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MTA JACQUI VINCENT

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news and a front cover page from AFTA.

NTIA support is key

THERE are just four more sleeps until the Australian travel sector can once again celebrate the long-awaited National Travel Industry Awards (NTIAs).

The awards organiser AFTA is taking the time on the eve of the big event to thank the generous support of the many NTIA sponsors - especially Major Sponsor Singapore Airlines.

"We're particularly grateful to Singapore Airlines for their support of travel's night of nights," AFTA CEO Dean Long said.

"The travel industry is built on nurturing and reinforcing relationships, and the value of their contribution, and those of every single one of our 23 generous sponsors, isn't going unrecognised by AFTA or any of our members," he added.

Long has also called out the endurance and tenacity of Australian travel professionals, all of whom will be celebrated on Sat at the ICC Sydney.

"The NTIA 2022 event has been months in the making, and we can't wait to see everyone this Sat as we meet to celebrate excellence, survival, and the generosity and passion that define Australia's travel professionals," he said.

See the full list of NTIA sponsors on the **front page** and learn more about the upcoming NTIA night on **page five**.

Tonga back in biz

IN GOOD news for Aussies dreaming of a trip to Tonga, the South Pacific island nation has now fully opened its borders.

Pre-departure and arrival COVID-19 testing have been scrapped, while the state of emergency and most COVID-19 restrictions have also been lifted.

HLO steadies the ship

HELLOWORLD Travel has posted a 352% growth in Total Transaction Value (TTV) for the Sep quarter when compared to the same period last year, with the travel company raking in \$561 million for the three months (**TD** breaking news).

TTV increased in volume month-on-month during the quarter, while revenue was also up by 175% to close to \$30 million, and EBITDA climbed to \$4.6 million in Australia and \$500k in NZ.

The continued recovery of the business saw HLO's wholesale and inbound division benefit from a strong return domestically for hotels and tour operators, as well as an encouraging trajectory in international travel, while the retail arm of the company

in Australia enjoyed a 395% growth in response to borders restrictions rescinding across a number of popular northern hemisphere markets.

Helloworld also said it is expecting cruise bookings to boost its sales strongly as more capacity arrives in Australian waters over the coming months.

The total number of members on deck at the end of the Sep quarter stood at 2,051, showing a gradual drop off on 2,064 member noted in Jun 2022 and 133 fewer than Sep 2021.

Looking forward, Helloworld said its growth prospects will benefit from having no external borrowing and strong liquidity, thanks largely to the proceeds of the Corporate Travel Management sale, freeing the business up to invest in key technology programs.

These include enhancements to its wholesale systems Mango and Ready Rooms, its air tickets booking engine, and retail agency platform ResWorld, all designed to improve productivity.

La Vie signs up two

INDEPENDENT hotel manager La Vie Hotels & Resorts will take management control of two Victorian properties after signing a deal with the Accor-affiliated Amber Property Group.

Under the terms of the new agreement, The Sebel Melbourne Ringwood and soon-to-relaunch The Motley Hotel in Richmond will now both be managed by La Vie, a testament Amber Property says to the Sydney-based company's growing expertise in urban fringe locations in cities such as Melbourne.

While The Sebel Melbourne is a well established brand, the 80-room The Motley was originally operated by Accor under its Peppers branding, but will launch again to the market with its new boutique-style identity just in time for Christmas.

We're back for good

INTREPID is announcing to Australia that 'travel is back for good' with its first local brand campaign in over two years.

The marketing collateral rolls out across Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland this week, and will run for two weeks until 12 Oct.

The push is designed to appeal to Aussie travellers' desire for responsible and sustainable travel, and comes as new data from the Intrepid Travel Index revealed that 89% of Australians are likely to choose sustainable travel options on their next trip.

More Disney cruises

AUSSIES have one last chance to experience the magic of Disney on board *Disney Wonder* over the next two years, with two more Transpacific voyages announced.

The 13-night itinerary from Honolulu to Sydney, departing 13 Oct 2023 and priced around \$3,950ppts, as well as the 15-night sailing from Sydney to Honolulu, departing 16 Feb 2024 and priced from \$4,800 per person, twin share, go on sale this Thu 13 Oct.

ETC hops on client

EVOLUTION Travel Collective (ETC) will now represent Asian cycling specialist Grasshopper Adventures in the local market.

The operator offers small group and self-guided cycling, bike and boat tours in countries like Japan, Thailand and Vietnam, with the brand keen to be front-of-mind with Aussie travel agents as it embarks on expansion plans.

"Getting active whilst immersed in the sights, smells and sounds, travelling by bike is without doubt one of the best ways to get out and enjoy Asia," ETC's Chief Executive Pete Rawley said.

"We all now recognise the importance of responsible travel and cycling is the perfect way to see Asia, whilst also being an environmentally-friendly traveller," he added.

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Alliance feels turbulence

ALLIANCE Aviation has recorded a dip in its underlying profit before tax for the 2022 financial year, with the company posting a \$5.7 million decrease to \$45.3 million.

The results for the Qantas acquisition target (**TD 05 May**) were discussed in an address to shareholders this morning, with Chairman Steve Padgett noting the last 12 months were still seeing the aviation sector, and Alliance, recover from the lingering impact of the pandemic.

“Those effects manifested themselves in a number of ways that negatively impacted... our business, and included wet lease capacity available but not utilised, staff training programs delayed and deferred, as well as continued staff illnesses,” he said.

Adding to the impacted result was also the statutory \$7.1 million loss before tax Alliance incurred on the disposal of the

Fokker 50 fleet.

Despite the challenging conditions, the aviation business managed to increase revenue by 19% to \$367.5 million for the 2022 financial year, as well as an uptick in underlying operating cash flow to \$91.8 million.

Padgett also revealed that the business now has “significantly more capacity” coming online for growth across FIFO, wet lease, and charter flights, as well as an “operational fleet and staff that are perfectly matched to continue to provide the quality services for which we are recognised”.

With regard to the potential Qantas takeover still before the ACCC, Alliance confirmed the offer at \$4.75 (to be paid in Qantas shares) is fully supported by the board and remains in the best interest of shareholders.

MEANWHILE shareholders voted in favour of reelecting Director David Crombe.

Virtuoso signs on

THE Express Tickets platform, powered by Aeronology, has signed a deal with Virtuoso to be the luxury travel network’s regional service provider for Australian and New Zealand-based members.

As a result of the tie-up, Virtuoso travel sellers will gain access to shop-and-book functionality, the Express Tickets team, the airline ticketing service solution, and benefit from premium fares negotiated on their behalf by Express Tickets.

“The rapidly changing air distribution landscape in Australia & New Zealand has given us cause to respond on behalf of our members who are looking for choice and convenience in relation to air ticketing arrangements,” Virtuoso GM ANZ Fiona Dalton said.

“It makes sense for us to welcome best-in-class air service providers to our valued community,” she added.



Window Seat

AUSTRALIA is no stranger to constructing large tourism monuments, but perhaps the Canadians have outdone the likes of the Big Banana and the Big Prawn with their giant statue celebrating the Cheeto.

The monument saluting the iconic snack treat which leaves your fingers bright orange has been built in the small town of Cheadle in south Alberta.

So why there we hear you ask as you munch on Cheetos, well PepsiCo Canada said the brand name for the orange powder is Cheetle - close enough I guess.



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Dairy Flat added

DAIRY Flat Lodge in Victoria's Daylesford spa country has been adopted into the membership of Luxury Lodges of Australia.

The stand-alone private villa is owned by the Wolf-Tasker family, who also own the nearby Lake House, a popular culinary retreat, and Dairy Flat Farm, a 38-acre farm that practises regenerative agriculture and sustainability.

The lodge offers exclusive use for groups from two to 12 guests, with six luxury suites, kitchen, bar, reading and dining rooms.

Four of the suites are in the main lodge building, while two suites are in the original high-gabled barn, offering views across the vineyard to the forest beyond.

The property is marketed to guests celebrating special occasion events, as well as casual gatherings, private retreats, and multi-generational get-togethers.



Falling dollar, no worries

THE Australian dollar may be weakening but the appetite for travel among Australians continues to grow stronger, a recent study by Money Transfer Comparison has found.

Despite the national currency hitting new lows over recent weeks and a bleak economic outlook amid global recession fears, Australians aren't being deterred from embarking on overseas holidays.

In fact, the independent panel survey of 1,000 Australians revealed that almost two-thirds of the country's population (62%) still intend to go through with their international travel plans, even if the dollar were to continually decline further over the next 12 months.

According to the research, younger Australians are the most steadfast when it comes to maintaining holiday plans, with only 33% of 18 to 34-year-olds saying they would forfeit international travel plans due to increased cost, compared to 37% of 35 to 54-year-olds and 42% of respondents who are aged 55 years or older.

South Australians were more likely to travel internationally in the next 12 months regardless of what the AUD is doing, with 70% saying they would still forge ahead with international travel plans, compared to 67% of NSW and WA respondents, 62% of Victorians, 54% of Queenslanders, and 49% of ACT respondents.

Founder and Managing Director of Money Transfer Comparison, Alon Rajic, believes Aussies' "unwavering commitment" to overseas travel is due to increased savings and a pent-up wanderlust after being stuck in their own backyard for over two years thanks to COVID restrictions.

"While the data shows there will be some impact, it is pleasing to know it will not be significant enough to create a crisis in the travel industry," Rajic said.

"The weakened Australian dollar will likely bring on increased tourism within Australia from int'l countries such as the US."

WS inks KE c'share

CANADA'S second biggest airline WestJet has expanded its codeshare agreement with Korean Air, with the updated deal to see its code added to Korean's flights to/from Toronto Pearson and Vancouver travelling to Seoul Incheon Airport.

The codeshare flights are able to be booked through WestJet's website, call centre, and agent partners, and represent the Canadian carrier's first two-way codeshare with an Asian airline.

Victor Hbr glamping

NRMA Victor Harbor Beachfront Holiday Park along South Australia's Fleurieu Peninsula has added six new glamping Safari Tents, offering direct access to the beach and views of Encounter Bay.

The spacious new beachfront tents can fit up to four guests, and offer king and twin beds, ensuite bathrooms, and a fully equipped modern kitchen, as well as an outdoor bathtub and firepit.



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Travel Daily

Airport accessibility

WESTERN Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport has committed to providing Australian travellers with disabilities with access to quality facilities.

As part of the early design phase, the airport said that engineers and designers are working with consultants and local groups like Wheelchair Rugby to better understand common issues based on lived experience.

“Accessibility needs to be considered to cater for the needs of the one in six Australians living with a disability,” the airport said.

Tourists with a disability spend an estimated \$3.2 billion a year, with the segment’s true value likelier to be closer to \$8 billion when including the person’s accompanying travel party.

The latest pledge from Western Sydney International follows ambitions to be the most technological and eco-savvy aviation hub in the country.

Air NZ boosts Japan

AIR New Zealand has announced it will increase the frequency of its non-stop service between Auckland and Tokyo from three to six times a week beginning 12 Dec, before increasing to a daily service from 13 Feb next year.

Prior to the pandemic, Air New Zealand operated 13 return flights to Japan every week through New Zealand’s peak season.

The airline’s General Manager Longhaul, Scott Carr, said the reopening of Japan’s international borders comes at an ideal time for Kiwis, with autumn being a major tourism season and New Zealand’s national rugby union team, All Blacks, set to play in Tokyo on 29 Oct.

According to Carr, the Kiwi carrier has seen a strong uptick in interest and bookings from New Zealanders following the news of Japan’s reopening, with the airline also planning to market NZ as a key destination for Japanese.

Agents enjoy unique Morocco



THE Unique Tourism Collection recently hosted agents on a family trip to Morocco with destination management company Experience Morocco, visiting in Fes, Rabat, Marrakech and The Atlas Mountains.

Experience Morocco offers fully customisable travel itineraries with a range of activities exploring the cuisine, artisanship, architecture, wellness, adventure, history, and religion of the North

African country.

Pictured enjoying a cool drink overlooking the main square in Marrakech: Marouane Naim, Experience Morocco; Hassane Oulkadi, guide; Liza Noakes, Travel Associates Paddington; Philip Smethurst, Bicton Travel; Sandra Di Benedetto, MTA Travel; Svetlana Jovanovic, The Unique Tourism Collection; Dana Michael, Y Travel; and Michelle Rawlinson, MTA Travel.

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MEL security error

A SECURITY breach at Melbourne Airport this morning delayed at least nine flights and forced around 1,000 passengers to be re-screened.

The chaos was caused by one person who, according to Qantas, “inadvertently entered the terminal without a security screening”, leading to the airline disembarking at least one loaded plane to be screened again.

Guessing a guest

IHG is inspiring travellers to “take a break from having to do it all” and “embrace true-to-life travel moments” with its new global loyalty campaign, ‘Guest How You Guest’.

The push, which promotes the recently revamped IHG One Rewards program, has rolled out across Sydney and Melbourne airport, digital & social media, Australian shopping centres, and billboards across New Zealand.

US airports breach

AT LEAST 13 US air travel websites were out-of-action yesterday, including those for Hartsfield-Jackson International in Atlanta and Los Angeles International Airport, following a targeted attack by Russian hacktivist group, Killnet.

Some of the targeted websites were offline for a brief period of time, ranging from under an hour to up to a day, with no indication that any lasting damage was caused, or that any internal airport operations were affected.

Stay on the Opera

MSC Cruises’ *MSC Opera* ship will act as a ‘floating hotel’ in Doha, Qatar between 19 Nov and 19 Dec, for soccer fans who are visiting to watch the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

The 1,075-pax vessel will join *MSC World Europa* and *MSC Poesia*, which will also be berthed in Qatar during the period.

AFTA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



WELL here we are, only four sleeps from the industry’s night of nights. This Sat, 1,200 people will pack the ICC ballroom in

Sydney, for the return of NTIA, with the support of Singapore Airlines. As we come together on Sat evening, we celebrate the achievements of our employees, businesses and peers. It is the one night of the year where competitors share in each other’s successes and celebrate the critical role we have in the Australian economy.

The event will be kicked off by Qatar Tourism, Qatar Airways & Visit Qatar, bringing an exciting cultural experience to Sydney.

Our secret judges will be on the lookout for the best-dressed and best suited to win accommodation by IHG in Qld.

CVFR is again hosting our photo booth and these photos will be featured on the 32-metre screens inside the ballroom.

The always gregarious Richard Reid, Hollywood gossip guru, will

be our emcee for the evening, injecting energy and fun into the night’s proceedings.

We are also excited to be introducing the ATAS champions lounge where finalists, winners and employees of ATAS businesses will be able to network, while enjoying exclusive Singapore slings.

In this area, our winners will celebrate with their teams and speak exclusively to *Travel Daily* for our live videos.

Express Travel is again supporting our entertainment and what a line up we have!

Attendees will be delighted by the spell-binding talents of six aerial performers across intermission and enjoy live music by Groove Academy throughout the evening.

Naturally, we hope everyone will let their hair down and dance the night away once formalities are completed, with Groove Academy bringing the beats to the largest dance floor in NTIA history. #NTIA2022 will be different from 2019 but one thing remains the same, the opportunity to celebrate what a great industry we work in!

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MONEY

WELCOME to Money, *Travel Daily's* Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US\$0.629

GROWING fears of global recession and rising COVID-19 cases in China prompted the Australian dollar to tumble to its lowest level in two-and-a-half-years yesterday.

Spending by Australian households also fell in Sep for the first time since the Reserve Bank started to raise interest rates, the Commonwealth Bank has revealed today.

Additionally, the ANZ-Roy Morgan Australian Consumer Confidence Index declined by 1.2% last week to its lowest level since mid-Aug.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.629
UK	£0.649
NZ	\$1.131
Euro	€0.649
Japan	¥91.81
Thailand	฿23.92
China	¥4.507
South Africa	11.40
Canada	\$0.868
Crude oil	US\$92.64

Intrepid previews Bosnia tour



INTREPID Travel's Global Corporate Communications Manager, Lucy Siebert, along with a group of travel industry partners (**pictured**), was recently able to experience the adventure travel company's new Bosnia and Herzegovina Expedition, which formally launches in spring 2023.

The eight-day itinerary was created in partnership with USAID Developing Sustainable Tourism in Bosnia & Herzegovina (Turizam) and The Global Travel and Tourism Resilience Council to support and develop sustainable tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Highlights of the journey include a white water rafting trip down the Neretva River, a wild horse-spotting expedition in the foothills of Mount Cincar, a Bosnian cooking demonstration and dinner in Sarajevo, and a visit to Josip Tito's bunker - an underground nuclear shelter from the Yugoslav era.

Siebert observed after the trip that she "can't wait to see customers experiencing the natural, cultural and historic highlights of this fascinating country", and thanked Intrepid's partners and media friends for "an unforgettable week".

Easter Island damage

A **FOREST** fire has caused "irreparable and immeasurable" damage to monolithic carved stone figures known as 'moai' on Rapa Nui-Easter Island last week, for which the Chilean island is famous for around the world.

The blaze, which the mayor blamed on locals, swept through 104 acres and affected around 20% of the island's 800 moais, accelerating the process through which the iconic figures will eventually turn to stone.

Qatar FIFA pop-up

QATAR Airways is bringing the excitement of the much-anticipated FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 to football fans in Melbourne via an interactive pop-up at Queensbridge Square on 15-16 Oct.

The installation will give fans the opportunity to test their skills against world-class Brazilian football player, Neymar Jr., and learn more about the history of Qatar and the tournament.

Fans will also be able to share their pop-up experience on social media for a chance to win a FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 travel package including match tickets.

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