



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features nine pages of the latest news including our **Sustainability** page and a photo page from **Qatar Airways**, plus a full page from **The Travel Junction**.

VA Vanuatu deals

AUSSIÉS can score return fares to Vanuatu from just \$459, thanks to Virgin Australia's new sale marking the relaunch of its service to the Pacific Island nation.

The airline will operate up to five direct flights a week in peak periods, and up to three times weekly in off peaks, between Port Vila and Brisbane using its Boeing 737-800 aircraft.

The resumption of the route, which had been paused for three years due to the pandemic, is Virgin's latest step in rebuilding its short-haul international network, and comes after the carrier launched its new Gold Coast-Bali route last week (**TD** 30 Mar).

AW bolsters Uniworld

THE Travel Corporation (TTC) brands Adventure World (AW) and Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection have partnered to offer guests customisable pre- and post-cruise journeys.

Thanks to the new tie-up, immersive cruise extensions await guests travelling to South America, Asia, Africa, and Europe, and includes a Kenyan safari, and Insider Galapagos trip, an Arctic Lights itinerary, and the Taj Wildlife Safari, complementing a sailing down the Ganges in India.

"We're bringing a collection of extraordinary journeys to life that pair beautifully with our Uniworld itineraries, meeting our guests' desire for new and unique travel experiences," said Uniworld President & Chief Executive Officer Ellen Bettridge.

"In addition to record-breaking sales this year, we've seen a trend of guests seeking opportunities for longer and more immersive

getaways, led by the success of our new Rivers of the World itineraries.

"This answers the call, and advisors can feel comfortable knowing their clients' journey begins and ends with TTC, whom they've entrusted their customers with for generations."

Adventure World Managing Director Neil Rodgers added that "as a company we want to make travel sustainable for the long-term, knowing that tourism can have both an exceptionally positive and potentially negative impact on people, wildlife, and the planet.

"When Uniworld guests travel with Adventure World, they will be experiencing the destination in the most authentic way possible, which is a natural extension to the Uniworld experience."

To learn more about the customisable pre- and post-cruise extensions on offer, **CLICK HERE**.

Win a trip to NZ!

THE Travel Junction is giving agents the chance to win a Christchurch trip for two including return flights from SYD, MEL or BRIS - see the **back page**.

Free Singapore tours

VISITORS to Singapore can once again enjoy the free Singapore tour, with Changi Airport Group (CAG), Singapore Airlines (SIA), and the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) relaunching the offer after a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19.

The promotion is available to Changi Airport transit and transfer pax, with several tours to choose from, including a brand-new Changi Precinct Tour, which introduces travellers to the eastern region surrounding the airport, such as the Tampines heartland.

Each tour lasts 2.5 hours and will be available daily, with plans to gradually increase to nine tours a day - for info, **CLICK HERE**.

SCENIC^o
LUXURY CRUISES & TOURS

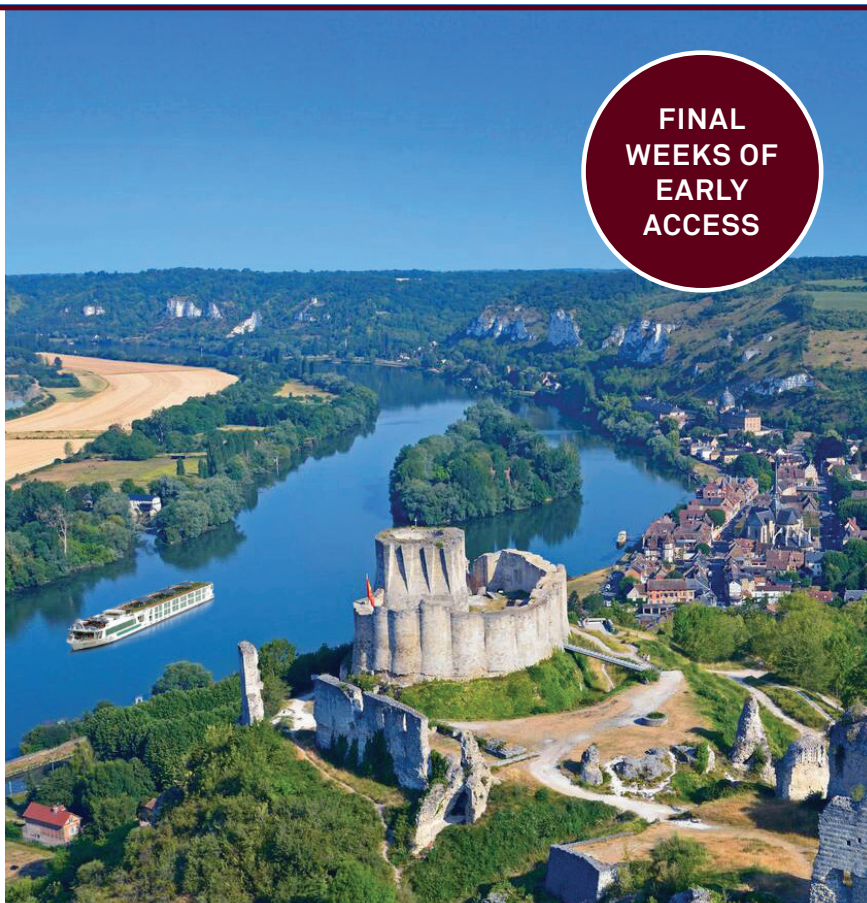
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Tourism WA dreams big



TOURISM Western Australia hosted more than 400 travel trade attendees last week at its Dream WA Roadshow, which visited Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney and Auckland.

The events gave 24 local operators from across WA the

opportunity to showcase their products and experiences, including Australia's Coral Coast, Luxury Outback Tours, Mabu Buru Tours, Mackerel Islands, Perth Wildlife Encounters and Salt and Bush Eco Tours.

The roadshow events highlighted new global tourism brand 'Walking on a Dream', which promotes the state as a "dreamlike place" for visitors (*TD* 06 Sep 2022).

There were also great prizes on offer, including a 12-day safari with Adventure Wild Kimberley Tours, accommodation provided by Crown Perth Resort and the InterContinental Hotel, scenic flights with Swan River Seaplanes and a Willie Creek pearl pendant.



Amadeus' big ticket

GLOBAL airline ticket consolidator, AERTICKET, has chosen Amadeus as its preferred technology partner, extending their existing partnership with a new multi-year agreement.

As part of the deal, the consolidator will fully integrate the Amadeus Travel Platform to provide NDC-sourced content to its travel agency customers.

AERTICKET will also use a jointly developed solution based on Amadeus Search Technology, which enhances the ability to find competitive fares through "machine learning and computations".

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"Robust" ATAS key driver

EXCLUSIVE

THE "inherent robustness" of the Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) has been the main factor in several new AFTA members joining this year, the Federation said.

Last week AFTA confirmed the ongoing expansion of its ranks (*TD* 31 Mar), with CEO Dean Long saying he's pleased that last year's independent review of ATAS was bearing fruit in terms of increasing the scheme's reputation across the sector.

"ATAS is a nationally recognised and respected symbol of professional excellence in travel," Long said.

"As the industry peak body, the role of AFTA is to continually elevate standards in travel, so ATAS is not, and never will be, a pay-to-play rubber stamp," he added, noting that all ATAS members are benchmarked against strict criteria in a rigorous process covering audits of

submitted financials, monitoring of consumer complaints and a formal dispute resolution process.

Long said that ATAS members recognise "the value of legitimate third party endorsement...it provides a proven platform for public recognition of professional and ethical conduct, serving to strengthen the reputation of accredited businesses".

He also highlighted the value of the industry having a united voice with government at all levels.

"ATAS enables individuals to add their voice to these collective discussions," Long noted.

Recent additions to the AFTA ranks include Sri Lankan specialist tour operator Tropical Lanka Getaways, luxury destination management agency Destination Artisans and Qld agency Clout Travel, with the newbies citing ATAS' strong reputation, ongoing education via AFTA and the basic credibility that being part of ATAS adds to their businesses - see **p6**.

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French travel advice

ATOUT France is reminding travellers and travel agents to stay up-to-date with potential travel disruptions by checking in with the Federal Government's Smartraveller website **HERE**.

While protests in France over a decision to raise the retirement age have continued to rage for over two months, Atout said the demonstrations are mainly taking place in the big cities in a well regulated way, with an average of one day of protests taking place a week.

Travellers to France should also understand protests that have spilled into violence have been largely localised to Paris and isn't reflective of the wider country, Atout told **Travel Daily** - the next Paris rally is planned for 06 Apr.

Get to the chopper in the NT!



Photo credit Melissa Furley.

TOURISM NT's Round Up event for agents soared to new heights yesterday, as the group of advisors took to the skies on board helicopters to take in the majesty of Kings Canyon.

The rides, conducted by Professional Helicopter Services, flew high above the chasm which is almost as deep as Uluru is high, with agents taking in the sheer sandstone cliffs, ancient cycads and permanent waterhole known as the Garden of Eden.

The operator offers three flights over Kings Canyon, all within the reach of most travel budgets, including the eight-minute Canyon Dash which gives tourists an aerial peek into the heart of the canyon.

Pictured: Miriam Schreiner, Tourism NT (far right) with agents on the Round Up.



Photo credit Melissa Furley.

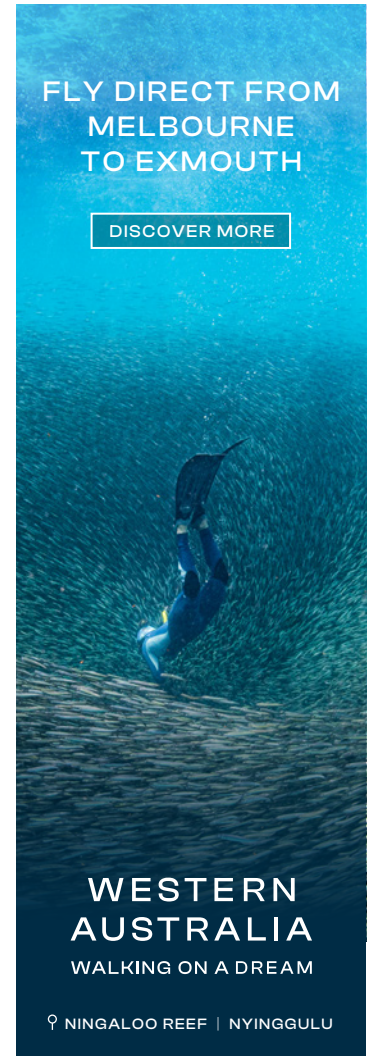
A star has fallen

STAR Sydney chief Scott Wharton, who was tasked with overhauling the casino after it was found unfit to hold a licence (**TD** 17 Oct 2022), has announced his sudden resignation after just eight months into the role.

Star Entertainment Group Chief Executive & MD, Robbie Cooke, revealed there will be a leadership restructure to split Wharton's portfolio into two, with his replacements to be named soon.

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Cash will endure: Travelex

EXCLUSIVE

DESPITE the focus Travelex is placing on its digital products, Chief Executive Officer Richard Wazacz has insisted physical currency is not dying out.

Speaking to *Travel Daily*, the Travelex boss said rather than cash abating, travellers feel more comfortable when there is a range of payment solutions available when heading overseas.

“Ultimately, cross-border international travel is the place where cash usage will decline last, because whilst you might be confident in the digital payment solutions that work in your own country, you can’t be sure yet whether those systems and methods will work elsewhere,” he explained.

“In some markets, such as certain Southeast Asian markets, cash remains king - nearly two-thirds of point-of-sale payments

in Thailand are still made using cash, for example.

“Even in more developed nations the majority of transactions are made using cash, such as Japan.”

Australia may prove to be one of the markets which continues to keep cash alive, Wazacz pointed out, declaring the country a “key market” for Travelex.

“As Australia is a long distance from other international destinations, Australians tend to travel for longer and therefore take more foreign currency with them,” he noted.

“The average transaction value for Australians is larger than in other markets around the world.

“The region will continue to be a key focus for Travelex.”

The company’s growth of its Australian proposition includes enlarging its distribution model and partnering with organisations such as Australia Post.

Regent really makes you think



LAST night Regent Seven Seas Cruises was a key sponsor of a special ‘Think’ thought-leadership event for *Qantas Magazine* readers.

Regent hosted some of its key industry partners at Sydney’s hottest new harbourside restaurant, Sala, with the dinner featuring a fascinating panel discussion on how businesses can do better by embracing diversity

and inclusion in their operations.

Pictured from left at Sala are Kendal Thomas from American Express; AFTA CEO Dean Long; Robert Berville from Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings; Regent Seven Seas Cruises chief Lisa Pile; CLIA MD Joel Katz; Rachel Kingswell from Travel Associates; Matt Vince, Regent Seven Seas Cruises; and Norwegian Cruise Line VP Ben Angell.

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Window Seat

WOULD you like to stay in a \$20 million luxury villa for free?

Cleaning brand MACH is offering a weekend away in a glamorous Tamarama pad in Sydney's eastern suburbs without charge - but there's just one catch.

Once guests arrive at the plush digs, they will need to clean up the dirty floors on arrival.

Fortunately, guests will be able to make use of the brand-new MACH V1 Ultra, the world's first cordless stick vacuum with a built-in steam mop.

Once you're done cleaning up, you'll be able to enjoy the property's five bedrooms, nine bathrooms, a home cinema, a 25-metre swimming pool, and plenty of bespoke art.

Check out the deal [HERE](#).

Most travellers disrupted

MOST Australian travellers experienced disruptions to their overseas holiday plans last year, according to new research commissioned by Southern Cross Travel Insurance (SCTI).

Three in four (74%) Aussies experienced an issue with their international plans in 2022, with an illness other than COVID-19 as the most common issue experienced (43%).

Other problems included airline-related issues such as lost luggage, flight delays or cancellations (38%), followed by COVID-19-related travel disruption (36%).

Those who travelled within Australia were slightly better off, with nearly six in 10 (58%) reporting a disruption to their travel or travel plans in 2022, with airline-related hindrances named as the most common cause (36%).

The average insurance claim cost through SCTI last year for

domestic travel (\$1,584) was 24% higher than the average claim cost for international travel (\$1,281).

The insurance company's CEO, Jo McCauley, attributes the slight difference in claim costs to the rising prices of domestic flights and accommodation in Australia.

"With the cost to travel not showing any signs of reducing, it's just not worth taking the risk and travelling without insurance either domestically or internationally," she added.

Mexican Spice route

CAMINOS Travel & Tours has partnered with Tamaleria & Mexican Deli's owner and cookbook author, Rosa Cienfuegos, to launch a new 14-day foodie expedition.

The 14-day Mexican Spice tour takes travellers through Mexico's culinary scene in Jun - email hola@caminos.com.au for info.

Mildura takes flight

BONZA'S new twice-weekly route from the Sunshine Coast to Mildura has taken off, a service the carrier claims will save travellers 40 hours of car travel and hundreds of dollars.

On 08 May, Bonza will launch its Melbourne to Mildura service.

Manchester new tax

MANCHESTER has introduced a City Visitor Charge that sees tourists having to fork out an extra £1 per room, per night, for accommodation costs.

Manchester's City Council said the levy would raise around £3m a year to form a fund to improve the visitor experience, focusing on enhancing conferences, street cleanliness and tourism marketing campaigns.

The UK city's accommodation sector is set to grow rapidly over the next few years, adding roughly 6,000 new rooms to current hotel volumes.

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A greener Cathay

CATHAY Pacific has affirmed its ongoing commitments and progress to achieving its sustainability goals in its latest sustainability report.

Titled *Greener Together*, the report details the carrier's belief that strong partnerships and collective action will be the most important drivers towards a sustainable future in aviation.

Highlights from the Hong-Kong-based carrier include the launch of Asia's first major corporate SAF program; achieving a 56% reduction of single-use plastics used on a per-passenger level compared to its 2018 baseline; and becoming the first commercial airline to be listed on the 2023 Bloomberg Gender-Equality Index.

Cathay Pacific also introduced a week-long Mental Health and Wellbeing Festival last year.

Read the full report [HERE](#), and for more sustainability news, see [page seven](#).

New Harbour cruises

JOURNEY Beyond's Darwin Harbour Cruises has launched two new cruising experiences, kicking off on 18 Apr and running until 11 Jun.

The line's open-air vessel will host the all-inclusive two-hour Tumlaran Sunset Cruise, available seven days a week for \$130 per person, in addition to the Tumlaran Brunch and Bubbles cruise, a two-hour brunch voyage departing daily from Tue to Sat, priced at \$109 per person.

UK slashes pax duty

THE UK Government has cut its Domestic Air Passenger Duty in a bid to encourage carriers to expand their networks and bolster UK air connectivity.

The decision sees the levy cut from £13 to £6.50 per passenger on domestic flights, effective from 01 Apr, with a likely rise to £7 from 2024 in line with the rising retail inflation index.

AFTA UPDATE

from Nina Hedges, Compliance Manager



AS WE approach the end of what's been a hectic first quarter of the year for all of us, I'd like to

make you aware of what happens when a business is no longer ATAS accredited.

ATAS is an important sign of your credibility both to the public and within the industry.

ATAS accreditation is a sign that a company is financially stable, committed to best practices in the handling of complaints and is a respected business within the travel sector.

In 2019 the ATAS website was visited more than 300,000 times by those searching if a business was ATAS accredited as part of their purchasing process.

Whilst we aren't back at those figures yet, the month-on-month growth on ATAS searches in 2023 is a point of difference for those that are ATAS accredited.

With so many members, consumers, suppliers and regulators relying on ATAS, we have a responsibility to ensure these stakeholders can

easily identify changes in the accreditation status of a business.

In nearly all cases, changes in status occur due to a business closing or due to voluntarily withdrawing from the scheme.

In the case of a voluntary withdrawal, and if a business continues to trade, then it's very much in the interests of those relying on ATAS as part of their verification process to be aware that this business is no longer accredited and therefore listed as a voluntary withdrawal on the website.

For a business that is closing, we provide support by ensuring that a business is responsibly settling their obligations to their customers, suppliers and government.

In this case, there is no consumer harm or detriment to the scheme if a business leaving ATAS is not published on the ATAS website.

Should your business be in either situation, we encourage you to get in touch.

Your ATAS accreditation is a statement to consumers that you're dedicated to operating your businesses at an elevated level and are being held accountable to this.

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Eco-friendly Oz

AUSTRALIA has ranked fourth in a new eco-friendly destination survey conducted by Agoda.

Over 13,000 people from more than 10 countries took part in the *Sustainable Impact Survey 2023*, which asked respondents to rank countries based on their sustainability efforts.

More than half of the Aussies surveyed (60%) gave their home country the highest sustainability rating, while Japan and Korea ranked Australia in second place, and Singapore placed Down Under in third position.

Australians considered Japan and Singapore as the top two and three eco-friendly destinations respectively, while Japan took the top place overall.

Other strong performers included Thailand & Taiwan.

SUSTAINABILITY KEY FOR SILVERSEA

THE planned 2024/25 deployment of Silversea Cruises' new *Silver Nova* (render pictured) is in no small part due to the affinity of the Australian market for sustainable product and the vessel's strong environmental credentials.

Silversea CEO Barbara Muckermann is in Sydney this week, and told *Travel Daily* *Nova's* design as the world's first "multi-hybrid" ship will see it emit a staggering 40% less greenhouse gases.

"These are factors that resonate strongly with Australian cruisers - more so than some other markets," she said.

As well as operating using MGO (Marine Gasoil) and LNG (liquefied natural gas) the ship will have onboard battery facilities which facilitate "peak shaving" to reduce emissions, heat recovery from waste



incineration and it will also be the test-bed for "aggressive prototyping" of a hydrogen plant which is ultimately hoped to deliver 4MW of power - enough to run the ship's entire hotel operation.

Muckermann said the hydrogen fuel cell may not be available on delivery, with work continuing on developing and certifying the new technology.

After the launch of *Nova* a sister ship called *Silver Ray* will boast

similar sustainability credentials, with Silversea also having options for two more ships in the class.

The *Nova* deployment is part of Silversea's largest ever planned local season, with the near newbuild joining *Silver Moon* for the summer season, while *Silver Cloud* will operate on the Kimberley next year in place of *Silver Explorer* which leaves the fleet later this year.

More from Silversea in today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

Radisson, CarbinX

RADISSON Blu Mall of America, part of Choice Hotels International, has become the first hotel in the world to install CleanO2's CarbinX, a carbon-capture technology unit.

The unit captures greenhouse gas emissions from heating equipment and converts it to a nontoxic carbonate powder known as pearl ash, which is then recycled and used in soaps.

Australia still Striving 4 Sustainability

ECOTOURISM Australia has partnered with the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) to highlight sustainable tourism experiences through the ATDW online platform.

Tourism businesses that have completed their Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard will have their score shown on their ATDW profile to demonstrate their commitment

to sustainable tourism.

The Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard, launched by Ecotourism Australia in partnership with Tourism Australia late last year (*TD* 17 Nov 2022), assesses tourism businesses against four factors, including sustainable management, environmental impacts, socio-economic impacts and cultural impacts.

HA updates plan

HAWAIIAN Airlines has committed to replacing 10% of conventional jet fuel with Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) by 2030, as part of its roadmap to net-zero by 2050.

The updated plan also includes a commitment to lowering life-cycle jet fuel emissions intensity per revenue tonne mile by 45% (from 2019 levels) by 2035.

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Getting their backsides trackside!

THE freshly-minted global Formula 1 sponsorship by Qatar Airways led to plenty of opportunities for industry motor racing enthusiasts to experience the roar at last weekend's Melbourne Grand Prix.

Other industry players including MSC Cruises and Singapore Airlines also made the most of the moment, with corporate hospitality opportunities abounding thanks to suppliers such as Keith Prowse Travel & Tours, which offered a comprehensive program of popular packages.

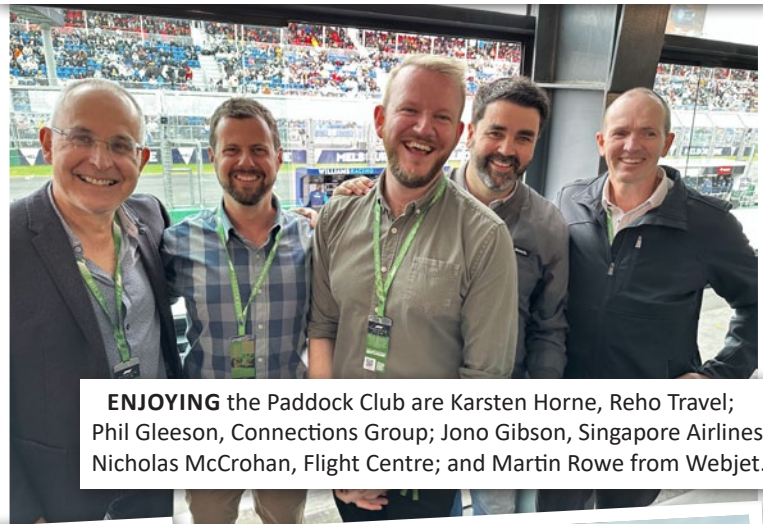
Travel Daily was there too, and captured some of these photos over the three-day F1 weekend.



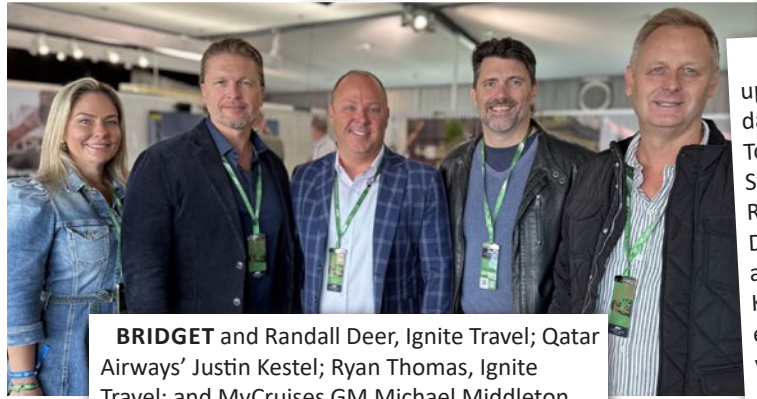
HEADING down to the pit lane for a practice session: Caroline Hitchen, Creative Cruising; Michael Middleton, MyCruises; Ryan Thomas, Ignite Travel; Noriye Oto, Arrivia; and Bridget Deer, Ignite Travel.



CHRIS Malina & Alexandra Pisker from Helloworld Travel with Glenn Wilcox of Corporate Travel Management.



ENJOYING the Paddock Club are Karsten Horne, Reho Travel; Phil Gleeson, Connections Group; Jono Gibson, Singapore Airlines; Nicholas McCrohan, Flight Centre; and Martin Rowe from Webjet.



BRIDGET and Randall Deer, Ignite Travel; Qatar Airways' Justin Kestel; Ryan Thomas, Ignite Travel; and MyCruises GM Michael Middleton.

THE F1 wrapped up a busy few days for Qatar Tourism's Richard Styles, Steve Reynolds from Discover Qatar and QR's Justin Kestel, pictured earlier in the week together at a Sydney event.





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MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.678

THE Australian dollar has surged overnight, gaining 1.5% against the USD in its highest climb since 06 Jan, just ahead of the decision of Reserve Bank of Australia later today.

Aided by the boosted price of crude oil, both the AUD and NZD have seen sharp gains.

Meanwhile, the RBA is due to meet at 2.30pm today with a chance of hiking the interest rates again.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.678
UK	£0.546
NZ	\$1.077
Euro	€0.622
Japan	¥89.97
Thailand	฿23.22
China	¥4.665
South Africa	12.09
Canada	\$0.911
Crude oil	US\$79.74

Transcend eyes Aug

TRANSCEND Cruises will be deploying the former *Crystal Mahler* vessel under the new name, *Transcend Advance*, which will charter private groups on the Rhine and Moselle in Aug.

The 110-guest luxury ship was not initially planned to enter service in 2023, but the company's founder, Matthe Shollar, confirmed the change of schedule during the Wed's panel at Seatrade Cruise Global.

With wider deployment to come in 2024, the vessel will seek to take advantage of rising demand.

Good Reef, these suites are sweet



OUTRIGGER Reef Waikiki Beach Resort has unveiled its new Coral Reef Penthouse Suite in the all-new Diamond Head Tower (**pictured**), as part of the latest phase of its US\$80 million transformation.

Designed as a "quintessential beach house", the new suite features an indoor/outdoor design, offering a large living space, including a spacious oceanfront patio furnished with plush chaise lounges, day beds and a trendy dining table.

The suite can sleep up to eight adults, with three primary bedrooms and three oversized bathrooms, plus a sleeper sofa, and a third bedroom and bath located on the suite's first floor, as

well as a full-sized kitchen.

A stay at the suite includes entry to the resort's exclusive Voyager 47 Club Lounge, which offers complimentary breakfast and evening pupu (appetiser) alongside chilled craft beers and cocktails.

Tassie Off Season

TOURISM Tasmania has launched a new campaign to promote what the state has on offer during the winter season.

The campaign aims to attract visitors by showcasing its unique destinations, vibrant events and distinctive creative spirit including the popular Dark Mofo festival.

View the campaign **HERE**.

HBA runs it back

THE Hobart Airport Marathon Festival returned to the Tasmanian capital on Sun.

Last year's event recorded over 1,450 participants, with nearly 300 of the competitors arriving from interstate.

The Tasmanian Government will said it will inject \$130k through the Event Attractions Fund to continue to support the annual event over the next few years.

Aerus to take off

FROM 27 Apr, Mexican start-up Aerus will launch up to 450 monthly flights to five regional routes from its base at Monterrey International Airport.

The airline will service a fleet of Cessna Grand Caravan EX aircraft with capacity for 19 passengers through to destinations like Ciudad Victoria, Matamoros, Piedras Negras and Tampico.

It's the way we look

NEW Zealand's iconic landscape and scenery remain its precious assets in attracting visitors from across all markets.

A study conducted by Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) has found that its natural scenery and culture are the most appealing factors for visitations to the country.

However, the data also showed that a lack of awareness of NZ might be putting off travellers from taking a trip to the country, with TNZ to continue seeking solutions to encourage travellers.

"Overall, preference for New Zealand among those actively considering visiting is at an all-time high of 44.6%...tourism will be an important contributor to the country's recovery, and we are working hard to position New Zealand as an attractive destination," said TNZ Chief Executive, Rene de Monchy.

TAT scores big four

FOUR prominent online platforms will help the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to boost tourism to the country.

Agoda, Alipay, Klook and KKDay will inject promotions and campaigns to spike tourism, with each platform responsible for various categories such as offering discounts through its channels & hosting events in various destinations.

"This joint marketing initiative with world-leading online platforms is in response to changes in tourist behaviour and in line with the TAT's aim to elevate the quality of Thailand's tourism industry with technology and innovation," said TAT Governor, Yuthasak Supasorn.



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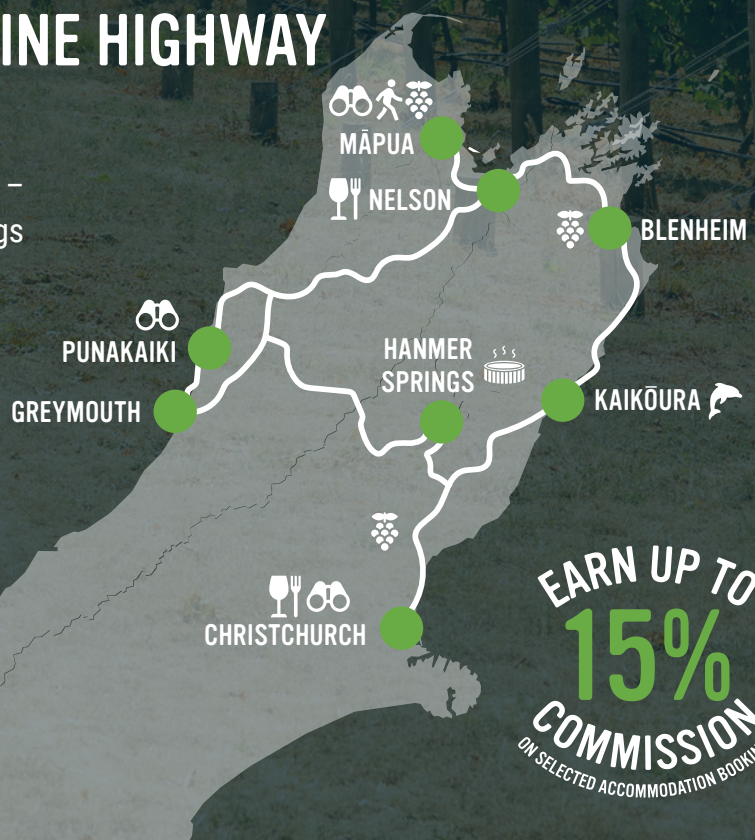
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