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## Australia fuels MH rebound

**EXCLUSIVE**

**THE** Australian market has become Malaysia Airlines' "top performer" during the carrier's recovery, Chief Marketing & Customer Experience Officer Yin May Lau has told *Travel Daily*.

Throughout the year, MH has been lifting the frequency of its services to Australia, with the KL-Sydney route moving to daily in Apr (**TD** 24 Mar).

By the end of the year, the airline anticipates it will be back to 95% of pre-pandemic capacity to Australia, Lau revealed, adding the airline has barely been able to keep up with demand.

"It really is way ahead of the other regions," she said.

"When the border restriction was lifted back at the start of the

year, Mar, Apr, everybody was jumping on board, to the extent we actually needed more flights," Lau enthused.

"We've worked very closely with the airport authorities, as well as [Tourism Australia] to make sure we are able to manage the inbound, to make sure that [passengers] will have a seamless experience."

Aiding a boost in demand for travel to Malaysia is the airline's Bonus Side Trip program (**TD** 24 May), which allows Australian passengers to add an extra domestic leg to their int'l journey.

Lau confirmed this program had sold "through the roof" for the carrier, and if performance justifies, the program may be increased in size in the future.

"The idea is really to get visitors to spend more days exploring the beauty within Malaysia...more people frequenting places like Langkai and Penang," she said.

"We will be happy to expand that provided that we will see the performance of it.

"We need to see this is a product that has a good uptake, that our passengers and customers in [Australia] are loving it, and we will then extend it."

## VA ADL/DPS returns

**VIRGIN** Australia has today announced the relaunch of flights between Adelaide and Bali, with the year round route to recommence on 14 Dec, providing over 70,000 additional seats to Denpasar each year.

Economy Lite sale fares lead in at \$399 return as part of a launch promotion, with VA Chief Strategy & Transformation Officer, Alistair Hartley, saying the Adelaide flights reflected strong demand for the destination from other ports including Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne.

VA will also launch Gold Coast-Bali flights in Mar 2023.

## Rail promo extended

**RAIL** Europe is extending a travel agent incentive in line with a Swiss Travel Pass promo offering a four day adult pass from CHF199.

Up to \$250 cash per month is on offer when booking European train tickets from 19 Sep-31 Oct - see [agent.raileurope.com](http://agent.raileurope.com).

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## Manch takes TIME out in Vic



**THE** Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) last week held a networking event at Intrepid Travel's office in Melbourne, which was attended by more than 25 guests, including a mix of graduates, mentors and first-time guests interested in learning more about the mentorship experience.

Intrepid co-founder Geoff Manchester was guest speaker for the event, inspiring the audience with his career journey and involvement in building the travel company to where it is today.

Issy Limn, recent TIME graduate and newly appointed Key Partnerships Manager for Intrepid Travel, emceed the event, sharing her journey with the audience.

Managing Director at Evolution Travel Collective and TIME graduate Ingrid Berthelsen added, "it's great to see growing interest in TIME from our Melbourne industry community with many attendees coming along for their

first TIME event.

"We are looking forward to future events and having more Melbourne based mentees and mentors participating in the program," she said.

**Pictured:** Kate Jury, Topdeck/BackRoads; Isabel Limn, Intrepid; Geoff Manchester, Intrepid Travel; Piers Charters Wood, Amadeus IT Pacific; and Ingrid Berthelsen.

## AA gets hacked

**AMERICAN** Airlines has confirmed it has been the victim of a data breach, in a "phishing scam" which saw an undisclosed number of employee email accounts compromised.

The carrier said the incident had seen hackers granted access to the personal information of a "very small number" of pax including names, addresses, phone numbers, birthdates, emails and passport numbers.



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## Tahiti roadshows

**TAHITI** Tourisme is inviting Australian travel advisors to two exclusive "Tahitian Soirees" in Sydney and Melbourne next month, featuring about a dozen key partners from the destination.

Participants will also have the opportunity to win prizes, with a grand prize open to Tahiti Specialist Agents who have completed the e-learning module at [tahitisppecialist.org](http://tahitisppecialist.org).

The Sydney event takes place at the Pullman Hyde Park on 24 Oct (**CLICK HERE** to register), followed the next day at the InterContinental Melbourne (register by **CLICKING HERE**).

Dedicated workshops for wholesalers are also being organised by the tourism board, with more details available on [info@tahititourisme.com.au](mailto:info@tahititourisme.com.au).

## China shift needed?

**AUSTRALIA** needs to invest more time and resources into attracting tourists from markets like Japan to help mitigate the fall in tourist numbers from China, according to a joint paper published by Charles Darwin University and Griffith University.

The paper claims that Chinese tourism growth stagnated even before the souring of relations in 2020, with the trends set to worsen due to ongoing political and economic tensions.

Access the full report **HERE** and read more about travel and tourism developments regarding China on **P3**.

## Korea QF specials

**QANTAS** this morning launched a Seoul Fly Away Sale in conjunction with the launch of its new non-stop services to South Korea on 10 Dec this year.

Discounted Economy and Business class fares are on offer for bookings made before 27 Sep - see [qantasagencyconnect.com](http://qantasagencyconnect.com).



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## Window Seat

**RELAXATION**, a few drinks, perhaps a lucky streak at the roulette table, these are the types of benefits travellers expect from a holiday to Vegas, but finding your exact double while taking a dip in the pool is a far less likely scenario.

But that's exactly what happened to Sean Douglas McArdle at the Flamingo, who noticed people pointing at himself and another man, who not only was the spitting image of Sean, but was also wearing the same hat and glasses.

When posted online, one user wrote: "you're supposed to fight to the death when you see your doppelganger", to which Sean quipped, "we did, I'm now dead".



## China ready for return?

**AFTER** years of isolation, China has revealed it is finally drawing up a draft proposal to restart tourism to the country.

The once-popular Australian outbound market and former number one source destination for tourists Down Under indicated through its Ministry of Culture and Tourism overnight that some tourism sites will initially be opened along the Chinese border.

No dates or location details have yet been released, with China's fledgling return to tourism likely to be capped and run through a select list of approved Chinese tour operators.

Only "select foreign tourists" will also be sanctioned in the initial intake, casting doubts over whether Australia will make the first cut given the strained relationship between the two countries in recent years.

Up until now, China has only permitted inbound visitors holding specific work visas and foreign students with valid residence permits to enter the country, with its hard line on mitigating COVID resulting in stringent border policies and

sporadic lockdowns of cities.

The scant nature of the announcement means at this stage it is unknown whether those entering would have to follow China's quarantine rules, which currently mandates one week of hotel quarantine and three days of home observation.

State think-tank, China Tourism Academy, was noncommittal in its recent tourism predictions.

"I think cross-border tourism will recover, though I can't predict when," the body said, adding "it depends on the COVID situation and the effects of virus control measures".

## VA bolsters wi-fi

**VIRGIN** Australia has flagged the introduction of high-speed in-flight wi-fi over the next 18 months, with the rollout to kick off just before the Christmas holiday break.

The carrier said the move was motivated by internal survey data it carried out, which suggested one in three leisure guests, and almost half of Business class customers, believe wi-fi to be a "very important" feature while travelling.

Business Class, Beyond and Velocity Platinum guests will be able to access the service for free, while a nominal fee will be charged for Economy passengers.

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## QF simplifies food

ONLY single meal/snack options are available on shorter Qantas flights due to recent changes made by the airline to help reduce the service stress for its crew members.

However, Qantas has been copping flak on social media for its lack of vegetarian options as a result of the change, with the airline responding, "if the option on a particular flight is not suitable for vegetarians, we try to offer an alternative small sweet or savoury vegetarian snack".

The carrier also told *Travel Daily* that on longer flights, customers can pre-book a range of special meals including vegan, gluten and dairy-free options.

## New Namibian camp

ULTIMATE Safaris has launched Camp Sossus, a new camp in the heart of the Namibian desert with six en suite tented guests rooms and desert swimming pools.

## TNZ platform eyes Oz

TOURISM New Zealand (TNZ) has revealed it is examining the prospect of bringing its new digital marketing program to the Australian market, following the initiative's successful cut-through in New Zealand.

Launched in partnership with Australian agency The Pistol and Meta (Facebook) during the height of the pandemic while international borders were closed, the platform offers tourism operators new ways to reach travellers, displaying "dynamically-personalised" Facebook ads to people who research tourism experiences on [newzealand.com](http://newzealand.com).

The ads showcase relevant tourism offerings and lead users directly to operators' own websites to book.

Since the initial trial began in May 2020, the platform has achieved over 5,000 conversions, driving as much as NZ\$19 in

revenue for every dollar of ad spend and resulting in over NZ\$7 million worth of bookings for 69 participating tourism businesses.

The platform also allows operators to track sales performance in real-time via an intuitive dashboard, including how much traffic Tourism New Zealand is driving to its website and how many purchases are being generated.

"TNZ is committed to supporting recovery and the industry and this project has been successful in driving a significant increase in bookings during a time where industry needed it most," Chief Executive Rene de Monchy said.

Now that the borders are open, TNZ is currently exploring when the platform will be available to new participating operators, including those in Australia.

Last month, the Kiwi tourism body launched a new global campaign (*TD* 17 Aug).

## Air NZ earnings

AIR New Zealand has revealed it is expecting to generate between NZ\$200 million to NZ\$275 million in earnings before tax and other significant items for the first half of the 2023 financial year.

The estimated figure is based on the assumption that the airline's strong forward sales over the first three months of the financial year continues over the coming quarter, and is also contingent on a similar capacity and an average jet fuel price of around US\$130 per barrel of crude oil.

In its half-year earnings guidance for FY23, the Kiwi flag carrier revealed it continues to operate at around 70% of 2019 pre-COVID capacity.

The airline said it will not provide full year guidance at this stage, noting "highly volatile" fuel prices as just one factor that may impede its recovery and impact earnings, along with "highly uncertain" demand in the second half of the financial year.



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## Autopilot EV air taxi plan

**THE** world of Urban Air Mobility (UAM) is heating up, with Boeing announcing a concept of operations to navigate the technological, regulatory and social issues involved in launching unmanned aircraft linking airports with key urban locations.

In a joint venture with advanced air mobility company Wisk, Boeing said that to successfully launch the first all-electric, self-flying air taxi fleet, it would first need to ensure vehicles can be operated in a safe and sustainable way at scale.

“Uncrewed operations will be fundamental to realising that vision, and we have to exceed the current safety standards for the air transportation system,” Boeing Vice President and Chief Engineer of Sustainability & Future Mobility Brian Yutko said.

Aircraft would be automated to reduce the load on air traffic controllers and pilots, and they would fly day and night under

visual or instrument flight rules, and be supported by automated onboard and ground-based systems.

The concept of operations is also seeking to form the bedrock principle around affordability for travellers, while the creation of new infrastructure such as vertiports, where UAM aircraft can take off and land, also crucial to the vision of the concept.

“The important work we’re sharing today provides a stepping stone in the advancement of UAM in the United States and the world,” Wisk CEO Gary Gysin said.

“The vision we have outlined is the result of many years of collaboration with Boeing, the FAA, NASA and key industry stakeholders and as a result, this document offers the most comprehensive framework proposed to date with a vision for enabling UAM in the national airspace,” he added.

View the full strategy [HERE](#).

## Chimu takes on the outback



**THE** Co-Founder and Managing Director of Chimu Adventures, Chad Carey, has teamed up with Josh Penny, Co-founder & CEO at Actegy Health, to take part in the Shitbox Rally 2022 to raise money for the Cancer Council.

The duo will travel across the outback from Mackay to Darwin in ‘Mona’, Chimu Adventures Marketing Manager Meg Hall’s beloved 1984 Toyota Corona, which she drove in last year’s rally.

The charity rally will see participants and their cars, worth no more than \$1,500, travel at their own pace over seven days across Australia’s vast countryside, with each night spent camping under the stars.

All teams participating in the Shitbox Rally, which is the largest community-led fundraiser for Cancer Council Australia, will raise a minimum of \$5,000, with the

2022 Spring rally target set at \$2.5 million - over half of that target has already been raised, with the rally set to wrap up on Thu.

To raise money, the two-man team is giving away prizes in a raffle, including two seats on an Antarctica scenic flight valued at \$6,390, a rare bottle of first batch single malt from Launceston Distillery valued at around \$500, and a Revitive Medic Coach Circulation Booster, worth \$649.

There are a maximum of 200 raffle tickets available for \$20 each, or three for \$50, with the winners to be drawn live on Facebook on Fri 23 Sep - you can make a donation [HERE](#).

## Hilton MICE series

**THE** newly opened DoubleTree by Hilton in Shah Alam i-City, Malaysia, has launched the hospitality company’s first-ever MICE series, which addresses the topic of sustainability with a panel of industry leaders on a quarterly basis.

The debut event took place on 25 Aug under the theme of food sustainability, which saw Hilton partner with key food vendors to highlight the “provenance, authenticity, and healing qualities” of the food served, and featured locally-grown produce, workshops run by Hilton’s partnering vendors and a Chef’s Table blind tasting session.

## Sustainable events

**THE** Melbourne Convention Exhibition Centre has signed the Exhibition & Events Association of Australasia Sustainable Events 2030 Pledge in a commitment to make environmental sustainability practices central in the events industry.

The pledge outlines goals to be achieved by the end of 2023 and 2025, covering seven key impact areas during the planning and delivery of exhibitions & events.



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# Agents experience Viking Med voyage

VIKING'S Leon Hill and Keira Smith recently hosted a group of travel agents on their popular eight-day *Ancient Mediterranean Treasures* ocean voyage from Istanbul to Athens.

Visiting historic cities and UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the group experienced a variety of authentic shore excursions immersing them in the local way of life, with the *Taste of Cretan Hospitality* excursion in Crete being a group highlight, before ending with an overnight stay in Athens.



THE excited group in the Atrium onboard *Viking Sky*.



A SPECIAL day in Crete included a visit to a stunning winery where the group participated in nine local wine tastings.



A PRIVATE dining experience in the Chef's Table onboard *Viking Sky*.



VIKING'S Keira Smith and Leon Hill outside the famous Blue Mosque in Istanbul.

JON House from Travel Associates Runaway Bay eating his way through the dessert menu in Manfredi's Italian Restaurant.



DARIAN Foot from Phil Hoffman Travel enjoying the many wines on offer (and the beautiful surroundings).



THE group enjoying the delicious snacks on offer at the Taste of Cretan Hospitality Excursion in Crete.

### New Thai pads

**DUSIT** International has announced two luxurious new private residence accommodation options as part of the creation of Dusit Central Park in the middle of Bangkok.

The project will also include a five-star Dusit Thai Hotel along with a premium retail complex and office space, all connected by a 11,200m<sup>2</sup> Roof Park sky garden located between levels three and seven of the 69-storey Dusit Residences and Dusit Parkside project overlooking Lumpini Park and the Bangkok skyline.

The development is set for completion in 2025.

### Tundra to Table

**QUARK** Expeditions has launched a new Tundra to Table Inuit Culinary Experience during its Epic High Arctic itinerary aboard *Ultramarine* this month.

Developed in partnership with Inuit chefs, the on-ship culinary experience allows the sharing of culture through food, according to Quark Director of Expedition Experience and Innovation, Alex McNeil.

Quark is also currently offering deals as part of a Sep sale with travel advisors offered \$1,400 in bonus commissions - [CLICK HERE](#).

## VIRTUOSO CONNECTS IN AUSTRALIA

**THE** first local series of Virtuoso On Tour events in Australia since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic saw more than 370 travel advisors from across the country connect with 34 of the group's global preferred partners.

Conducted last week, the program included a new smaller-scale format called "Virtuoso Connects" in Adelaide which brought members and suppliers together in an intimate dinner at the Mayfair Hotel.

Then the traditional "Virtuoso On Tour" events kicked off in Brisbane at the Emporium Hotel last Tue, followed the next day at Melbourne's Park Hyatt and then Sydney's Fullerton on Thu.

GM Virtuoso ANZ, Fiona Dalton, said last month's Virtuoso Travel Week in Las Vegas had reminded delegates about the "power of human connection".

"Coming home to deliver our first On Tour event in Australia with so many international



partners wishing to reinvest for the first time since the pandemic in our advisor community in this source market has been both joyful and emotional to witness," Dalton said.

Research released during Virtuoso Travel Week showed a strong correlation between advisor sales performance and the number of Virtuoso events they attend each year - primarily due to the quality of connections

which are forged as a result.

"It's up to us here in Australia to ensure we do our part to create those opportunities to bring the right partners with the right products to the right members at the right time," Dalton said.

**Pictured** at the Sydney event are the Wentworth Travel attendees Sandra Pelekanakis, Gabrielle Thackray, Anna McMurtrie and Lynn Mayer with Virtuoso's Jen Pagett.

### Marriott plots APAC luxury hotel expansion

**MARRIOTT** International will add 14 additional luxury Asia-Pacific properties by the end of 2023, with the portfolio including brands such as W Hotels, The Luxury Collection, Ritz-Carlton, St Regis, EDITION, Bulgari and JW Marriott.

The expansion includes The Ritz-Carlton, Melbourne which is set to open in early 2023, along with St Regis properties

in Jakarta, Qingdao and Goa.

There's also the highly anticipated W Hotel Sydney in the Darling Harbour precinct, along with JW Marriott hotels in Bengaluru, Goa, Jeju and Xi'an.

Bulgari Hotels & Resorts will also make its debut in Tokyo next year, with 98 luxurious guestrooms, while the first Southeast Asian EDITION hotel will open in Singapore.

### EVA Air upgrade

**TAIWANESE** carrier EVA Air is offering Economy class passengers the opportunity to pay for Business class meals, as part of a new menu created by veteran Taipei chef Huang Ching Biao and Joe Huang.

The meals are available for pre-order for US\$25 on flights from Taipei to the US, Canada, Europe & Australia.

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## OQTA relocates

**OUTBACK** Queensland Tourism Association (OQTA) has relocated its offices to the Local Government House in Brisbane, a move designed to strengthen partnerships with 19 councils.

"A fully networked approach to marketing, advocacy, product development and experience delivery...[will] deliver the best outcomes for our region," OQTA Chair Andrew Martin said.

OQTA's footprint covers more than 930,000km<sup>2</sup>.

## GL, FI partnership

**AIR** Greenland has partnered with Icelandair to allow passengers to book connecting trips via each airline's website, after signing a letter of intent to seek "common opportunities for cooperation that will link the two companies' networks".

Additionally, Air Greenland announced plans to introduce a new seasonal route between Kangerlussuaq, Greenland and Billund, Denmark, launching for the first time on 29 Mar 2023.

## Dropping in on Kota Kinabalu



**INTREPID** Travel Chief Financial Officer Michael Burnett recently caught up with the adventure tour company's Malaysian team during a trip to Kota Kinabalu.

Burnett said it was "fantastic" to spend 10 days with his 15-year-old son as well as 10 Intrepid customers during what he dubbed "an experience that we will never forget."

In a post on LinkedIn, Burnett said, "travel has reopened to this stunning part of the world and they are delivering a fantastic product to our customers."

"If you haven't been to Borneo do yourself a favour and come."

**Pictured:** Michael Burnett (centre) with Intrepid's Kota Kinabalu team.

## 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](mailto:accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au).



Guests staying at the **Playford Hotel - MGallery** in Adelaide can now dine at the newly opened Luma Restaurant and Bar, which features an 800m handcrafted lighting sculpture as its centrepiece, as well as long tables spanning the venue's massive columns and cosy booths. The European share-inspired menu offers both express and a la carte menus, featuring organic and free range breakfasts, coffee, French pastries, gin, craft beer, and fine wine.



After nine months of extensive renovations, **Anantara Veli Resort Maldives** is set to re-open on 01 Dec. The adults-only resort will reveal new-look accommodation including a new 'Beach Pool Villa' category, refreshed restaurants and spa, and a new wellness concept. A new restaurant will also open on the property, Cumin, offering authentic Indian Ocean cuisine, joining the fully renovated Japanese restaurant, Origami, and the oceanfront Dhoni Bar.

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IHG Hotels & Resorts is preparing to open **Hotel Indigo** in Tokyo's Shibuya district in late 2023. The hotel will be located at the top of a large, mixed-use complex, featuring 272 guest rooms, a neighbourhood cafe and bar with an outdoor terrace, and a fitness centre. Rooms on the upper floors will offer panoramic views extending as far as Mount Fuji and Tokyo Sky Tree. There will also be a coffee shop for eat-in and take-out near the third floor entrance.

## Lennox Head luxury

**REFLECTIONS** Lennox Head Holiday Park has announced a brand-new luxury Glamping Precinct for travellers seeking high-end accommodation while getting back to nature.

Set to open in Nov, the precinct will offer two bell tents as well as four glamping tents, which are tent-cabin hybrids featuring timber interiors, an ensuite and private balcony bathtub, a kitchenette, and room for four campers in a queen-sized and two single beds.

The four-person glamping tents are priced from \$165 per night, while the two-person glamping bell tents are available from \$150 per night (subject to peak seasonal rates).

For further information regarding bookings, **CLICK HERE**.

## Tassie hails recovery

**TASMANIA'S** tourism industry is making a strong rebound, achieving a record visitor expenditure of \$270.2 million for the month of Jul, which is double the pre-COVID spend in Jul 2019.

The state reached a significant milestone six months earlier than expected, generating \$2.5 billion in total visitor spend for the year to Jul 2022, according to the latest Tasmanian Visitor Survey.





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