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Travel Daily on location in Barcelona, Spain

Today's issue of TD is coming to you courtesy of Virgin Voyages.

Valiant Lady's second port of call on her seven-night 'The Irresistible Med' cruise is Tuscany, with pax to disembark for a day in central Italy.

Some will head down the coast to Pisa, which although is known worldwide for its Leaning Tower, also contains many historic churches, medieval palaces, and a university, which is one of the oldest in Europe.

Guests also have the option to head further afield to Florence, the capital of Tuscany, of which its historical centre is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, noted as the breadbasket of the Renaissance.

Ritz-Carlton set for GC

MARRIOTT International will bring Australia's third Ritz-Carlton hotel to the Gold Coast by 2026.

The newbuild hotel, claimed to "reinvigorate Australia's sixth largest city as a luxury travel destination", will be part of a \$480 million new waterfront development at Mariner's Cove in partnership with Pelligra Group and Ginnarelli Group.

The Ritz-Carlton Gold Coast will feature about 150 guest rooms and suites, a signature restaurant, cafe and three bars, along with an outdoor rooftop pool, fitness centre and spa, while the property will also cater for events with a large ballroom and

a variety of meeting spaces.

"A luxury hotel development like this will draw in more tourism spending from across the globe and fuel the local economy," said Pelligra Group Chair, Ross Pelligra.

Sean Hunt, Marriott Area VP for Australia, NZ and Pacific, said the new Gold Coast Ritz-Carlton would join the group's existing JW Marriott Gold Coast and Sheraton Grand Mirage properties.

"It is a momentous signing, not only for our growing Gold Coast portfolio, but for the expansion of the Ritz-Carlton brand in Australia, first relaunched with the Ritz-Carlton Perth in 2019 and with the Ritz-Carlton Melbourne slated to open its doors in early 2023," Hunt added.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news plus a product page from Topdeck.

CI Da Nang link

TAIWAN-BASED China Airlines will launch five weekly return flights from Sydney to Da Nang in Vietnam from 02 Jan 2023, with a transit via its Taipei hub.

Release your Real

YOUTH travel operator Topdeck Travel has launched its 'Release your Real' promotion, offering 15% discounts on a select number of departures in 2023.

Adventures include the Get Social: Big European trip, a 27-day tour of some of the biggest attractions in Europe, which is now priced at \$6,008, a saving of \$1,144 per person.

The sale runs until 16 Nov - for more details see [HERE](#), and to learn more about the brand, see the [back page](#).

LHR cap to end?

LONDON'S Heathrow Airport has informed airlines that it will lift the cap on passenger numbers later this month, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

While the major UK hub's official response did not directly confirm the news, a spokesperson did say its focus was to remove the cap as soon as possible.

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Sherry heads north

ANN Sherry will relocate to Brisbane to take up a new role as Chair of Queensland Airports Limited, the operator of Gold Coast, Mt Isa, Townsville and Longreach airports.

Sherry, whose extensive career has included leadership of Carnival Australia and a non-executive directorship for Sydney Airport Limited, is also Chair of the Port of Townsville and is on the board of National Australia Bank and the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia.

More appointments on **page 6**.

Air NZ pride flights

AIR New Zealand will operate special WorldPride flights in Feb next year, hosted by *RuPaul's Drag Race Down Under* star drag queen Anita Wig'it.

Services will operate to the event's host city of Sydney from Auckland and San Francisco, with pax to enjoy a full program of drag shows, dance routines, comedy and "plenty of surprises".

NZ's special SFO flight will operate on 20 Feb, while AKL-SYD is scheduled for 24 Feb.

Expedia TAAP upgrade

EXPEDIA Group has announced a range of enhanced features to help agencies which are members of its Expedia Travel Agent Affiliate Program (TAAP), including Live Chat support and an easier quoting process.

Stuart Udy, TAAP Retail Distribution Director Australia and New Zealand, said the move was part of the organisation's "continuing commitment to helping travel agents deliver incredible experiences for the travellers they serve".

"Travel agents play a crucial role in the travel landscape, and we're thrilled to provide them with the resources they need to have an even bigger impact," Udy said.

The enhancements include Live Agent Chat, which now connects TAAP advisors directly with a human agent online at any time, with the service now accessible to agents in Australia and New Zealand as well as Belgium, the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, Philippines and Singapore.

The initiative will help agents more quickly resolve booking questions so they can save

time and "focus on delivering exceptional traveller experiences".

An enhanced quoting process also now allows TAAP users to name and save quotes for future reference, review and modify quotes, and quickly begin a booking from a saved quote.

Advisors can also now track and manage all quotes in a single place, for improved convenience.

Expedia TAAP is now offering more marketing assets for agents including over 300 customisable templates for social media, email marketing, banners and more.

The portal now offers more than one million properties, 200,000 activities, 500 airlines and 175 car rental options - [expedia.com.au](https://www.expedia.com.au).

Johnson takes lead

THE Accommodation Association of Australia (AAoA) has revealed Michael Johnson will take on the interim CEO role in the lead-up to its proposed merger with Tourism Accommodation Australia (TAA).

The responsibility will be in addition to his current role of CEO of TAA, which according to AAoA President Leanne Harwood, will enable Johnson to maintain a focus and align goals across the two organisations in the areas of advocacy, national policy, and delivering services and events.

More details on the status of the amalgamation can be read in this week's *travelBulletin* update.

FIRB ticks merger

THE Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) has no objection to the merger of Apollo Tourism & Leisure and Tourism Holdings Limited, with only ATL shareholders & the Qld Supreme Court remaining as hurdles.

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VS to shut down in HKG

VIRGIN Atlantic Airlines has confirmed the closure of its office in Hong Kong after almost three decades of serving the destination - including a proud landmark period in which it also operated flights from Sydney to London via the Asian hub.

The carrier cited several factors for the move, which comes despite the recent slight easing of quarantine restrictions in Hong Kong and indications that it is no longer pursuing its former "zero

COVID" approach.

VS has not yet resumed any post-pandemic operations to HKG, and the ongoing closure of Russian airspace adds around two hours to the route.

The move leaves Cathay Pacific and British Airways as the only operators on the formerly key London-Hong Kong route, with BA currently expecting to restart its BA31/32 flights in Dec.

VS had previously pushed back its planned restart of Hong Kong services to Mar 2023, but now says anyone booked on those flights will be offered a refund, voucher or alternate VS route.

Tauk solo specials

TAUCK has waived single supplements on all "Cat 1" cabins across its entire 2023 inventory of river cruises.

The company has also reduced solo supplements on other cabin categories, as well as a wide range of its land tours in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East - 1800 962 043.

KE Budapest route

KOREAN Airlines has launched a new non-stop route between Seoul and Budapest.

The new Hungarian services will operate twice weekly using Boeing 787-9 aircraft.

CDC drops COVID travel advisories

THE US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has announced it will cease issuing country-specific COVID-19 travel advisories for American travellers from this week.

The American health body had been reporting the COVID status of nations around the world for the majority of the pandemic, with the decision to stop publishing motivated by a decreasing volume of data being made available by most countries.

LH appointments

JEFFREY James (nee Dalziel) has been promoted to be Lufthansa Group Airlines' Head of Communications, Media & PR - Asia Pacific, based in Singapore.

He will be replaced locally as Marketing Manager - Australia & NZ by Candice Steffensen, whose experience includes roles at Virgin Australia & Destination NSW.



Window Seat

DUBAI has just notched up another world record, this time boasting the title of the Most Waterslides in a Waterpark.

Atlantis Aquaventure has been certified by *Guinness World Records* this week as the new title holder, sliding past the former mark of 41 slides with 50 separate installations.

But rest assured, safety is also an important factor for the water resort, which is famed for more than just high-octane fun.

"This wouldn't be possible without our team of more than 500 lifeguards who protect the safety of our guests every single day so that they can relax and enjoy extraordinary record-breaking experiences," the resort's chief, Timothy Kelly said - presumably before floating away on a giant blow-up pelican.

Norway Early Bird Sale

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*Selected sailings, based on twin share. T&Cs apply.



THE first few days of this year's Norwegian Cruise Line Walk for Wellness has seen a record number of participants putting their best feet forward.

There are now over 1,060 people from across Australia and NZ taking part, with the massive effort having seen the local industry cruise community collectively clock up a combined 18,400km so far.

As well as individual efforts, participants can join in with their local NCL BDMs for a hosted walk right across Australia and NZ by registering **HERE**.

Craig McLaurin, BDM for Qld/NT/Northern NSW is **pictured** above out on the road with industry partners Mary Powell from RACQ Chermide, Rebecca McDermott of Flight Centre North Lakes, and Kayla McDonald and Kerri Lingard from RACQ Chermide.

Each week there are also special challenges, with the initial "Awaken Your Spirit" competition offering prizes including a weekend retreat

for two, an experience gift card or a four-pack of Airtags for the most creative selfie of "something beautiful in nature" as walkers reconnect with their surroundings.

Some of the entries for the first week challenge are **pictured** below, with more welcomed until 11.59pm AEDT this Sun 09 Oct.



TODD McGeary, Helloworld Ballina: *It's been just so wet here in Northern NSW for like - forever. Our area has suffered so much of late with the horrible floods. So when there is a spot of sun - even for a couple of hours this morning - I took the chance to set out with my dog Pippa for today's W4W sector to "Awaken both our spirits". Lucky to be on the coast here - even spotted a couple of whales out there today. Always something to see on our beautiful coastal walks.*



ROLAND Kautzky from Travel Associates Prahran: *A walk in the snow at Mt Buller has awoken my spirits on the weekend thanks to the fresh mountain air and the beautiful snow gum trees.*

Agritourism play

THE NSW Government has released the final draft of its revamped agritourism policy which is designed to make it easier for farmers to cultivate new tourism experiences.

The new framework, which will come into effect from 01 Dec, will introduce clearer definitions and enhanced planning pathways to allow rural property owners to launch tourism activities with either faster or zero planning approvals required.

"Farmers who want to innovate and share a taste of their region with visitors shouldn't be held back by red tape," NSW Deputy Minister for Regional NSW Paul Toole said.

Agritourism is considered by the NSW Government to be a key sector with plenty of growth potential for both the Australian and NSW economies, and is expected to generate around \$19 billion nationally by 2030.

The final agritourism policy will aim to foster a greater number of farmers diversifying their income by starting agritourism experiences, such as farm stays, cafes, cellar doors, retreats, roadside stalls, fruit picking, and small wedding venues.

SYD tops the ladder

SYDNEY Airport has enjoyed a 27-fold increase in passenger revenue movements between Jul 2021 and Jul 2022, new figures from the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics has shown.

Australia's largest air hub was well ahead of other domestic airports when it came to yearly growth, delivering a total of 2.84 million pax for the month, with the next best capital city being Melbourne Airport with a 447% growth in passenger movements to 2.5 million.

Strong year-on-year growth was also noted for Ballina (up 500%), the Gold Coast (up 412%), and the Sunshine Coast (up 403%).

WA cruise spotlight

SENIOR cruise industry representatives have made their way to Western Australia for the sixth WA Cruise Exchange, which kicked off in Perth yesterday.

The four-day conference will showcase WA ports and onshore activities to the world's leading global liners, including Carnival Australia, Royal Caribbean Cruises, Australian Pacific Touring, MSC Cruises, and Ponant, as well as first-time attendees Heritage Cruises, Coral Expeditions and Viking Cruises.

Eight WA port destinations are being represented at the key cruise event, as well as the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council.

More than 10,000 cruise ship passengers are set to visit WA between Oct and Dec this year, with a maiden call by Carnival Australia's *Coral Princess* on 28 Oct, followed by Cunard's *Queen Elizabeth* on 07 Nov.

Summer holidays

ALMOST two-thirds of Aussies (62%) intend to go on holidays this summer, with one in three (35%) planning to travel domestically, according to a recent survey conducted by Readly.

One in five (23%) Aussies are keen to fly overseas, with the 30-49 age group most excited to fly abroad - in contrast, only 10% of the 60+ age group plan on holidaying outside of Australia.

Overall, 16% of Aussies will stay local and opt for a 'staycation'.

A&K DMC growth

ABERCROMBIE & Kent has announced the opening of four new Destination Management Companies (DMC) across the nations of Colombia, Namibia, Saudi Arabia, and Canada.

The luxury travel company, which is celebrating its 60th birthday this year, has also recently opened DMCs in the United States, and now has over 55 offices worldwide.



ICC brings \$190m

OVER the 2021/22 financial year, International Convention Centre (ICC) Sydney has contributed \$190 million in visitor spend to the local economy, through 300 events with 470,000 visitors.

Visitor attendance and expenditure more than doubled on the previous financial year and domestic event attendance matched pre-pandemic levels.

According to the venue's Annual Performance Review, it is on track to deliver \$1 billion a year in economic contribution to the city and regional communities within the next three years.

ICC Sydney is currently hosting the interactive digital experience, 'Gadigal Dreaming - The Sacred Country of the Gadigal People', until the end of Oct.

Still time to attend summit

THERE are limited spots still available for the Melbourne Event Organisers Summit, which takes place on 20 Oct at the Victoria Pavilion.

The event is free & includes breakfast and lunch - fill in the registration form [HERE](#).

30 years and strong

CORPORATE and Leisure Events (CLE) is celebrating 30 years of business this month, which founder Deborah Vaughan said was "a great milestone" to achieve in challenging conditions. "Not only have we had to keep up with technology, but we have survived the GFC, floods and recently the pandemic," she said.

Over three decades, the Qld-based company has built a solid reputation for delivering conferences, incentives, events, and leisure escapes both nationally and overseas.

EEAA, AACB EMERGING LEADERS

THE Exhibition & Event Association of Australasia (EEAA) and the Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) have collaborated to launch a program designed to guide and prepare up-and-coming industry leaders.

The Emerging Leaders program, led by EEAA Director and Leading Well Executive Coach, Dan Londero, aims to develop leadership skills, foster a business mindset with a focus on wellbeing, and explore relationship building and communication style.

CEO of AACB, Andrew Hiebl, described the program as a "streamlined pathway for emerging leaders across our industry, including convention bureaux".

"It is critical that we come together to support tomorrow's leaders and help drive the recovery and rebound of business events in Australia," he said.

The program consists of three phases, including a briefing for the employer, two one-day coaching sessions, and a one-on-one session with a Leading Well Executive Coach.

One of the program's highlights is the individual coaching session, which will explore what "enablers and inhibitors" each Emerging Leader faces on their journey to reach their leadership potential.

All successful participants will receive recognition at the EEAA Awards Gala evening event on Wed 07 Dec at the ICC Sydney.

The program, which kicks off this month, is valued at \$1,490 (plus GST) per participant, with employers responsible for interstate participants' transport, accommodation, and incidental expenses.

Business Events Australia will offer 20 Emerging Leaders the chance to build their leadership skills at no cost through the 2022

Scholarship Program.

"Supporting the development of our industry, to ensure Australia delivers high calibre business events and remains a competitive business events destination internationally, is especially important at this critical time for the sector."

Additionally, event and venue management software company Ungerboeck are sponsoring 10 scholarship programs.

"We have a proud tradition of supporting the younger generation to move through the ranks as our leaders of the future...this program provides an excellent foundation to support that," Ungerboeck APAC Marketing Director, Charlotte Cailleaux, said.

Applications for the program must be submitted by 5pm AEDT Mon 10 Oct - for further details about registration and program details, [CLICK HERE](#).

Geelong boost

GEELONG'S business events sector is set to receive a boost thanks to the state-funded Business Events Attraction program, which has secured 54 events to the region and is expected to bring a combined economic benefit of \$3.4 million.

Events run through the program will take place until late 2023, with 36 in Geelong and The Bellarine, and 18 along Great Ocean Road.

ACB reflects more

ADELAIDE Convention Bureau (ACB) has rebranded to Business Events Adelaide, a name which the organisation said will better define "the far broader scope" of its services, and ensures it is not incorrectly viewed as "restricted to conventions".

Darwin turns on the charm for famil

NORTHERN Territory Business Events recently hosted a group of corporate incentive planners and event management companies on a four-day Darwin Showcase familiarisation program.

Highlights included tours of key business event accommodation properties and meeting venues, visits to attractions like Crocosaurus Cove and Mindil Beach Sunset Markets, and dining experiences



such as Char Restaurant at historic Admiralty House.

The group also enjoyed a full day excursion to Matt Wright's Top End Safari Camp.

For more info on business events in the NT, [CLICK HERE](#).

Venue off the blocks

MELBOURNE & Olympic Parks newest venue, CENTREPIECE, has welcomed nearly 21,800 guests to over 92 events since it opened back in Feb this year, in that time hosting events such as the AIME Welcome event, Carlton in Business luncheon, and the Destination Australia National Tourism Conference.

Jacobs joins BEV

SIMON Jacobs has joined the Business Events Victoria (BEV) team as its Business Development Manager.

Jacobs is also a committee member for EEAA Emerging Leaders, and has previously worked at the Melbourne Convention Bureau.

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Travel Daily



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.

Outrigger Hospitality Group has announced **Angela Murphy** as Vice President of Sales - The Americas. Murphy was most recently a Global Director of Sales and Marketing Consultant for a portfolio of contracted clients in New York, Northern California, Portland and other destinations.

Frances Smith has been appointed as **StayWell's** new Global Director of Human Resources, Training & Compliance. Smith has 30 years of HR management experience under her belt, and has worked with brands such as Intercontinental Hotels Group and Mantra Group.

The Board of Edgewater-Lake Wānaka has rolled out the welcome mat for **Colin McClean**, who comes on board as its new General Manager, a role he will start in Dec. McClean joins from SkyCity Entertainment Group in Auckland, where he will wrap up as GM of Hotel Operations.

Lida Alevizos is **Emirates** latest recruit as Senior Sales Executive - Corporate, a role which will see her based in Sydney. Prior to assuming her new role, Alevizos worked at Qatar Airways for six years across several roles, the latest of which was Key Account Manager.

Ennismore 100th

GLOBAL collective of founder-built and entrepreneurial brands, Ennismore, is celebrating the opening of its 100th property, the flagship SO/Paris, which began welcoming guests at the end of last month.

The creative hospitality company, formed in Oct 2021 through a joint venture between Sharan Pasricha and Accor, expects to have an additional 30 new properties in its portfolio by the end of 2022.

Ennismore is gearing up to open over 35 hotels next year, including 25hours Hotel Sydney, TRIBE Bangkok, The Hoxton, Brussels, and Mondrian Bordeaux.

The hospitality collective also recently announced four new lifestyle hotel signings across New Zealand, including two TRIBE hotels, a JO&JOE property, and a Hyde location (**TD** 09 Aug).

Jetstar back to Tokyo

FOLLOWING the reopening of Japan's borders, Jetstar Japan is preparing to resume daily direct flights between Manila and Tokyo (Narita) on 16 Dec for the first time in nearly three years.

From Singapore, Jetstar Asia pax will be able to fly to Narita via Manila on 3K765 and transfer to GK40 operated by Jetstar Japan.

Jetstar Japan will operate return services on a 180-seat Airbus A320, with fares on sale now.

SL advice lowered

SMARTTRAVELLER has eased the travel advice level for Sri Lanka, but is still cautioning Australians to "exercise a high degree of caution" as the country continues to grapple with civil unrest and an economic crisis, with fuel, cooking gas, food and medicine in limited supply.

The best of the Hudson



NEW York State's Division of Tourism, I Love NY, partnered with Air New Zealand last month to host four operators on a family trip to the Big Apple, in celebration of the new direct service from Auckland to John F. Kennedy International Airport (**TD** 19 Sep).

The group was made up of New Zealand-based senior travel trade managers including representatives from Flight Centre Travel Group, Helloworld, First Travel Group Marketing, Fortis Events, and more.

After sightseeing in New York City, the group enjoyed views of Hudson Valley during an open-air cockpit biplane ride, dinner at The Bocuse Restaurant on the shores of the Hudson River at The Culinary Institute of America.

The group also had the opportunity to network with partners located throughout the destination's vacation regions to learn more about the latest product and accommodation updates from across the state.

Pictured: The Kiwi travel advisors enjoying the blue skies and friendly smiles at Mohonk Mountain House.

VSC enjoys new moment in the sun

VISIT Sunshine Coast (VSC) has launched a solar-powered ad campaign to encourage holidaymakers to visit the coastal destination and discover their 'Sunshine Moment'.

The campaign, which showcases eco adventures, paddock-to-plate dining experiences, rainforest retreats and other sustainable-focused operators, will be rolled out in Queensland, NSW and Victoria across paid social media.

QF issues apology

QANTAS has apologised to an Australian woman who was left "absolutely disgusted" when the carrier initially refused to compensate her after her wheelchair was left damaged during a recent flight.

After the writer and disability activist voiced her frustration on social media, Qantas offered to cover the cost of the damages and issued an apology.



Topdeck Trip Style: Get Social

TOPDECK'S Get Social trip style is all about non-stop adventure and fast-track friendships - it's the ideal option for travellers who prefer larger groups, crave the social vibe, and want to see it all.

Get Social travellers enjoy the safety and security that a group tour brings, having a trip leader who is looking out for them, and can point them in the direction of great places to eat, things to do, and where the nightlife is.

With an average group size of 30 (and a max of 48), Get Social trips will see travellers stay in sociable accommodation like hostels, visit multiple destinations with tour options in Europe, North America and New Zealand, and participate in social,

group-focused activities - ideal for forming fast-friendships!

Get Social trips include welcome and farewell dinners, breakfasts on select days, and walking and driving tours of bucket-list sights with the group.

This fast-paced trip style is perfect for travellers wanting to get a feel for a number of countries and cultures.

A Get Social trip takes travellers to the must-see A-list sights, giving them ideas for where they'd like to come back and explore further in the future.

The Big European, for instance, is a fast-paced itinerary that whisks travellers to 14 countries in 27 days, including England, France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany and more.

The Big European guarantees tons of socialising, bucket-list sights, and good times all round.

Get Social trips are perfect for the spontaneous, go-with-the-flow traveller who is eager to form fast friendships with other travellers.

FIND THEIR STYLE

To arrange for a Topdeck training session with one of our BDMs email:

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For more detail on all of the Topdeck trip styles click [HERE](#).



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