



Pacific partnership

SOLOMON Airlines has taken its partnership with Air Vanuatu to the next level, signing a wet lease agreement which will see the two carriers share aircraft, align their schedules, and expand their networks.

From 05 Jun, Solomon Airlines will launch a third frequency between Port Vila and Auckland for Air Vanuatu, further complementing the latter carrier's existing Wed and Sat services, while the two airlines also confirmed they are currently working towards a formal codeshare operation on the route.

The agreement will also see Air Vanuatu resume direct flights between Brisbane and Santo in Vanuatu, with the new route also operated by Solomon Airlines.



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Bunnik, Sun Island out of ATAS

EXCLUSIVE

TWO key industry suppliers have pulled out of the Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS), with Bunnik Tours (ABN 38 077 203 466) and Sun Island Tours (ABN 91 002 932 336) among six participants voluntarily withdrawing from the program.

An update on the AFTA website last night confirmed the withdrawals, which also include V Travel Network (ABN 62 072 214 389), group tour specialist Morcombe Travel (ABN 62 072 214 389), Gold Coast-based Interline Travel (ABN 86 651 729 467) and Sydney agency Zodiac Travel (ABN 48 130 352 822).

Sun Island Tours GM John Polyviou noted that the business is IATA-accredited and as a longstanding member of CATO is "now a proud participant of the new CATO Accreditation scheme which is more fit-for-purpose for our wholesale business".

He told **TD** that the company had originally joined ATAS because of its Kyrenia Travel

Cost vs conscience

THE majority of Australian travellers (58%) feel sustainable travel options are currently too expensive, with close to half wanting to be offered discounts to take up eco-friendly options.

The new study from Booking.com showed that Aussies are torn between being environmentally responsible and looking after their hip pockets, with just 36% of travellers stating a willingness to "pay extra" for travel options with sustainable certifications.

Despite the economic tension, the same report also indicated most Aussies (72%) want travel companies to offer more sustainable travel choices in the future, up from 61% in 2022.

Close to two-thirds of travellers also said that regardless of the financial pressures, they want to travel more sustainably over the coming 12 months.

retail division and felt that ATAS accreditation was "necessary for our retail travel business".

"However, we have begun to wind down our retail arm and we therefore feel that the CATO scheme suits our company profile best moving forward," he said.

CATO Chairman Dennis Bunnik, speaking in his capacity as joint CEO of Bunnik Tours, said the firm had elected to go with the CATO Accreditation system "as it better suits our business model as a tour operator [having] been created specifically for tour operators and wholesalers which operate with significantly different legal responsibilities and operational structures than travel agents".

He said Bunnik Tours was a strong supporter of industry associations and the vital role they play, adding "we are a full IATA member and, through our inbound division, are also a member of ATEC".

"Whilst we have withdrawn from ATAS it was our strong desire to continue to support AFTA through allied membership the same way other suppliers such as car rental companies, cruise lines and airlines do.

"Unfortunately, this was not accepted and sadly our 28-year membership of AFTA has been forced to end," Bunnik said.

Cruise united front

THE Australian Cruise Association (ACA) and Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) will demonstrate the importance of industry unity at next week's Australian Tourism Exchange, for the first time mounting a joint presence to promote the "diversity and depth of cruising in this region to the international travel market".

CLIA MD Joel Katz said the event would give both associations the opportunity to meet with key tourism wholesalers and retailers from around the world - more in today's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including **Business Events News** and a photo page from **Rail Europe**, plus a full page from **NCL**.

More of the middle

VIRGIN Australia has extended its Middle Seat Lottery comp until 09 Jul, offering even more prizes valued at over \$45k.

Among the rewards that middle seat pax can score themselves are return flights to Tokyo and 250,000 Velocity Points, return Qatar Airways flights to Europe and a luxury experience in Doha for two, and a three-night stay in Townsville with a waterfall and tropical island tour via helicopter and sailboat cruise - more information **HERE**.

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HLO improves its outlook

THE timing of this morning's profit upgrade announcement by Helloworld Travel Limited (**TD** breaking news) couldn't have been better, with the group's franchisees and members currently gathering in Auckland for the first ever company-wide multi-brand Owner Managers Conference (OMC).

CEO Andrew Burnes released the ASX update, noting that despite challenging economic conditions, leisure travel demand continues to hold up.

"Demand for international and domestic travel continues to improve, with a trend towards longer trips and longer lead times to overcome global supply constraints," the update noted.

Inbound arrivals to Australia and NZ continue to improve from western markets, although demand from traditional Asian markets remain soft, while cruise capacity has increased significantly and bookings are now being taken through to the end of 2024 and into early 2025.

The update reported that underlying earnings were \$10.5

million in Australia for the three months to 31 Mar, while the NZ result for the same period was \$3.1 million in EBITDA.

"Based on our year-to-date results and expectations of trading across the Jun quarter, HLO is increasing its previous guidance for underlying EBITDA from \$28m-\$32m to an underlying EBITDA of \$38m-\$42m for FY23," the company said - with the caveat of no material adverse change in operating conditions, as well as continued recovery in aviation capacity.

Burnes said Helloworld continued to maintain its costs and deliver improving margins, while also undertaking ongoing investment in its "key own technology platforms", including Air Tickets, ResWorld, Mango and ReadyRooms.

KE VS codeshare

VIRGIN Atlantic has expanded its codeshare partnership with Korean Air, with the VS code to appear on KE flights from Seoul to Sydney, Brisbane and Auckland.

Saturn delivered

VIKING has taken delivery of its newest ocean ship, *Viking Saturn*, this morning at Fincantieri's shipyard in Italy.

Saturn will spend its inaugural summer sailing two new itineraries: Iconic Iceland, Greenland & Canada, between NY and Reykjavik, and Iceland & Norway's Arctic Explorer, between Reykjavik and Bergen.

QF inks Norfolk deal

QANTAS has secured a long-term contract with the Federal Government to continue operating six return flights per week to Norfolk Island.

The three flights from Sydney and three from Brisbane will continue until at least Mar 2026, providing a total of 2,000 seats to the Aussie territory each week.

Qantas started serving Norfolk in Jan 2021 after restrictions forced Air NZ to withdraw.

Person overboard

AN AUSTRALIAN man remains missing after he went overboard while on a transpacific *Quantum of the Seas* cruise to Hawaii.

"The ship's crew immediately launched a search and rescue operation and is working closely with local authorities," Royal Caribbean said in a statement.

According to media reports, the man's partner died on board during a medical emergency earlier in the evening.



Window Seat

A LANDMARK judgement handed down in Spain this week is likely to have a significant impact on the dress codes of the country's flight attendants, after low-cost carrier Vueling was found to have discriminated against its female flight attendants.

A US\$30,000 fine was handed down in the case after authorities in Catalan province ruled that the airline placed an "undue burden" on stewardesses by requiring them to wear high heels.

The carrier also specified what kind of makeup they could wear, including so-called "low key" lipstick shades and banning the use of fake-looking false eyelashes.

The requirements for male flight attendants were much less stringent, only requiring them to have a "clean and neat" appearance, according to the *El Periodico* newspaper.

A spokesperson for the airline insisted that the dress code had been developed in consultation with cabin crew representatives.

The decision was handed down pursuant to a formal complaint being filed with employment authorities by the flight attendants' union.



Explore the beauty of Nice

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

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TM adds to mystery

TRAVELMANAGERS will join Signature Travel Network's Mystery Shopper program, with 10 travel advisors selected to participate in the scheme.

Each agent will spend a two-night stay at one of Signature's worldwide collection of luxury properties and provide an evaluation of their experiences across three key areas.

The feedback TM's advisors provide will then be evaluated by Signature and shared with the property in order to identify opportunities for improvement and determine if the program will need to continue.

TravelManagers COO, Grant Campbell, described the invitation to participate as indicative of the mutual esteem between the two brands.

"We're extremely proud to have been invited to play our part in this critical component of Signature's quality control strategy," he said.

Air NZ upgrades forecast

AIR New Zealand has upgraded its earnings forecast for the 2023 financial year before other significant items to be in the range of NZ\$510-560 million, a significant jump on the previous guidance of NZ\$450-530 million.

The carrier's upbeat predictions are fuelled by stronger levels of domestic and international travel demand, as well as the falling price of jet fuel, which is now down to US\$95 a barrel.

Despite the encouraging financial outlook, Air New Zealand noted it does not expect its capacity expectations to change much for the remainder of the financial year, which is forecast to be around 95% of domestic and 80% of pre-pandemic international volumes.

The carrier also qualified the upgraded outlook by conceding fuel price volatility, global recession risks, and inflationary pressures across the supply chain



Pictured: Air New Zealand CEO Greg Foran.

remain high, all of which have the potential to adversely impact its bottom line at the end of the financial year.

As of 01 Apr, Air New Zealand had carried 1.63 million passengers for the FY23, still 11.5% shy of where the carrier was at the same point in 2019, but well ahead of 2022 levels, which saw just 624,000 travellers hop aboard its planes.

Passenger load factor for the Kiwi airline has also improved significantly on last year, the latest forecast showed, recording 85.6% of planes filled by 01 Apr, compared to just 60.7% at the same time last year.

Airlines tardy in Mar

LAST month was not a great period for domestic aviation punctuality, with the latest report from BITRE showing Aussie airlines are still lagging well behind the long-term performance average.

The cancellation rate for Mar was 3.6%, quite a bit higher than the 2.5% recorded in Mar last year, while the combined efforts of the major airlines only managed to land on time 71% of the time, and on-time departures were recorded at 71.4%.

Both numbers were down on the long-term average of 81.5% and 82.7% for arrivals and departures respectively.

Jetstar continues to be the least reliable airline in terms of cancellations, with its 7.1% of scrapped flights close to double the industry average for Mar.

Virgin Australia Regional Airlines was the next biggest offender at 5.6%, followed by Qantas at 3.6%, QantasLink (3.2%) & VA (2.6%).

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Fraudsters target travel

THE travel industry is especially prone to cyber criminals and ad fraud, according to new research from TrafficGuard, an Australian-based digital ad verification and fraud prevention platform.

Bots comprise up to 80% of all invalid traffic for travel advertisers - much higher than the 15-30% affecting other industries, the study revealed.

TrafficGuard co-founder & CEO Mathew Ratty attributes this to a number of factors, including the travel industry's use of third party Online Travel Agencies (OTAs).

"Unauthorised OTAs are known to scrape the data of airlines/hotel databases and sell them on behalf of airlines and rentals," he explained.

"The high value loyalty programs are also an extremely attractive proposition for fraudsters to try to assume control of," Ratty added, with the high volume of travel vendor apps, which are at

further risk of "bad quality traffic and misattribution", identified as another contributing factor.

Pay-per-click campaigns in particular fall prey to click fraud, with the research showing that up to one-fifth of clicks on ads/campaigns can be fake.

"On paper, it's a great idea... however our analysis shows that these performance networks are delivering upwards of 50% invalid traffic on average," Ratty warned.

"The result is a tonne of fraudulent installs and misattribution of post install events such as flight and hotel bookings," he added.

Swiss learning

ENTIRE Travel Group will be hosting a live webinar along with Switzerland Tourism and its Swiss local partners on 17 May to uncover some travel aspects of the country - register [HERE](#).

QF amenity kits

QANTAS Airways has launched limited-edition amenity kits with Tourism Western Australia (**pictured**), featuring the artwork of Wongi man Kevin Wilson.

The kits feature some of Western Australia's "dreamlike, otherworldly, and wondrous" assets, such as Ningaloo Reef, the Margaret River, the Kimberley, and Perth, in celebration of the state's new global tourism brand, 'Walking on a Dream'.

Kits have started to be handed out to passengers on select Qantas services, including those taking the first flight from Melbourne to Exmouth.



Canada pushes for airline liability

CANADA is pushing to make airlines pay passengers for flight disruptions, except in limited cases, under proposed legislation.

As air travel complaints in Canada hit record levels, Minister for Tourism, Omar Alghabra, said there will be no more loopholes allowing airlines to claim a disruption is caused by something outside of their control.

"It will no longer be the passenger who will have to prove that he or she is entitled to compensation," he said.

"It will now be the airline that will need to prove that it does not have to pay for it."

Passenger complaints against airlines in Canada over lengthy delays or flight cancellations have risen as air traffic rebounds following the COVID-19 pandemic, hitting a record of 44,000, according to the Canadian Transportation Agency.

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MICE on the up

THE global MICE industry is expected to generate US\$2.1 trillion by 2031, seeing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15.2% from 2022 to 2031, according to a new report from Allied Market Research.

The *MICE Industry by event type: Global Opportunity Analysis and Industry Forecast, 2021-2031* report shows that the meetings segment held the highest market share in 2021, and is expected to retain top spot over the forecast period.

Europe claimed the most revenue market share in 2021 and is expected to maintain its dominance, while the Middle East region is predicted to experience the highest CAGR of 22.7% from 2022 to 2031.

VICTORIA'S BUSINESS EVENTS BONANZA

MELBOURNE is asserting its position as the top global city for medical conferences, with the Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) winning 48 events to take place over the next five years, set to attract 38,000 delegates and generate \$255 million for Victoria's local economy.

MCB Chief Executive Julie Swanson believes Melbourne's strides in medical research and innovation, as well as the state's investment in developing the city's medical precincts, has made it stand out on the global stage as an ideal destination for medical and healthcare events.

Additionally, 40% of Australia's funding for medical research is generated in Melbourne, while Victoria has the highest proportion of people employed in the life sciences sector.

"Excellent infrastructure and joint collaborations between universities, research institutes and hospitals have created a city where the world's brightest minds gather to inspire, innovate and create real change in world-leading research and development," Swanson said.

One such example is Spine Intervention Society's SpineWeek in May, which is expected to see 2,250 delegates convene in Melbourne, delivering \$14.7 million to the local economy.

In other news for the city's events sector, education leader Sujata Stead has been appointed to the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Trust, which manages the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, and the soon-to-be-built Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre.



Stead is the founding CEO of Occupational English Test (OET), which provides healthcare professionals with proof of English proficiency; his appointment is expected to bolster the expertise of the Trust.

MEANWHILE, Business Events Victoria's Regional Victoria Showcase is returning this year on Wed 21 Jun, where planners can network with the best business events venues and destinations from around regional Victoria - register to secure your spot [HERE](#).

WA regional fund

TOURISM Western Australia's annual Regional Events Scheme will see up to \$1.15 million in funding doled out to 65 events taking place from 01 Jul 2023 to 30 Jun 2024.

The fund includes support for 10 new events such as the Taste of the Kimberley, which will showcase the produce and landscapes of the region, as well as \$250,000 for the Regional Aboriginal Events Scheme (RAES), which supports events that celebrate Aboriginal activities.

TCEB roadshow

THERE are limited spots left for business event planners to attend the Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) roadshow events in Sydney on 02 May, including a networking lunch and evening roadshow.

Attendees will hear updates from 15 Thailand operators and get a firsthand look at the newly renovated host venue - email sales@clockwiseconsulting.com.au to register your interest.

The Sebel offer

THE Sebel Melbourne Ringwood has launched a Winter Residential Conference Package until 30 Sep, offering overnight accommodation in a Superior or Classic King Room.

From \$299pp, the deal also includes breakfast at the on-site restaurant and a Day Delegate Package, including morning and afternoon tea, conference lunch, room hire, data projector and screen - contact (03) 9874 9100.

CWT calculator

CWT has launched a new meetings and events carbon footprint calculator to provide detailed environmental impact insights to both CWT event planners and clients.

From an event's planning stages to its completion, the new tool maps emissions across travel, hotel stays, meeting spaces and food & beverage, allowing customers to compare the data against their own carbon benchmarks for current and future events.

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Rail Europe keeps agents on track

LEADING the way in train travel, Rail Europe treated a select group of advisors in Melbourne to an exclusive cocktail masterclass where they not only picked up and demonstrated some impressive mixing skills, but importantly, gained valuable tips on the best and most rewarding ways to “unlock” rail connections across Europe.

Six lucky advisors also took home prizes courtesy of Atout France (Christina Dior perfume), Switzerland Tourism (Victorinox knife set), the Austrian National Tourist Organisation (picnic blanket and a bottle of Austrian Rose), the Italian National Tourist Board (limited edition cheeseboard) and Tourism Ireland (Aran scarf).

In Sydney, Rail Europe hosted a group of European tourism board partners and media at the Fullerton Hotel to an intimate soiree featuring wine tasting and a comical magic show.

Guests also gained a better understanding of the travel tech company’s vision and mission to get more advisors and travellers on board trains to explore Europe.



ADVISORS were treated to a cocktail making Masterclass where they learned to make Negronis.



RAIL Europe CEO Bjorn Bender with Sarah Elms and Jaimi Boyle, Flight Centre Southland.



SHAKING things up are Darcie Comben and Maddi Wood from Flight Centre 278 Collins Street.



HERE to keep rail travel in shipshape are Rail Europe’s Key Account Managers James Hooper and Grant Robertson.

FRED Mazenq, Atout France; Andrew Cavallaro, Turespana; Rich Leonard, Rail Europe; Maria Sykes, Visit Britain; Patrick Benhamou, Atout France; Livio Goetz, Switzerland Tourism; Sofia Hanson, Tourism Ireland; Sophie Almin, Atout France; Emanuele Attanasio, Italian National Tourist Board; Bjorn Bender, Rail Europe; Kathrina Denk from the Austrian National Tourist Office was present but not pictured here.



THE Rail Europe team: Bjorn Bender, Rich Leonard, Steph Hummel, James Hooper and Grant Robertson.



WINNERS are grinners. Adrienne Quirk, DQ International Travel Service won Miss Dior Perfume from Atout France; Darcie Comben, Flight Centre 278 Collins Street won a picnic blanket from ANTO; Igor Deletic, Flight Centre Chadstone won a bottle of Austrian Rose from ANTO; Sam Sly, Travel Avenue won a Victorinox Swiss army knife from Switzerland Tourism; Sonia and Trevor Jones, Hawthorn Travel and Cruise won an Aran scarf from Tourism Ireland; and Cosima Bagala, Travel Avenue won a limited edition cheeseboard set from ENIT.



BJORN with Isabelle Pisani and Laura Wright from Flight Centre Eastland.



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.

Belinda Trembath has joined the **Whistler Blackcomb** ski resort in Vancouver as its new Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. Trembath was most recently the VP and General Manager of Perisher and the Chair of the Australian Ski Areas Association since 2018.

Martin Cowley has joined **Mint Payments** as an independent non-executive Director, bringing with him an abundance of knowledge in the travel and payment space. Cowley is currently the Executive Chairman at Travica and eRoam.

Cashel Travel has welcomed **Jason Caruana** as its new Managing Director of the UK-based destination management company. Caruana brings over 30 years of extensive experience within the MICE and tourism industry to the team. Before joining, he had almost a 21-year stint as a Director at Special Interest Travel prior to the current position.

Mark Willis has been appointed Chief Executive Officer at **Fairmont Hotels & Resorts** in Dubai. He will be responsible for the brand's portfolio of more than 100 hotels in operation and under development globally and brings more than three decades of experience to the position. He was previously the Chief Executive Officer for India, Middle East, Africa & Turkey at Accor.

Climate change to make flying bumpier

TURBULENCE is set to worsen by 150% over the next century thanks to climate change, Weatherzone meteorologist Yoska Hernandez has warned.

"Jetstreams are bands of intense, very strong winds flying from west to east in the atmosphere...as greenhouse emissions increase, the temperature differences strengthen in the upper atmosphere and that causes an increase in the intensity of the jet stream," she explained.

As well as causing bumpier flights, the faster jet stream may also either speed up or delay flight times depending on the direction, as well as affect fuel consumption, Hernandez said.

Euribia on track

MSC Euribia, MSC Cruises' second liquefied natural gas (LNG)-powered ship, has entered the final phase of preparation ahead of her debut season in Northern Europe.

After successfully completing her deep-water intensive systems tests during a four-day trial in the Atlantic Ocean, the vessel will receive her finishing touches at the Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard in France before joining MSC Cruises' fleet on 31 May.

The 6,327-pax ship's official naming ceremony will take place on 08 Jun in Copenhagen, Denmark, before she arrives at her homeport in Kiel, Germany to offer seven-night sailings to the Norwegian Fjords.

Keep up to date with **Travel Daily** on the go



Travel Daily



Get on the green bus, guys!



CONTIKI has welcomed its new fleet of tour coaches, which have begun to arrive in Europe.

The buses feature a new design, as well as being more eco-friendly, reducing fuel consumption and minimising CO2 emissions.

Contiki Marketing Lab's Chief Marketing Officer, Simon Llanos, hailed the new sustainable fleet, stating: "soon travellers will be on board and on trips experiencing the best the world has to offer in the best way - socially".

He added that "agonising over

internal furnishings and shades of green" was "all worth it in the end", praising the final design of the coaches as "incredible".



Ecotourism deal

BIG Red Group and Ecotourism Australia are paving a pathway to sustainable tourism for experience operators via a new strategic partnership between the two organisations.

Operators on platforms such as Adrenaline, Experience Oz, and RedBalloon will now be able to showcase their sustainable approach through their 'Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard' result, as well as their ECO or Sustainable Tourism Certification.

Explora Journeys sounds the Horn

EXPLORA Journeys has announced world-renowned adventurer, explorer and environmentalist Mike Horn as its new brand ambassador.

Horn will work alongside the Explora team to develop adventure destination experiences and onboard enrichment programs, as well as lead guests in exploring some of the most remote locations in the world.

The inaugural Iceland and Greenland journey, 'Arctic Geyser, Calving Glaciers, and Fiery Lands of Ice', will see Horn take guests on two different hikes in remote areas of Greenland in Sep.

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