



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news, including our **Corporate Update** and a photo page from **TIME**, plus a full page from **My Cruises**.

Punthill Sunshine set for next year

VERIU Group's latest Punthill property is set to open at Sunshine, Melbourne's next 'superhub', in late 2024.

The 90-room hotel will be located next to Sunshine Station, which is under redevelopment to create a hub linking Melbourne Airport with the CBD via the new Melbourne Airport Rail service.

Punthill Sunshine will offer a mix of studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments, meeting facilities, a gym and a laundry.

Flight Centre reveals trends

FLIGHT Centre's online client base is skyrocketing, growing three times faster than its in-store customer base, according to the latest insights revealed by the company's senior leadership team last night (see **p4**).

Pre-COVID, around 15% of Flight Centre bookings were made online, but this figure has already risen to 25%.

However, the average basket size was significantly lower online than in-store.

Customers who booked online spent an average \$950 compared to \$4,030 for those shopping in-store.

Average trip durations booked were also much shorter, at four days and 20 days, respectively.

Online bookings were mostly (80%) for domestic travel, while

just over half (54%) of in-store bookings were for overseas destinations.

Global MD Andrew Stark noted that the brand's typical Australian customer is a 49-year-old female booking solo travel in-store.

Aussie customers' top five travel destinations remain the same - UK, US, New Zealand, Bali and Thailand - but the UK has replaced the US as the most popular destination among solo travellers, couples, families and small group segments.

Family travel patterns have seen the biggest changes, with Fiji's popularity increasing at the expense of Bali and NZ.

Families are also splurging more compared to 2019, spending an extra \$400 on a domestic holiday, \$1,000 more on a Fiji holiday, and an additional \$3,000 per overseas holiday elsewhere.

Another significant trend noted in the data was the amount of currency that customers are exchanging in FC's Travel Money stores and kiosks.

Pre-COVID, customers were exchanging approximately \$2,800; now they are exchanging \$4,900 - a 75% increase.

In 2022, females spent 31% more than males in FC stores, while males spent 6% more than females online.

The average lead time in-store was 71 days; online it ranged from 23 to 62 days.

Explore pay partner

TOUR operator Explore Worldwide has appointed TravelPay B2B as an official payment partner, with the brand now live on the payment company's online portal.

"We see travel agents as the cornerstone of building our brand in Australia, so a partnership with TravelPay was crucial to ensure we had a seamless payment solution in place to support our trade growth," Regional Director Ben Ittensohn said.

QF increases credit flexibility

QANTAS has issued a new commercial policy which offers more flexibility to assist pandemic-impacted customers holding tickets in credit to make redemptions.

Effective from yesterday, the updated arrangements apply to pax holding a valid Qantas (081) ticket issued on or before 30 Sep 2021 currently held in credit.

Customers are now able to rebook to a new passenger name without a change fee, into a new PNR from current inventory, to QF operated and marketed flights on an equal or higher fare.

Rebookings by the current passenger are also possible, to a domestic or international itinerary within existing ticket validity (12 months of date of issue for domestic fares, and 12 months of departure date for international).

Tickets must be reissued by 30 Jun 2023, and reissued authority 523902 must be used, with further details at qantasagencyconnect.com.

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Work at MyCruises!

IGNITE Travel Group is today highlighting a range of available roles as it continues to capitalise on strong demand in the cruising market - see the **last page**.

SLH turns its eyes back to Australia/NZ

SMALL Luxury Hotels (SLH) has announced that Australia and New Zealand are once again "priority markets for brand expansion" as part of its post-pandemic growth strategy.

SLH reopened its Australian office in 2022, and has begun expanding with a new line-up including Tasmania's Islington Hotel, Chalets at Blackheath in NSW and the Carlin Hotel in NZ, as well as its partnership with La Vie Hotels & Resorts (**TD** 19 Oct).

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Amadeus to power Nancy's rollout

THE implementation of smart baggage technology services at Western Sydney International Airport (WSI) will be aided by a new deal with Amadeus.

Sydney's second airport, which will open to travellers in late 2026, will incorporate Amadeus Flow, a cloud-based solution that helps manage passengers' end-to-end services, as well as self-service hardware to enable luggage check-ins and drop-offs in a matter of minutes.

Amadeus systems will also seek to make a range of touchpoints at the airport more seamless, including flight data, check-in facilitation, aircraft stands and gates, as well as boarding and biometrics services.

Vietjet names APG as GSA

THE aggressive Aussie expansion of Vietjet has reached another milestone, with the Vietnamese carrier appointing APG as its exclusive GSA in the Australian market.

Reflecting on the contract win, APG Australia General Manager, Dan Quigley, said Vietjet represents a great opportunity for Aussie travellers across multiple profiles to explore more of Vietnam and link to surrounding Asian markets.

"Vietjet will provide an excellent offering for all market segments, whether it be business, leisure, or VFR," he said.

"Through seamless connections into Ho Chi Minh City, Vietjet provides Australian travellers with the opportunity to explore multiple destinations within Vietnam and beyond, with the Vietjet network extending to India, Japan, South Korea, and other Southeast Asian destinations".

Vietjet offers direct services from Sydney and Melbourne to Ho Chi Minh City.

Sabre taps Air India

SABRE and Air India have signed a new distribution deal to enable travel agents to access the carrier's fares and inventory through Sabre's Global Distribution System (GDS).

The timing on the agreement coincides with a sharp expansion push from the Indian airline, recently placing the biggest aircraft order in aviation history for 470 jets.

"As well as coming together once more under a new GDS agreement...we are confident this will strengthen Air India's position in our domestic and international routes, and help us to become more competitive on the global aviation stage," Air India said.

The airline's content will be available in the Sabre marketplace from 04 May.

Poznan for flydubai

FLYDUBAI has announced plans for a new non-stop service from Dubai to the Polish city of Poznan.

Three weekly Boeing 737 flights are scheduled on the route commencing from 29 Oct.

Four Seasons NEOM

FOUR Seasons Hotels & Resorts has announced plans for a new luxury resort as part of the NEOM master project in Saudi Arabia, with the 225 guest room and 52 villa property to be located on Sindalah Island.

As well as accommodation, Sindalah will be home to a superyacht marina, nine hole golf course and major events venues.



Unlock European Trains with Grant Robertson

Tips on Connection, Support and Deals

1. Being connected to 16 different European rail operator systems and with time differences, system maintenance can impact an otherwise seamless booking experience. Always check systems connectivity status from the homepage health centre icon or visit agent.raileurope.com/health-center
2. To access our dedicated operational support team (24/5 + reduced weekend hours), head to the **Help** tab on the home page navigation bar or use the contact form agent.raileurope.com/contact-us and follow the prompts.
3. To stay updated on special deals head to the **Planning Resources** tab on the home page or agent.raileurope.com/planning-resources. Currently, we have two promotions running including a 20% off Eurostar Standard Premier seats for for travel 9 May – 6 September (book by 10 May, T&Cs apply).

For more information, visit agent.raileurope.com or contact jhooper@raileurope.com (VIC, TAS, SA) or grobertson@raileurope.com (NSW, ACT, QLD, WA & NT).

Unlock Easy Rail Access

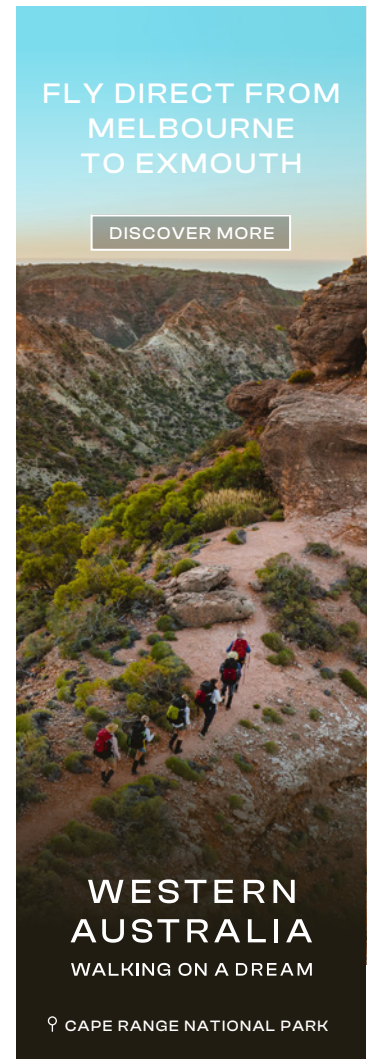
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Window Seat

TWO Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers at Phoenix Airport in the USA have ended up in hospital after trying to take some apple juice away from a passenger.

The incident saw the 19-year-old traveller arrested and charged with assault criminal damage and offense against public order after she allegedly undertook an “unprovoked and brazen physical attack” on the agents who confiscated the juice at a screening checkpoint.

It was just after 6am, so perhaps a case of very low blood sugar, but the suspect allegedly bit the officers and also “inconvenienced about 450 travellers who had to be redirected to another checkpoint,” the TSA said.

Exchange rate warning

AUSSIE travellers are potentially losing out on savings when it comes to exchanging currency, according to a new report by Money Transfer Comparison.

The survey of an independent panel of 1,002 Australians found that almost half (44%) aren't checking fees or rates before exchanging currency or making a money transfer to make sure they have found the best deal.

One in four (26%) respondents said they only occasionally research for the best deal before making a transaction, and a further 18% have never checked.

Of those who never or only occasionally checked fees and rates, two thirds (68%) said they didn't think they could save money through other service providers, and 27% said they didn't have the time to research.

Older Australians were more likely to neglect the research, with 46% of over-55s never or

occasionally checking fees and rates with other service providers, compared to 45% of those aged 35-54 and 41% aged 18-34.

Founder and Managing Director at Money Transfer Comparison, Alon Rajic, warned that Aussies shouldn't accept the first rate they come across, with some transfer services marking up the foreign exchange rate by up to 4.81%.

China outbound capacity improves

NEW data from ForwardKeys has provided some optimism for Aussie tourism operators, with figures suggesting Chinese outbound travel has recovered strongly in recent months.

While Thailand, Japan and South Korea make up the bulk of Chinese travel traffic, Australia was listed as a popular destination for Chinese residents travelling in the Asia Pacific.

The end for HTA?

THE Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) has expressed concerns about a proposed bill in the US state which would see the tourism body disbanded and folded into the State Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism.

The proposed bill was agreed to in a conference committee meeting between the State Senate and House of Representatives, HTA confirmed, with the only funding coming the way of Hawai'i's tourism sector in the form of US\$64 million to fix the leaky roof at the Hawai'i Convention Centre.

HTA said there is currently no legislative funding in place for the body to continue implementing its Destination Management Action Plans, which includes support for community events, popular sports events, and Hawai'i's branding messaging which educates visitors and guides the state's visitor economy.

Hello Hong Kong

Welcome to a world of new discoveries!



CORPORATE UPDATE

EMM travel solutions

A NEW report outlines advice and strategies for the safe and efficient transportation for energy, mining and marine (EMM) workers.

According to the latest travel management report by American Express Global Business Travel (Amex GBT), the movement of large and disparate EMM workforces - including mining and offshore rig workers, and seafarers - is a complex process that requires a particular blend of technology and specialist services.

Amex GBT's report offers solutions and strategies for EMM organisations to optimise their crew travel programs, and also shares insights on specialist discount airfares, virtual payments and sustainability initiatives.

"Our report sets out challenges and best practices for transporting EMM crews to often-remote sites, offshore installations and seaports.

"Challenges can vary from 'everyday' risks such as travel disruption causing missed

connections on multi-leg, multi-modal journeys, to extreme weather events, complexities in global maritime logistics, and local geopolitical instability," Amex GBT Head of EMM, Swapna Nair, said.

"With safety a top priority for companies, risk management and duty of care are paramount and travel programs must deliver on these.

"Specialist crew-travel solutions and expertise are needed, along with round the clock servicing and traveller support," Nair concluded. Get a copy of the report [HERE](#).

BCD's new hub

BCD Travel has established a service centre in Colombo, Sri Lanka, to provide clients in the Asia Pacific region with an always-on service for efficient program deployment.

The BCD Travel Asia-Pacific Service Centre (BCD ASC) supports travellers from around the world with front-line services during out-of-office hours in their regions.

BCD ASC is also creating a local Sustainability Committee and will appoint a local charity to further expand its outreach to the local communities.

With almost 200 full-time employees and set to expand, the new hub - which is led by Pradeep Kumar as the Executive Director - is expected to be one of the company's largest operations in the Asia-Pacific by the end of this year.

EK city check-in

EMIRATES has just opened a new City Check-in and Travel Store in the ICD Brookfield Place at Dubai International Financial Centre, allowing customers to book travel, check-in for flights, drop luggage and shop for travel essentials, as well as get free access and discounts to the centre's lifestyle facilities.

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FC leaders ready for action



LAST night the global Flight Centre brand leadership team assembled in Sydney for an event showcasing some of the organisation's current booking trends as well as future travel predictions (see [p1](#)).

Pictured at the Otto Ristorante in Woolloomooloo are, from left: Global Head of Marketing Clinton Hearne; Global CFO Katrina Ryan; Global Head of Operations, Marieke Tucker; MD Andrew Stark; GM Australia Brent Novak; and Global Head of Product & Pricing, Jason Hartley.

ANA glitch a no-go

TRAVELLERS who managed to hit the jackpot and nab heavily discounted All Nippon Airways (ANA) tickets because of a computer glitch have received the bad news that the Japanese carrier will not be honouring the erroneous transactions.

Last week, ANA sold First and Business class tickets as low as \$445 due to a "conversion error".

AA record revenue

AMERICAN Airlines has announced a record first-quarter revenue of USD\$12.2 billion, up 37% on the same period last year, with the carrier attributing the positive results to strong domestic and international demand.

The airline also achieved a US\$10m first-quarter profit for the first time in four years, and saw record operating cash flow of \$3.3 billion in the first quarter, operating 476,000 flights.

LH adds long-haul

LUFTHANSA has added new Airbus A380 destinations from Munich for the upcoming winter season, including a daily service to Los Angeles from 05 Oct.

The German carrier will also offer Munich flights to Bangkok from 28 Oct, and expand its services to India with three weekly Bangalore flights.

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TIME celebrates 350 graduates!

THE Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) this week hosted its latest graduation and networking evening in Sydney, along with the induction of the organisation's 51st cohort of mentees.

The occasion was sponsored by Radisson Blu Hotel, Globus Family of Brands, Princess Cruises and Sabre, with founder Penny Spencer saying "without the support given by organisations such as these, TIME would not have been able to grow and help the 350 graduates to date".

The guest speaker was Crystal Cruises APAC VP of Sales, Tony Archbold (right), who shared his industry journey, with Spencer urging prospective mentees to invest in their career by taking part in the program - more at travelindustrymentor.com.au.



THE gathering was emceed by TIME graduate Anna Shannon from Travel Agent Finder.

LINDY Goodwin from Oh the Places You'll Go Travel Co, a graduate of TIME program 48 and the recipient of the tour Atlas Scholarship provided by Alex Obleschuk, and her mentor, TIME Board member Dan Russell.



LEXI Papoulias from Globus Family of Brands with TIME mentor Dilli Ching and Jenny Le of AFTA.



THE evening's host Terry Oomens from Radisson Blu Hotel Sydney with TIME Founder Penny Spencer from Spencer Travel.



JEAN Summers-Reeves from Clean Cruising/Globenet Travel with CLIA's Peter Kollar.



TIME Committee Members Sharon Stanley and Richard Taylor.



DEMI Kavaratzis from Accommodations Plus International with Sabre's Nicole Regel.



ADVENTURE World's Andrea Morgan with Flight Centre's Benedict Porter.



BEN Gilkison-Duckworth, Scenic; Tahlia Shaw of Norwegian Cruise Lines and Sabre's Simon Roll.



TRAVEL SPECIALS

WELCOME to Travel Specials, *Travel Daily's* Friday feature. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of, send the details to specials@traveldaily.com.au

Viking is offering savings of up to \$2,000 per couple on the 10-day river journey between Lisbon and Porto and savings up to \$4,600 per couple on a 15-day holiday traversing Paris to Avignon, as well as the option to embark on the 16-day round-trip to Malta, Morocco & the Mediterranean priced from \$8,885. Visit viking.com for more.

Explore the most beautiful villages in France through the Dordogne Valley in a seven-day, baggage-free, self-guided walking route by **On Foot Holidays**. Itineraries include breakfasts, accommodation, picnic lunches and more from £1,220pp (AU\$2,257). Learn more [HERE](#).

North Guru has unveiled some of its new B2B summer packages for travel agents to book specific areas in North India. More than 150,000 packages such as the Pilgrimage Tour packages, Golden Triangle Tour packages, and much more are available - view all of them [HERE](#).

Make your booking by 31 May and save up to US\$2,035 on the 13-night Greenland and Arctic Canada package in 2024 from **Cruise Traveller**. Depart from Greenland to Canada on 02 Aug or vice versa on 14 Aug onboard *Ocean Endeavour* with a free night's hotel stay, zero solo supplement, and more. Call 1800 507 777 to make a booking.

LAX SAF fuel deal

SHELL Aviation will be supplying 10 million gallons of neat SAF to Delta Air Lines across two years for use at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), as part of the carrier's plan to achieve 10% SAF usage by the end of 2030.

DL's latest SAF commitment will increase the global usage of green jet fuel to 200 million gallons, laying down a clear path to the airline's 2030 SAF goal with partner Shell and becoming a net-zero emissions airline by 2050.

"We can have a huge impact in just a few years if stakeholders and government work together to provide the same level of investment and incentives currently available for the fuel that runs our cars," DL said.

More Mexican bodies

MEXICAN authorities continue to investigate the identities of five of the eight bodies found dumped near the Caribbean resort of Cancun.

More searches are underway as over 112,000 people are currently missing in the country.

Carnival plastic push

CARNIVAL Corporation has pledged to eliminate single-use plastics and improve waste disposal on its ships.

CEO Josh Weinstein said Carnival has eliminated more than 500 million single-use items and now has better recycling facilities in key ports in its pursuit of sustainability goals.

A unique famil to India



DMC and The Unique Tourism Collection client, Peirce & Leslie, in conjunction with Taj Hotels, recently treated a group of hand-picked travel agents to a nine-day famil trip to India.

The cohort travelled to Agra, Jaipur, Udaipur, Rishikesh and Haridwar on the banks of the Ganges River, staying in Taj properties in each city and visiting beautiful monuments such as the Taj Mahal, as well as eating some mouthwatering Indian cuisine.

Pictured: Karla Bett, Emma Whiting Travel; Stewart Evans,

Travel Associates Mosman; Karen Birch (standing), Main Beach Travel; Thushara Liyanarachchi (standing), Taj Hotels; Joanne Bailey (sitting back), Travelcall; Melanie Evans (sitting back), Travel Associates Mosman; Svetlana Jovanovic (sitting front), The Unique Tourism Collection; Thomas Sfyrios (sitting front), Lewis & Turner Travel Associates; Belinda Ferguson (standing right), Savenio Affiliate; Deb Oliver, Island Travel Specialists; Karen Bennetto, Travel Associates Ashmore Harris & James.



Got a confidential tip? Contact *Travel Daily* via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click [HERE](#) 



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