

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest news, including a photo page from last week's **Ramsgate Travel** event. The next issue of *Travel Daily* will be on Wed 26 Apr due to tomorrow's Anzac Day public holiday.

KE BNE year-round

KOREAN Air has returned to BNE, with the permanent restoration of five weekly flights to Seoul, effective today.

Brisbane Airport CEO Gert-Jan de Graaff said the move would see an additional 89,000 weekly inbound seats supporting over 1,200 jobs in Queensland.

"It turns the tap back on for large-scale South Korean tourism to Queensland, and makes it easier for students to study here and their families to visit," he said.

Stirling Hinchliffe, Qld Tourism Minister, said the return of the route had been enabled by the state's Attracting Aviation Investment Fund, and is an important part of Queensland's post-pandemic international visitor recovery.

Swan Hellenic seals new culinary deal

SWAN Hellenic has announced "an entirely new dimension in gastronomic discovery by sea" as part of a partnership with global chef organisation JRE-Jeunes Restaurateurs.

The pact involves a series of special sailings featuring Maris, a new onboard dining experience showcasing a different signature dish each night courtesy of a JRE "leading light" on each voyage.

Ramsgate - 40 fab years

EXCLUSIVE

SYDNEY suburban agency Ramsgate Travel Service marked a rare milestone last week, celebrating 40 years in business at an event attended by key clients and longstanding suppliers.

Owner Justine Sealey recounted the highs and lows of the last four decades, with the agency founded by the legendary Rosemary Peart in 1982.

Sealey, who started there in 1988 doing work experience, took over as owner in 2018, and noted that the agency held a firm place for many years as an AFTA National Travel Industry Awards finalist and winner for 'Best Suburban Travel Agency'.

Ramsgate Travel Service is a member of the Australian Travel Agents Cooperative (ATAC), with Sealey noting that "it was extremely important to Rosemary to not be part of a franchise, instead to be an independent travel agent that sold what was best for the client".

"This would guarantee a lifelong client in her eyes, and continues to be part of our success...it was always about securing a return visit client, rather than the up-front commission that would be made," Sealey said.

Ramsgate has long been a key producer for many suppliers, some of whom generously

QF Pacific sale

QANTAS has launched a Pacific Islands & NZ Red Tail Sale, with deals on offer to New Zealand, Tonga, Samoa, Norfolk Island and New Caledonia for booking before midnight on 26 Apr.

sponsored the landmark event.

Chris Hall, former APT chief and now CEO of Ponant, gave a personal presentation noting that when he started his career with Insight Vacations, Ramsgate Travel Service was among the top outlets for the brand - so much so that Insight's chief at the time, Chris Newman, would take brochures to the agency for any corrections prior to being printed.

"Rosemary was admired and respected by all areas of the industry - airlines, cruise lines, wholesalers, everyone wanted to work with Ramsgate Travel because of Rosemary, but also because of the team she was building - including Justine who now owns the agency," he said.

"A 40-year-old business is rare in this industry, and this is a milestone that I'm so pleased to see is being celebrated."

More from the Ramsgate Travel Service celebration on **page six**.

UK tourist accused of Thai hotel arson

A BRITISH tourist visiting Chiang Mai in Thailand has been arrested over accusations he set his hotel room on fire.

Officials said firefighters were called to the scene at the Y Smart Hotel at about 11pm, with the incident allegedly following an altercation with a receptionist.

The man checked out after the argument, and about an hour later the fire alarm was raised for a major blaze which saw other guests trapped on their balconies.

An ensuing manhunt saw the tourist arrested, with investigations still continuing.

Maltese Six Senses

IHG Hotels & Resorts has confirmed the development of a new Six Senses property on the Maltese island of Comino, located midway between Malta and Gozo.

The Six Senses Comino will feature 19 standalone retreats ranging from two to four bedrooms along with 71 low-rise suites and extensive spa and wellness facilities.

The project is scheduled to open in 2027.

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Window Seat

THE small tourist town of Yackandandah in Victoria is asking itself if a recent swarm of wasps that have made themselves at home in the area is impacting tourism.

"They can be absolutely shocking some days," Beechworth Bakery owner Janet Martin told *ABC News*, adding that she has armed staff with flyswats in a bid to curb the numbers of the buzzing pests annoying (or stinging) her customers.



MEANWHILE Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has finally found a bidder for the country's former presidential Boeing 787 Dreamliner jet, with Tajikistan purchasing the plane for US\$92 million.

Strangely, only one Mexican leader ever used the jet, Enrique Pena Nieto, who was in office between 2012 and 2018, with the purchase of the plane making headlines at the time as to why a politician would need to fly in a jet as large as a Dreamliner.

CATO celebrates Earth Day



THE Council of Australian Tour Operators held its first Earth Day event (*TD* 28 Mar) at Brisbane's Calile Hotel last Fri, taking the opportunity to hear from several speakers on the importance of protecting the world's natural resources for future generations.

The event included a thought-provoking panel discussion featuring Flight Centre Chief Sustainability Officer, Michelle Degenhardt; Hurtigruten Managing Director Damian Perry; Boeing Sustainability Lead, Heidi Hauf; and Toni Ambler from TTC Touring Brands.

The major sponsor of the event was G Adventures, with supporting sponsors including Hurtigruten and the Italian National Tourist Board, which saw Emanuele Attanasio presenting on the importance of sustainability for Italian tourism.

Some of the attendees (pictured from left) included Jacqui Tulafa from Abercrombie & Kent; Anna

Shannon of Travel Agent Finder; Global Touring's Dylan Hearne; CATO event chief Brett Harvey; Sean Martin from G Adventures who also emceed the event and moderated the panel; Emina Hiko from TTC Tour Brands; and Chimu Adventures MD Chad Carey.

Japan bloom boom

INSIDEJAPAN says 2023 to date has equalled the Japan specialist's busiest-ever cherry blossom season, with more than 2,000 guests hosted on a combination of FIT and small group tours over recent weeks.

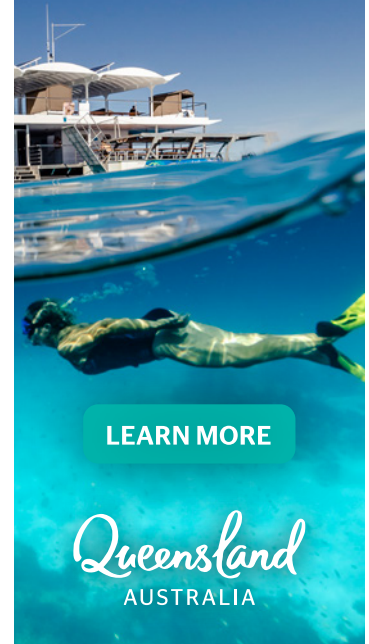
The wholesaler's Brisbane-based Trade Manager, Harry Sargent, said bookings for Oct travel to Japan are already forecasted to exceed the 2019 pre-pandemic peak.

Sargent said he believes the trend will not be short-lived, with departures for 2024 and beyond also already selling well.

Thai tax bumped

THE ongoing saga about Thailand's proposed tourist tax has added another chapter, with the country late last week confirming the implementation will be knocked back from Jun (*TD* 20 Feb) to Sep, citing a need for more time to get systems ready for the approximately A\$13 fee.

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VIEW OFFERS



A night at the opera...



REGENT Seven Seas Cruises took some of its key partners out on the shores of Sydney Harbour last Fri, with a VIP experience at the Handa Opera performance of *Madama Butterfly* at Mrs Macquaries Point.

Kicking off with spectacular fireworks at 8.30pm, guests

(pictured) enjoying the Opera Australia show were hosted by Regent VP Lisa Pile, and included Michael and Kellie Londregan from Virtuoso; Accor Plus CEO Renae Trimble; Sharon Dawson; Sharon Byrne from Fiji's Kokomo Private Island; Angelika Hannon; and Virtuoso's Fiona Dalton.

Hotel & events in WSI plan

NEW plans for a Business Precinct at Western Sydney International (WSI) Airport have been revealed, including a hotel, shops and conference centre.

The precinct will initially service the region's booming construction workforce before changing to meet the needs of airport customers.

The 20-hectare site will feature a ten-storey, 150-key hotel, gym, cafe and conference facility, as well as around 25,000m² of warehouse and office space.

"Once the airport becomes operational in 2026, the precinct will welcome flight crews and international passengers, but we are leading the way by meeting the demand for shops, accommodation and offices," WSI CEO Simon Hickey said.

"Western Sydney International Airport is shaping up as a destination in its own right and we are making sure that we

cater to local demand during the construction phase and as we grow to ultimately become Sydney's biggest airport.

"The vision for Western Sydney International is to maximise the economic uplift of the new airport by bringing business and commercial development alongside international and domestic passenger flights and cargo services in a vibrant, diverse and growing region," Hickey added.

The first phase of construction also includes internal roads and connections to arterial roads.

"The Western Sydney Airport Business Precinct Stage One Major Development Plan is on public display until 13 Jul in the airport's Experience Centre, Penrith City Council Library, Liverpool City Council Library and online **HERE**.

The airport is expected to open in late 2026.



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VV bets on poker

VIRGIN Voyages has partnered with the World Poker Tour to introduce WPT at Sea.

The new poker room on the high seas is available now on every sailing aboard *Scarlet Lady*.

Utilising eight custom poker tables and staffed with professional dealers, the room offers beginner training, cash games, satellites, and WPT Prize Package tournaments with buy-ins ranging from US\$80 to US\$320.

Aqua to the stars

AQUA Expeditions has introduced SpaceX's Starlink satellite internet on board *Aqua Mare*, *Aqua Nera*, and *Aqua Blu*.

The rollout began last month, with *Aria Amazon* and *Aqua Mekong* to follow suit by Sep.

Guests of all ships will have access to two hours of complimentary wi-fi per day, with more available for purchase.

Intrepid's CSR win



INTREPID Travel CEO James Thornton (pictured) last week accepted an award from New York-based online publisher Fast Company, which recognised the company's commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility.

Thornton noted it was the first time Intrepid had been recognised beyond the 'travel' category, ranking third overall among the top 10 companies in corporate social responsibility across all sectors.

Toronto gold heist

IT SOUNDS like a good plot for a movie, but a real-life robbery at Canada's Toronto Airport last week is believed to have netted the offenders at least C\$20m in solid gold and valuables.

Police confirmed that a "high-value container" disappeared without trace after being offloaded from a plane.

"An aircraft arrived here at the airport in the early evening...as per normal procedure the aircraft was unloaded and cargo was transported from the aircraft to a holding cargo facility," said a police spokesman.

It was then removed "by illegal means", with the officer confirming it contained gold and other high-value goods worth about C\$20 million.

The operator of the airport stressed that access was gained to the public-facing side of a warehouse that is leased to a third party, with no threat to passengers or staff.

Daydream families

DAYDREAM Island Resort & Living Reef on Queensland's Whitsundays Islands is offering the ultimate family vacation package, with 25% off the best flexible rate, free return ferry transfers, and a complimentary daily breakfast.

The deal applies to stays of at least three nights between 25 Apr and 30 May - [CLICK HERE](#).

Intrepid in Albania

INTREPID has teamed up with MEET Network to launch its first standalone tour to Albania, a nine-day expedition which takes in the less-explored parts of the Balkan country.

Priced from \$1,995 per person, the tour departs in Sep and includes two nights in a cosy family-owned village guesthouse, a farm-to-table dinner, and a sunrise breakfast overlooking the Karavasta Lagoon - [CLICK HERE](#) for further details.

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Jakarta impacted

TRAVELLERS to Indonesia are being advised to plan carefully and prepare for significant delays across public transport, including airports, with around 18 million people expected to travel in and out of the greater Jakarta area over the Eid al-Fitr holiday period until 01 May.

Disneyland blaze

A FIRE broke out at Disneyland resort in Anaheim, California over the weekend, during the *Fantasmic* show in the Tom Sawyer Island section.

Footage circulating on social media shows a 15-metre tall animatronic dragon bursting into flames on the stage, prompting the crowd to evacuate.

The Anaheim Fire Department told a local news station that no injuries had been reported, however, the cause of the fire and extent of the damage has not yet been determined.

RSSC Grand cruises

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) has released five new Grand Voyages for its 2025-26 collection, with itineraries ranging from 61 to 117 nights across five continents and 194 ports of call.

The Grand Arctic Adventure is one of the sailings on offer, taking guests on an 83-night journey from New York to Barcelona on board *Seven Seas Mariner*.

Also available is the 117-night Grand Cultural Quest, which takes in a number of destinations in Northern Europe and the Mediterranean, and an 84-night Grand Continental Sojourn through Africa, Asia and Australia.

A 61-night Grand Asia Exploration from Auckland to Tokyo and the Indian Ocean Odyssey, which embarks from Mauritius to Rome on a 64-night voyage, rounds out the luxury cruise line's collection.

Bookings for the voyages will open on 04 May, with guests able to register their interest **HERE**.



THE Skal Club of Melbourne recently came together at the Stamford Plaza for its Apr event, 'Harry's Restaurant'.

Four new 'Skalleagues' were welcomed into the fold, with Jarrod Pickford from Storytowns, Diana Devlin from Sabre, Lorinda Hollis from STUBA, and Andrew St.Ledger from ALH Hotels (**pictured** inset) put through their paces in a Harry-inspired quiz, as part of the notorious Skal Melbourne Hot Seat.

"We were thrilled to have sold out this event a week in advance...a great endorsement

of the importance that Skal holds in the industry," President Tara Strickland enthused.

"And how fabulous to welcome four brand new members to the International (and now national!) Skal Club of the Year!" she added.

Pictured: Russell McGilton, Catherine Baird, Dean Cleaver and Richard Kellaway.



Explore the beauty of Nice

Starting 9 May 2023, we are resuming flights to Nice with four weekly services.

Fly with the World's Best Airline and discover the best of France, from Paris to Nice, and new services to Toulouse starting 18 May 2023 and Lyon starting 3 July 2023.

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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

Ramsgate Travel celebrates the big 4-0



THE 40th birthday celebration for Ramsgate Travel Service (see p1) saw suppliers from across the industry out in force to support the agency's milestone.

One of the speakers at the event was Abercrombie & Kent chief Debra Fox, who wrapped up proceedings by noting that both now and in her former role at APT, Sealey was always a key sounding board with her finger on the pulse of what clients want.

"Congratulations, I know the business will continue to thrive and I will remain firmly your biggest supporter and I am so glad that I can call you my friend," Fox said.

Pictured from left: Ramon Drew, Viking Cruises; Aaron Dodkin from Back-Roads Touring; Regent Seven Seas Cruises' Scott Graham; Barbara Baron from APT; Talia Mastronardi, Ramsgate Travel; Silversea Cruises' Christine Gardner; Ramsgate Travel owner

Justine Sealey; Tony Archbold from Crystal Cruises; Jenny Day, Ramsgate Travel; Beth Ellicott from Abercrombie & Kent; and Alice Ager of Uniworld Boutique River Cruises.

Other industry guests in attendance included former Wingsaway Travel & Cruise owner Anne Rogers who is now in charge of Ramsgate Travel's burgeoning in-house escorted tour program; Oceania Cruises VP Jason Worth; and Ponant CEO Asia-Pacific, Chris Hall.



JUSTINE Sealey and her longstanding right-hand women, Talia Mastronardi and Jenny Day.



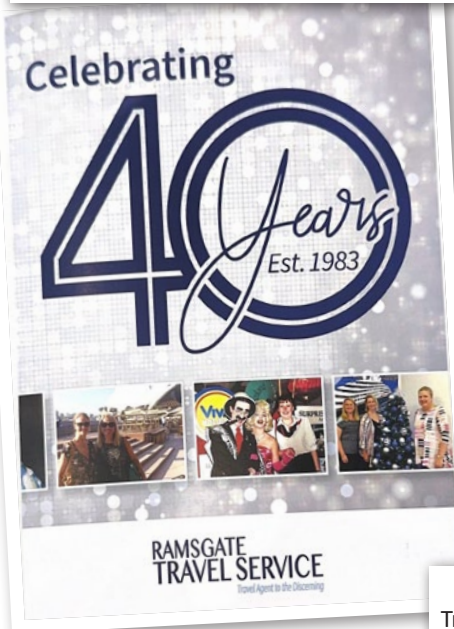
AUSTRALIAN Travel Agents Cooperative (ATAC) GM Michelle Emerton was on hand to honour one of the group's key members.



JUSTINE thanks her mum for all her support over the years.



OCEANIA Cruises VP Jason Worth.



INDUSTRY partnerships are key for Ramsgate, with Marita Nasic from CLIA and AFTA's Amanda Rixon among the honoured guests.



LONG time friend Debra Fox from A&K gave a stirring tribute to Justine and Ramsgate Travel.



BARRY and Anne Rogers ex Wings Away Travel & Cruise, now Ramsgate's tour manager.



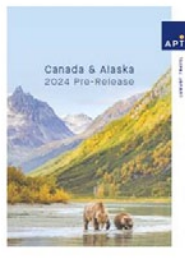
PONANT CEO Chris Hall's long association with Ramsgate Travel Service started when he was a fresh-faced sales representative (and had much more hair).



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BROCHURES

WELCOME to Brochures of the Week, *Travel Daily's* Monday feature. If your firm is releasing a new brochure you'd like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description summarising its features and itineraries, including a PDF of the front cover, and contact details to brochures@traveldaily.com.au.



APT - Canada & Alaska 2024 Pre-Release

APT has released a new brochure showcasing the jewels of Canada & Alaska with its specially curated itineraries for the 2024 travel season. From the turquoise lakes and snow-capped peaks of Banff National Park to the towering cliffs and imposing icebergs of the Inside Passage, both locations consist of breathtaking natural wonders. With over 30 years of experience in touring the region, APT's expertise allows guests to sit back and relax with luxury inclusions throughout their journey. Book now and save up to \$3,000 per couple with the earlybird deal.



Scenic - Europe River Cruising 2024

Scenic's expertly crafted river cruising itineraries and experiences will allow your clients to explore their passion for adventure in exciting destinations. The new Europe River Cruising brochure from Scenic showcases Europe's unique destinations in its Epicurean Delights Collection, designed for those who love to indulge themselves in extraordinary food and wine. Guest can also immerse themselves in cooking classes, meet local farmers and taste their produce, as well as sample wine from award-winning vineyards throughout the river cruise experiences.

Don celebrates Vietnam links



FEDERAL Minister for Trade and Tourism, Don Farrell, recently congratulated Vietjet on the launch of new direct flights connecting Vietnam and Sydney (*TD* 14 Apr) while on an official visit to the country.

Farrell and his official delegation praised Vietjet for pushing its expansion plans Down Under (**pictured**), which currently includes connections between Ho Chi Minh City and Sydney Melbourne, and also welcomed plans for other new routes to be launched, including the first ever direct flights to operate between Brisbane and Vietnam.

Jet incident punished

TEN army personnel have been jailed in Iran for their role in shooting down an Ukrainian International Airlines' plane minutes after taking off from Tehran, killing 176 people in Jan 2020 (*TD* 20 Jan 2020).

The plane was hit by two missiles fired by a Revolutionary Guards air defence unit, who mistook the commercial aircraft for a missile, with families of the victims labelling the sentence as "meaningless and unacceptable", contending only low-ranking officers were punished.

Mexico airport crash

A GROUND collision occurred between a Delta Air Lines' Boeing 757 and Aeromexico's Boeing 737-800 in the Mexico City International Airport last week.

The crash took place shortly after the DL flight landed and the Aeromexico plane was about to take off, impacting the Aeromexico B737's left upper winglet and the right horizontal stabiliser of the DL B757.

No one was injured in the incident, and an investigation is currently underway to determine the cause of the impact.

Boeing raises rate

BOEING has introduced a generous employee incentive scheme in a bid to recruit and retain staff so it can keep production targets on track.

The manufacturer is handing out US\$10k bonuses for staff to stay on with the company, as well as US\$5k bonuses for those signing new employment contracts, with a view to increasing production and completing five Dreamliners a month by the end of the year, 38 737 MAXs by mid-year, and in total, rolling out 400-450 aircraft by 2030.

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