre-COVID peak, gaining 10.6% on the previous month and 41% on Apr 2021, according to latest CommBank HSI Index data.

Spending on travel agents, airlines, cruise ships, tourist attractions, and hotels all increased during the month, the report showed, while there was also a marked decline in camper and RV rentals.

The Commonwealth Bank report noted the drop in RV spend reflected changing travel patterns from a dominant domestic focus to an international one in line with the reopening of state and international borders.

"We are seeing a post COVID normalisation of consumer spending patterns, with lower spending on categories that increased during lockdowns like health & fitness, while higher travel and entertainment spending reflects more people being out and about," Commonwealth Bank Senior Economist Belinda Allen said.





## **Qld boosts Indigenous focus**

THE Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) has announced the creation of the Queensland First Nations Tourism Council (QFNTC), which will be charged with increasing the development of Indigenous tourism experiences in the state.

After extensive consultations between QTIC, various government bodies, and First Nations communities across Queensland, the new independent peak body will officially go live from next month, and serve as a collective voice and advocate for indigenous tourism issues in the state.

While the establishment of the QFNTC has been facilitated by QTIC, the new not-for-profit association will exist as an independent and separate entity to QTIC.

"The formation of Queensland's very own First Nations tourism council is an integral step in the advancement of Indigenous tourism within our state," QTIC said this morning.

"To meet growing consumer demand for cultural experiences and facilitate the expansion of our First Nations visitor economy, it is critical that indigenous tourism have its own voice by which to advocate."

The concept of forming such a body was first raised in 2017 at QTIC's First Nations tourism event Destination IQ, where event participants called for the development of an Indigenous tourism strategy.

From this discussion, the *Queensland First Nations Tourism Plan 2020-2025* was produced, with the establishment of an independent peak body for Indigenous tourism forming one of the report's integral pillars.

QTIC is inviting everyone within the industry to join QFNTC - learn more about membership **HERE**. The book has been thrown at the booker, with Trivago being fined \$44.7 million last month. Read all the details in the May issue of *travelBulletin*.

# G Adventure's advisor discounts

**G ADVENTURES** is offering its preferred partner travel agents up to 50% discounts on upcoming trips for themselves, and 25% savings for up to three travelling companions.

The operator is running the promotion as it reaches the important milestone of 1,000 departures scheduled for Jun, also revealing that all other agency partners can currently receive up to 30% off its tours, with up to 15% discounts for their fellow adventurers, when they present a travel ID.

The Jun departures list sees the return of Borneo, Canada, Cuba and Madagascar for the first time in two years, in addition to the reopening of its Thailand Hilltribes trekking route, and the restart of the popular Mont Blanc hiking season.

More info on the deals is available via Sherpa - **CLICK HERE**.





**SYDNEY** has been named the sixth-best city in the world for shopping addicts, as part of a new study by discount code aggregator Hey Discount.

The research analysed cities around the world based on things like shopping malls and top designer boutiques.

Just missing out on the top five, Sydney came in after Tokyo, London, Paris, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

However, the Emerald City beat out shopping meccas such as New York City, Madrid, Toronto, and Boston, which rounded out the top 10.

It was not all good news though, with highly sought-after destinations such as Vienna, Munich, and Stockholm rated the three worst shopping cities.





## FCTG leaders line up



LAST night's 40th birthday celebrations for Flight Centre saw some of the firm's top executives kick up their heels at Sydney's Hubert Restaurant, with the milestone marked by the launch

### Celebrate the Month of Lei and win a famil to Hawai'i!



of the Flight Centre Brand 4.0 omni-retailing platform (see p1). Flight Centre brand CEO Andrew Stark said as well as facilitating increasing consultant productivity and providing an enhanced client experience, the new system reflects the evolution of travel as customers put sustainability topof-mind when booking holidays.

"To meet this evolving customer demand, Flight Centre Travel Group's booking platforms have also been designed to inform and help clients make decisions around their travel options, providing CO2 reporting and carbon offsetting solutions that contribute to positive climate action," Stark said.

"Our suppliers are also taking positive steps to reduce their impact, with many of our preferred partners having implemented comprehensive environmental and broader Corporate Social Responsibility strategies," he added.

A video celebrating the last 40 years was also showcased - see it at traveldaily.com.au/videos.

Pictured at last night's event are Andrew Stark, Flight Centre Global MD; Darren Wright, Global CMO Retail; Flight Centre cofounder Bill James; Haydn Long, Public Affairs Manager; Kelly Spencer, Flight Centre Australia GM; James Kavanagh, Global Leisure CEO; and Global CEO Graham "Skroo" Turner.

## **AVAILABLE ON THE** TRAVEL DAILY TRAINING ACADEMY 'HUB' Travel Daily

THIS week I will be meeting with the NZ Tourism Nash, and CEO of Tourism NZ, Rene de Monchy as

trade mission to Australia that coincides with ATE.

While travel is now permitted between Australia and New Zealand, there are still some friction points such as pretesting that needs to be urgently removed.

We know Australians are rediscovering their love of travel far quicker than forecast, but destinations with restrictionfree travel such as Singapore and the UK have seen a quicker recovery and no additional burden on their health systems.

As I have spoken about before, for many in the sector, a successful recovery will be dependent on a successful 2022 Australian and NZ ski season.

With domestic border closures long gone, any country that maintains even minimal barriers to travel will most likely see a

#### More transparency

HURTIGRUTEN has launched its latest Environmental. Social. and Governance report, which calls for more transparency from the travel industry.

"We operate in an industry which negatively impacts the environment, so we have a collective responsibility to be more transparent," Hurtigruten CEO Daniel Skjeldam said.

In the report, Hurtigruten committed to a number of science-based targets, including reaching zero emissions by 2050 and the launch of the first zero emission ship on the Norwegian coast by 2030.

Read the full report HERE.

### AFTA UPDATE from Dean Long, CEO

Minister, Stuart part of their

slower recovery.

CEO of TAANZ Greg Hamilton recently discussed how both organisations can work together to support the recovery of our sector.

AFTA and the newly appointed

The strong relationship both organisations have will serve our members well as we jointly advocate for the removal of the NZ restrictions.

Finally, last week the AFTA Board met in Sydney for a workshop on the new constitution.

The aim of this project is to ensure the constitution will deliver on the current and future requirements of the Association and provide clear objectives for operating.

There has been over three months of consultation with Board members and industry leaders and a draft discussion paper will be shared with members and the greater sector in the coming month.

This is a once-in-a-generation project, taking all of the lessons learnt from the establishment of ATAS, the pandemic and ongoing evolution of the sector.

### Back to the future!

A NEW era in travel to the Cook Islands has started, with access to the destination becoming easier with the removal of all pre-departure COVID-19 testing and several other related requirements.

Cook Islands Tourism's local General Manager Graeme West, said the changed regulations from this month meant it is "back to the future," for the destination.

"The main requirement is that people aged 16 and over must be fully vaccinated and present an international travel vaccination certificate," he added.

Visitors must also complete a Cook Islands health declaration.



# Skroo's reflections on 40 years of taking off

Flight Centre founder Graham Turner looks back on four decades of travel and what the future holds. Got an opinion to



via email to feedback@traveldaily. com.au.

THIS year marks a very special occasion for Flight Centre Travel Group, not only in Australia but in suburban strips, shopping malls and high streets all around the world where our iconic brand is represented.

In 1982, 40 years ago, we opened our first shop in Australia.

Our 40th birthday milestone is an acknowledgement of our Australian roots, and the birth of a brand that became the catalyst for all of our success and brand diversification to follow.

More than 40 years ago, I flew to London as a uni grad and had a harebrained idea that buying a run-down double decker bus would be a cheap, but effective, way to drive around Europe.

A few friends liked the idea too and pretty soon, we worked out people would actually be willing to pay to come along with us on some of our fun.

That was the start of Topdeck

Travel and became the catalyst for the birth of Flight Centre in Australia.

It's been a privilege to watch the growth of the travel industry, both in Australia and globally, over the past 40 years.

It's safe to say I've done my fair share of travel but this is the most incredible journey l've been on.

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To our

customers, who have let us play a part of their travel memories, and to our people, past and present, who have contributed to the company's enduring success over the past 40 years, thank you. Here's to the next 40 - and some thoughts about what's to come:

• Air travel – Sydney to London in less than 6 hours

Over the next 40 years I think the most significant change for long-haul travel will be in flight times.



speed (Mach3) intercontinental aircraft, travellers will be able to get from Sydney to somewhere like London or New York in less than six hours. The planes are powered by

Using a new generation of high-

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liquid hydrogen processed by renewables. The fuel cost is about double relative to the cost of kero in 2022.

> • Coach touring - immersive cultural experiences

Back in the 80s, European coach camping tours were marketed at 18-25 year olds and the most common itineraries were around the 10week mark. Travellers would stay in tents or converted double deckers (favoured by our

own Top Deck brand) and come home with tales of seeing many new countries and experiencing a taste of what they have to offer. Over the next 40 years, touring

will focus on more intimate, experiential memories in smaller

#### **UA signs SAF deal**

UNITED Airlines says it's the first US-based carrier to sign an agreement to purchase Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) overseas, overnight announcing a three-year pact with Finnish group Neste for the supply of more than 50 million gallons of SAF to operate its flights out of Amsterdam.

UA Chief Sustainability Officer, Lauren Riley, said the deal reflected the fact that "the demand from our customers to limit their emissions from flying is growing exponentially".

groups (25 max).

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> Instead of building larger 10-week itineraries covering multiple countries, tourers will spend about three weeks in a single region, staying in hostels as a more experiential way to immerse yourself in a destination.

• Cruising - riding big waves

Over the past 40 years, cruising has been largely contained to popular ocean cruising in large ships, but we've seen river boat cruising and smaller expedition ship journeys grow in the lead up to COVID.

I predict cruising in all sorts will see a resurgence over the next 40 years as ocean, river and expeditions grow in popularity dramatically as an industry in all three sectors.

#### • Hotels – rise of the boutique brand

Big, branded hotel chains have dominated accommodation preferences for 40 years but I anticipate smaller, boutique brands will become more popular as travellers seek a unique stay to complement their in-destination experience.

Our own (Turner-family owned) Spicers boutique offering continues to grow in line with pandemic-driven demand for tranquil, nature-based getaways.

#### **Michelin Toronto**

THE Michelin Guide has announced its first Canadian destination, with the launch of the new Michelin Guide Toronto. in partnership with Destination Toronto, Destination Ontario and Destination Canada.

The inaugural edition showcasing top Toronto eateries will be released in the third quarter of 2022, with Destination Toronto CEO Scott Beck saying the move was a "powerful way to share our culinary capabilities with new audiences from around the world".



#### France warning

FRENCH Minister of the Interior Gerald Darmanin vesterday announced increased security measures around Jewish places of gathering and worship, following threats from the Islamic State.

In response, DFAT has advised Aussie travellers to exercise a high degree of caution around these areas, and generally be more cautious of your surroundings.

Authorities may restrict access to some places or search tourists.

#### Biles goes Beyond

**AMERICAN** artistic gymnast Simone Biles has been named the godmother of Celebrity Cruises' newest ship, Celebrity Beyond. Biles will name the vessel at an official ceremony in Fort Lauderdale on 04 Nov.

Recently debuting in Europe, Beyond began her inaugural season on 27 Apr with a 10-night sailing from Southampton to Barcelona, which TD was lucky enough to be aboard (TD 27 Apr).

## ACCOMMODATION

WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily*'s Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



Bebek Hotel by the Stay has opened in Istanbul's fashion quarter. Described as a 50s waterside retreat, the hotel features a seasonal rooftop bar and two in-house restaurants, including The Terrace Restaurant, which boasts a nine-dish Greek-inspired menu. Decor includes art deco features with neon

lighting and modern art by Turkish artists.



IHG Hotels & Resorts announces the opening of avid hotel Chicago O'Hare -Des Plaines, located close by to one of the Illinois for the rapidly growing brand. With the most recent opening, avid hotels now

has 53 locations open across the U.S and Mexico. The new property joins several recent openings in the US for the brand, including avid hotel Detroit-Warren on 15 Feb and Florida's avid hotel Ocala which threw open its doors on o8 Apr.



The Top End's newest luxury experience, Finniss River Lodge, has welcomed its first guests. Located within a working cattle property of Finniss River Station and a 90 minutes' drive south-west of Darwin, the opening of Finniss River Lodge promises

relaxation, adventure, and an intimate dalliance with nature from its luxurious, six suite accommodation complete with wide verandas and wet-edge swimming pool with station views as far as the eye can see.

info@traveldaily.com.au

## ATG wraps up the first round



APT Travel Group (ATG) has wrapped up its first round of Travel Expos around Australia, showcasing its product to agents and guests across 15 events in cities around the nation.

From Frankston to Fremantle, the whirlwind expo series saw hundreds of attendees flock to see what updates ATG had in store for the market, with the largest event taking place in Sydney at the Fullerton Hotel, which included a VIP breakfast with ATG Director Rob McGeary, who spoke about the ATG charitable fund OneTomorrow.

ATG General Manager of Sales,

#### Ponant savings

**PONANT** has released an exclusive limited time offer for Australian and New Zealand guests looking to cruise aboard Le Soleal's Kimberley 2022 departures leaving on 28 May and 7 Jun.

Valid for all new bookings made by 20 May, the special deal offers guests savings of up to 30% on the regular price with the Ponant bonus, which includes onboard bonus credit of €150 per person to use on things like shore excursions and shopping.

For new to Ponant guests, they can additionally save \$800 per statement based on double occupancy for more details, call 1300 737 178.

Scott Ellis, said is was gratifying to see such strong interest in the operator and to finally meet with people in person.

"It has been so terrific to get out and about talking about travel again," Ellis enthused.

"Our BDM Teams around Australia have done such a spectacular job in hosting our first round of travel events, and are raring to go for the next ones.

"We are seeing interest in Canada & Alaska, Europe and of course domestic remains very popular, especially our Kimberley Cruising program," Ellis added.

Pictured: ATG's NSW/ACT BDM Team: Sandy Allan, Margie Colbeck, Barbara Baron, and Rashelle Thompson.

#### Bite The Mad Apple

**CIRQUE** du Soleil's latest Las Vegas show Mad Apple is set to make its debut on 26 May at New York-New York Hotel & Casino.

The show, featuring comedian Brad Williams, freestyle rapper Chris Turner, and vocalist Xharlie Black, consists of six acts, each representing a different aspect of New York's nightlife.

Mad Apple concept co-creator and Executive Producer, Simon Painter, said the show will "feel like a giant party from start to finish", complete with music, dance, comedy, acrobatics, and magic acts.



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For more info contact us on: Phone: 1300 208 712 Email: info@aptouring.com.au Website: www.aptouring.com.au guests twice during a 14-days cruise. Guests will be delighted by the beautiful tasting menu, featuring cuisine inspired by the region being travelled through, all served with complimentary, hand-picked local wines.

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