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Thursday 13th Apr 2023

Journey to the NT

JOURNEY Beyond is enticing travellers to explore the vast landscape of the Northern Territory by train, on an allinclusive adventure on The Ghan.

Couples can save up to \$900 on the four-day, three-night The Ghan Expedition, which travels through the Red Centre from Darwin to Adelaide.

Departures for 2024 are now available to book - for details, see the **front page**.



CTM wins big in the UK CORPORATE Travel announced in London overnight,

Management (CTM) this morning confirmed it has been awarded a British Government contract with an estimated TTV of about \$3 billion over two years.

Described in an ASX release as an "award of material customer contract", CTM's successful tender for the UK Home Office's Bridging Accommodation and Travel Services Contract was

Logo gets accredited

THE Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) today released a new logo (pictured) to coincide with the 01 Apr commencement of the CATO Accreditation Scheme (TD 06 Mar), which automatically applies to any membership renewals.

The new program launched on 01 Apr as a "fit-for-purpose program for the Australian land supply sector", with CATO Board Member Aaron Pointon stating "it is important to understand that when booking through a CATO Accredited Member, there are protections available under Australian Consumer Law that do not exist when booking directly with foreign-based DMCs and suppliers".

CATO MD Brett Jardine said the new logo will allow members to "proudly display their CATO accreditation when dealing with the trade and or consumers", with membership renewal rates up significantly on this time last year. announced in London overnight, although it actually commenced effective 26 Feb.

The company said the work involves "highly complex services and logistic support that will be delivered by an already established team within CTM that has both the experience and specialised knowledge to support this work".

The contract relates to record levels of asylum-seekers arriving in the UK via small boats, while at the same time officials are dealing with unprecedented demand for accommodation from other refugees and migrants under Britain's Ukraine and Afghanistan relocation schemes.

CTM is being tasked with sourcing accommodation and transportation services for the project over the next two years, with the contract also envisaging a possible 12-month extension.

Southern Ocean Lodge open in Dec

BAILLIE Lodges has confirmed that its Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island is preparing to reopen on 06 Dec.

The luxury property has been fully rebuilt following its destruction by bushfires three years ago (*TD* 06 Jan 2020).

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of news including a special Tourism NT feature, Business Events News, plus a cover page from Journey Beyond and a full page from Silversea Cruises.

Silversea upgrades

FOR a limited time, clients can enjoy a two-category suite upgrade on Silversea's oceangoing voyages, or a one-category suite upgrade on Expedition cruises, as well as US\$1,000 shipboard credit per suite.

Additionally, the luxury cruise line is offering 15% reduced deposits on a global collection of itineraries departing Oct 2023 through May 2024.

For more, see the **back page**.



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Bon voyage, Mr Benhamou

EXCLUSIVE

PATRICK Benhamou, the longtime local head of the French Tourist Bureau (Atout France), has confirmed that his 44-year association with the organisation is over (TD breaking news).

Benhamou returned from Paris just this morning after receiving the news, telling TD it had been confirmed that "my 44-year-old French Government contract is coming to an end".

His tenure commenced decades ago when he opened the French Tourist Bureau in Australia in 1979, which was followed by several overseas assignments with the organisation, including roles in Canada and The Netherlands.

Mandarin Oriental appoints Aussie PR

MANDARIN Oriental Hotel Group has nominated hotel and hospitality specialists PEPR Agency to manage its communications in Australia and New Zealand.

The Hong Kong-based hospitality group operates 36 hotels and nine residences in 24 countries and territories, with openings this year including the company's second London hotel and Mandarin Oriental Costa Navarino on the Athenian Riviera. New projects for the hotelier in continental Europe, the Middle East and mainland China are also

in the pipeline.



However Australia called him back, and over the years he developed a stellar reputation for hospitality and bonhomie as he showcased destinations across France and leveraged partnerships with a host of the country's premium brands.

A successor is set to be announced in the coming months, but in the meantime the Australian Atout France office will be overseen from Japan.

Travel Daily has prepared a special photo tribute highlighting just a few of the more than 700 events Benhamou organised on behalf of France and its overseas territories - see page 6.

Sabre United NDC

SABRE today announced the availability of NDC offers from United Airlines via its GDS platform including Sabre Offer and Order APIs, the Sabre Red 360 agency point-of-sale system and the GetThere OBT.

Sabre said travel buyers will be able to access UA continuous pricing content, as well as more descriptive info & seat selection.

Bonza to Port Mac

BONZA launched its Port Macquarie service vesterday, with the new route to run twice weekly from the Sunshine Coast on Wed and Sat.

The low-cost carrier will also launch twice weekly flights to Port Macquarie from its second base at Melbourne Airport.

The new route is the 16th to launch as Bonza progresses towards having all 27 routes in action by 23 May.

Minimal cyclone impact in Kimberley

THE massive Cyclone Ilsa, which is bearing down on the WA coast between Broome and Port Hedland, has so far only had minimal impact on travel plans.

APT told TD that it has made alternative arrangements for its small expedition ship. MS Caledonian Sky, to ensure guests are kept away from the storm's impact, adding that it is "keeping in close contact with our team on the ground in Broome, the ship's captain and authorities in the area, and as the situation evolves we will have more details".

Meanwhile BKB Holidays has confirmed the impact so far has been limited, with only one booking affected to date.

"We will monitor the outcome of the cyclone and if any damage will affect our guests in the coming weeks," a spokesperson for BKB Holidays said.

The cyclone is forecast to make landfall in WA today.



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Outrigger acrobatics

THE showroom venue at Outrigger Waikiki Beachcomber Hotel in Hawaii is set to become the stage for exclusive Cirque du Soleil shows from next year.

The news follows a new multiyear residency entertainment deal which will see guests at the famous Hawaii hotel entertained with circus-like acrobatics from the famous French-Canadian act, drawing on the rich culture of the Hawaiian islands as inspiration for the show.

For the concept to become a reality, Outrigger Waikiki has submitted permits to redevelop its showroom to create an 800seat theatre, equipped with a modern audio-visual system, with Hawaii-based architect G70 appointed to handle the revamp.

More details will be shared in the coming months about the show's name, entertainment concept and sale dates, with a target date of Dec 2024 slated for the show's debut.

Axis blasts QF/EK alliance

AN AUSTRALIAN Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) submission from Adelaide-based Axis Travel Centre urges that the proposed Qantas/ Emirates alliance extension (*TD* 30 Jan) should be rejigged from the "currently substandard relationship that is biased towards the commercial interests of Qantas and Emirates".

In the document obtained by **Travel Daily**, Axis MD and industry veteran Max Najar, notes that "the continuation of any partnership between the carriers in its current form will detract from the choices and availability of fares, routes, choices and quality services available".

"Having such strong market share allows QF/EK to also control the market prices that consumers pay - as we discover that, coincidentally, other carriers increase their airfares also, usually in the same week... consumers lose, airlines win."

Click here for an information pack

Najar noted that under the current regime, the airlines are able to amend, cancel, and rebook to non-connecting flights without paying any compensation to consumers, and with no money at all payable to the travel agents who do most of the behind-thescenes work 24/7.

He urged the ACCC to mandate better communications to the travel industry and clients in the event of delays, as well as the establishment of a travel agency advisory board to better assist customers and the industry.

Najar also highlighted product inconsistency between the airlines, and a lack of clarity and certainty in terms of lounge access and luggage allowances.

The ACCC is continuing to consider the extended QF/EK pact, having recently granted interim authorisation (*TD* 24 Mar).



TRAVEL brands better take advantage of TikTok before it gets banned by the Federal Government, especially in light of new evidence that users of the platform are more likely to travel to a destination after seeing it featured in a post.

New data from marketing agency MGH suggests that Americans were 60% more likely to take a trip to a city or country after viewing it as part of a TikTok video.

Close to 20% of those surveyed said they have travelled to a new city they saw on TikTok, while 12% attended a festival or state fair after seeing it on the platform.

With the social media platform accused of spying for the Chinese Govt, the time to promote is, ergh, ticking.



FLY YOUR WAY

From the 3rd of March 2023, Fiji Airways will offer customers the option to customise how they travel based on their needs with four categories, **Lite**, **Value**, **Comfort**, **and Plus**.

All categories will include meals, beverages, inflight entertainment and a carry-on bag, with increasingvalueadd-onsfromLitetoPlus, such as checked baggage, ticket change and cancellation flexibility, seat selection and boarding priority.



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Thursday 13th Apr 2023

Biometric tech the focus

MORE than half of the world's airports will either have implemented or plan on having a single, secure biometric token for all touchpoints by 2025, according to SITA's new *Air Transport IT Insights 2022* report.

By the same year, 63% of airports will have self-boarding gates in place using biometric technology exclusively, while 76% of aviation hubs said they would have self-boarding gates in place.

The biggest investment priorities over the next two years include touchless biometric solutions for passengers, better mobile and digital apps, more self-service tools, as well as protection against cyber attacks.

Airport budgets are also expected to see more funding dedicated towards IT over the next two years, with 75% of respondents confirming a planned increase in spend, while only 7% said they would decrease outlay, and 18% suggested spend would remain the same.

Selong Selo Oz rep

INDONESIAN resort Selong Selo has appointed Slojourn Studio to oversee its digital marketing, trade distribution and PR in Australia and New Zealand.

Situated in Lombok, the luxury property consists of 35 villas and luxury tents offering infinity pools and magnificent views across Selong Belanak Beach and Bay, along with a club house, fitness centre, spa, kids' club, and more. Meanwhile the report also revealed that around a third of carriers have no plans to implement satellite broadband connectivity for passengers despite close to half of players already going live with the tech, while one in five airlines also noted there were no plans to install wireless in-flight services.

The area of least technological investment on board was wearable services, with only 1% of carriers currently offering the tech, and one in four committing to some offerings by 2025.

Examples of wearable technology include smart watches and medallions.

AAT Kings rejigs

AAT Kings has restructured its marketing team this week, announcing a number of new appointments and promotions.

The changes see Di Morgan lead the team as General Manager of Group Marketing, after joining the company in 2021 as Head of Customer, while Alison O'Loughlin has been promoted to the role of Head of Digital Marketing & Data from Head of Customer.

Nikki Bruce has also shifted up the ranks, moving from Senior Group Marketing Manager to Head of Marketing.

Additionally, Michael Woods has been welcomed as Partnerships & Industry Marketing Manager, where he will develop and maintain relationships with key industry partners.

ESCAPE unveils a new look

NEWS Corp Australia's travel brand *ESCAPE* is preparing to publish a new format featuring additional content and an updated design.

The new-look edition will debut on Sun 16 Apr in *The Sunday Telegraph* (NSW), *Sunday Herald Sun* (Vic), *The Sunday Mail* (Qld) and *The Sunday Mail* (SA), with the revamped issue to include more editorial content, with new features including 'Why I travel', where jetsetters, cruisers, experts and celebrities reveal their reasons for exploring the world, and 'Hour by hour', a curated guide to navigating a city in only one to three days.

There will also be eight themed issues released annually, with the first of the special editions set to come out in May, dedicated to North America.

"ESCAPE will be the ultimate destination for Australians who are more eager than ever to

Sir David travel game

EXPLORE Worldwide has asked travellers to find out how 'David Attenborough' they are in a new online game, where players can compare their travel history with that of the beloved nature presenter for a chance to win a once-in-a-lifetime adventure.

The Explore team analysed over 100 episodes of Attenborough's documentaries to create an interactive map representing all of his visited destinations (totalling 333 locations in 83 countries), with players able to enter their own list of travelled-to destinations to compare.

The data revealed that the average Explore customer is 37% David Attenborough, having visited 29 countries, with all 12 of the top-visited countries in Europe, apart from the US and New Zealand.



travel...this new look will create the most premium weekly travel product in Australia," General Manager Travel Industry Product and Partnerships Liz Glover said.

The overhauled magazine will be promoted by a contentled consumer marketing campaign, which will roll out this weekend across print, radio and subscription TV.

Rail Europe free days

RAIL Europe is offering one and two additional free days of travel between 15 Apr and 13 Nov for bookings for four- or eight-day Swiss Travel Passes.

Those who book from this Sat to 14 May are eligible for the offer, with prices starting from \$340 for kids and \$481 for adults - **CLICK HERE** for further details.

Air Mauritius to beef up Perth flights

A THIRD flight will be added by Air Mauritius from Perth Airport from 09 Dec, with the extra service to London to operate until 27 Jan 2024 to cater for the high school holiday demand.

The airline has also added extra services to Geneva & revealed a move of its operations to London Gatwick Airport from 29 Oct.



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Thurs 13th April 2023

Content produced in collaboration with Tourism NT

THE Northern Territory has worked hard behind the scenes over the past couple of years to ensure it throws plenty of light on its vast tourism appeal.

The jewel in its brightly coloured crown is arguably the immersive light and sound installation called Light-Towers, which has started illuminating the Discovery Kings Canyon Watarrka National Park property this month.

Thanks to a partnership between G'day Group and acclaimed British-Australian light artist Bruce Munro, visitors can now enjoy 69 two-metre towers that change colour in response to music emanating from within the structures, taking guests on a unique visual journey.

But Munro's mastery of light does not end in Kings Canyon, with Uluru also playing host to the spectacular Field of Light, also created by Munro, starting out as a temporary light installation

Hello Hermannsburg

VISITORS to the NT looking to immerse themselves in Red Centre history simply have to check out the newly-restored Hermannsburg Historic Precinct.

The nationally listed heritage site includes the physical remains of the Finke River Mission Station, with tours with an Indigenous guide on offer to learn more about its rich history.

Visitors can also explore solo if they desire, taking in the heritage buildings and some morning tea.



before becoming permanent after rave reviews from visitors.

The exhibition, aptly named Tili Wiru Tjuta Nyakutjaku meaning 'looking at lots of beautiful lights' in local Pitjantjatjara is his largest work to date, covering more than seven football fields.

The fantasy garden showcases 50,000 spindles of light, with the stems breathing and swaying through a sympathetic desert spectrum of ochre, deep violet, blue and gentle white.

Also located at Uluru will be the new \$16 million drone and laser light show called Wintjiri Wiru.

Taking flight on 11 May, the show is set to feature 1,000 drones to form night sky images of the Mala ancestral story.

But the spectacular lights do not end there, with the famous annual 10-day Parrtjima light festival currently taking place in Alice Springs, boasting light installations, artworks, performances, music, films and some amazing Indigenous talks.

Time to wake up with Alice

APART from its amazing gorges and art scene, Alice Springs is fast becoming renowned for its deliciously diverse coffee culture.

Cafes in the Red Centre are serving up wonderful and tasty combinations of both brews and gourmet food.

There's a mix of old favourites, such as the Page 27 cafe (**pictured**), a long-time local treasure which is evident by the stong flow of customers, as well as newcomers like the DuYu Coffee Roasters outlet.

This company has opened The Roastery - a new cafe-in-a -warehouse concept where the coffee beans are roasted on the premises and every delectable morsel is baked in the kitchen - from hot-out-of-the-oven biscuits to yummy pastries.



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Magnifique Benhamou bids au revoir

SINCE establishing the Australian office of the French Tourist Board in 1979, the inimitable Patrick Benhamou has set record after record. In 1980 there were about 300,000 Australian travellers to France, a number which tripled over the ensuing years to a 2019 peak of close to a million. He published about 100 magazines on behalf of Atout France, oversaw 150 online and offline advertising campaigns, and organised

industry.

overseas territories.



PATRICK holds court at a 2011 extravaganza at the Sydney Opera House.



WITH former Prime Minister Julia Gillard at a 2008 Atout France soiree.



HOSTING French Minister of State for Veterans and Remembrance, Jean-Marc Todeschini.





OOH la la - at the launch of a special Louboutin sneaker in 2020 with Club Med's Rachael Harding.



MUMM was definitely the word for Patrick on Melbourne Cup Day 2019.



more than 700 stellar events showcasing France and its

And despite his tenure drawing to a close (see **page 2**), Benhamou's sense of humour certainly hasn't left him, with the unashamed Francophile telling **TD** "above all, I

Having appeared literally hundreds of times in the pages of *Travel Daily* over the years, we've put together this special tribute to honour Benhamou's contribution to the

"Mr France" plans to stay within the travel sector, and

popped more than 50,000 Champagne corks".

can be contacted on pabenhamou@gmail.com.



SHOWCASING the upcoming Rugby World Cup at *Travel Daily*'s Still Still Standing celebration last Dec.





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Vivi business events news

Thursday 13th Apr 2023

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GSTC TO DEVELOP NEW MICE CRITERIA

THE Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) has revealed it is in the process of creating a new set of criteria for the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) sector.

The new measures are designed to act as the global sustainability standards for the industry, and play a key role in helping the tourism industry meet the rising demand for sustainable practices.

Over the long term, the yet-tobe-published GSTC MICE criteria is expected to significantly reduce environmental impacts, preserve local cultures and cuisines, and support sustainable consumption and production patterns.

According to GSTC CEO Randy Durband, the guidelines will also "provide a globally-created and globally-applicable set of sustainability standards that serves as a platform for universal



approaches to measurement, monitoring, reporting, and various forms of external verification needed to drive positive impacts from good practices".

The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) will work closely with the GSTC to provide feedback, consultation, and industry expertise for the draft criteria, as well as promote industry adoption of the standards. Additionally, a MICE Criteria Development Board consisting of up to 10 relevant organisations will offer expert opinions and encourage the sector to take part in the public consultation phase. Once the new criteria is available, GSTC will make a

specific training course available for the MICE sector.

CLICK HERE to read more about how the MICE Criteria development process is tracking. **Pictured:** GSTC MICE Criteria Workchon at GSTC2022

Workshop at GSTC2022 Conference in Seville, Spain.

Wellington gets down to business

BUSINESS Events Wellington has announced the addition of five new ambassadors, spanning a range of disciplines, to its Advocate Network, who will support the city in attracting more int'l conferences.

The new thought leaders consist of Dr Jessica Mills, President Psychosocial Oncology New Zealand; Dr Nadia Pantidi, Lecturer in Interaction Design at the School of Design Innovation, Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University; Mark Lawrence, Senior Geologist GNS Science; Dr Lee Davidson, Associate Professor, Museum & Heritage Studies, VUW; and Paul Atkins, CEO of the Royal Society Te Aparangi.

WA on full display

MORE than 230 education agents and 150 education and service providers from around 49 countries have convened in Perth today for the 2023 International Consultants for Education Fairs (ICEF) Australia and New Zealand Agent (ANZA) conference.

The WA Government has partnered with StudyPerth to deliver a series of famil activities for visiting delegates, including a gourmet beach barbecue at sunset and a trip to Rottnest Island, to showcase the state as a leading study destination.

MCEC raises \$23m

THE Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) raised over \$23 million for the Good Friday Appeal, with over 102,500 Victorians gathering at the venue for the Kids Day Out event.

MCEC's chefs created an interactive Ice Cream-o-Ram, serving 1,500 house-made ice creams for visitors, while MCEC provided a space for the phone room and money counting room.

Parrtjima 2023 lights up the Red Centre

THE Northern Territory's Aboriginal festival of light, art, music and culture, Parrtjima 2023, kicked off over the weekend at Alice Springs Desert Park.

Under the theme of 'Listening with the Heart', the annual free celebration features a single major work as its centrepiece, along with other large-scale light and sound installations, music, Indigenous talks, workshops, films and more.



Highlights include a stunning light projection against the 300 million-year-old MacDonnell Ranges, an immersive lightscape based on the story of the Mala people, and a Welcome to Country and performance by The Andrew Gurruwiwi Band.

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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.

Virgin Australia has announced **Millicent Rusby** as its new Product Owner in Next Generation Retailing. Rusby has eight years of experience in the travel and airline industries, including a previous five-year stint with Virgin Australia. She was formerly Virgin's Specialist Advisor in Commercial Systems.

Flight Centre Travel Group has appointed **Aaron Fadelli** as its new Senior Product Manager to help lead customer engagement and improve customer/agent experiences. Fadelli transitions to the role from Business Leader in Global Contact Centre under FCTG. He has now been with the agency for 13 years.

John Di Bert will become the new EVP and CFO of Air Canada to succeed the retiring Amos Kazzaz, effective o1 Jul. Di Bert has served as CFO for both Bombardier and Pratt & Whitney Canada, in that time accruing extensive experience in senior leadership positions.

Jason Rodgers has become the new General Manager at the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay. Rodgers commenced his journey with Four Seasons Hotels and Resort in 1998 as a management trainee in Kuala Lumpur and was most recently the Bahrain property's Hotel Manager for five years.

Hyatt Regency Club

HYATT Regency Sydney has announced the launch of its new Regency Club, available to guests who have booked a Regency Club room or suite and members of the World of Hyatt Globalist & Lifetime Globalist.

The hub is located on the 11th floor, featuring natural light and bi-fold windows overlooking Darling Harbour.

Features of the Club include exclusive check-in, a dedicated concierge service, complimentary continental breakfast from 7am daily, and evening canapes & beverages from 5.30pm to 7.30pm daily.

The new Regency Club follows the launch of The Upper Deck, an outdoor space for meetings and events - **CLICK HERE** for more.

Paul's 25-year party

THIS year marks the 25th year anniversary of the Ponant-owned Paul Gauguin Cruises brand, with the moment being celebrated via extending \$1,500 flight credits per person on 13 departures booked before 12 May for travel between Oct 2023 to Jun 2024.

The applicable sailings span seven and 14 nights, and explore the South Pacific, stopping at destinations such as Bora Bora, Moorea, Rangiroa, Tahiti, and the Cook Islands.

The eight-day Papeete to Papeete cruise leads in from \$5,990 per person, while the 11day version is priced from \$7,720 per person.

Paul Gauguin's latest offer is combinable with Ponant's Bonus and Yacht Club benefits.



A new Pakistan perspective



CROOKED Compass recently held a "perspective-shifting" agent famil to Northern Pakistan, where participants spent time in the Kalash Valley with one of the world's most fragile and remote minority tribes.

Other highlights included a trek to Fairy Meadows, often considered 'heaven on earth'; experiencing a local match of wild polo; travelling on the Karakorum Highway, the world's highest paved road; visiting remote mountain villages; and hiking to several isolated glaciers.

Swan Hellenic sale

THE Swan Hellenic 2023 Adventure Sale has been extended to 15 May for departures through to 30 Nov. Savings of up to \$3,000pp are available on a select number of popular voyages.

View the itineraries and packages for the Mediterranean Cruises HERE, African voyages HERE, and the sailings aboard Arctic cruises HERE. Hosted by Crooked Compass Founder Lisa Pagotto, the group included Brett Jardine from CATO; Melanie Harrop, Kathy Millett and Camilla Manson from TravelManagers; Jacqui Vincent from MTA Travel; Becky Kent-Perchalla from Perchalla and Turner Travel Associates; and Malcolm Hyslop from Wye and James Travel Associates.

The group is **pictured** with the polo teams and local crowd at the end of the match.

RSSC Epicurean

TO CELEBRATE Seven Sea Explorer's inaugural season in Alaska, Regent Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) has announced a range of dining experiences as part of its Epicurean Perfection program.

Three new culinary arts kitchen classes and three new Epicurean Explorer Tours will be introduced as part of the initiative, where children aged from two to 17 years old can sail for free on reservations made by 31 May more offers available **HERE**.

Travel Daily

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