



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of news, including our **Corporate Update** page, plus a full page from **The Travel Junction**.

Viva joins NCL fleet

AFTER a few minor delays (*TD* 19 Aug 2022), Norwegian Cruise Line's (NCL) highly anticipated Prima Class vessel *Norwegian Viva* has finally been delivered from the Fincantieri shipyard in Marghera, Italy.

The milestone moment for the cruise line was celebrated in Sydney yesterday, which heralded the arrival of the second of six ships in the Prima Class to launch through to 2028, joining sister vessel *Norwegian Prima*, which launched last year.

The newest ship will "raise the bar" yet again, offering passengers more unique eateries, larger spaces and a broader range of activities - see ***Cruise Weekly*** for all the fanfare from yesterday.

Group tours done your way

EXCLUSIVE

TAILORED travel business Designer Journeys has announced the debut of its first custom group service for travel sellers in Australia and New Zealand.

Hailed as an "industry-first", the new Custom Group Travel by Designer Journeys product allows travel agents to curate one-of-a-kind group tours in more than 70 destinations, with advisors afforded the option of tailoring adventures to specific client interests and preferences.

Designer Journeys CEO, Matt McCann, said this new custom group service will allow travel agents to set themselves apart from the competition by providing genuinely idiosyncratic travel product to clients.

"By giving travel agents the ability to design travel experiences that uniquely match their clients' desires and preferences, we aim to

strengthen the connection between agents and their clients," McCann enthused.

The company also believes the new option will arm travel experts with a larger toolkit in which to both attract new customers and strengthen current client-agent relationships.

The group design service is currently comprised of more than 160 designers in the network, and boasts the option of travel agents joining tours as hosts, personalised in-destination support, and a flexible pricing model that allows agents to have full control over rates based on their own market analysis, target audience, and profit margins.

Successful pilot tours have garnered a satisfaction rating of 94% - more details **HERE**.

Rocking the savings

ENTIRE Travel Group has teamed up with Canadian rail service Rocky Mountaineer to offer Aussie travellers savings of up to \$1,750 per couple on 2024 journeys when bookings are made before 31 Aug.

Discounts on offer through the All Aboard 2024 promotion include a \$558pp saving on a two-day trip passing through Fraser Valley, some of the Rockies' highest peaks, and a night in Kamloops - see **HERE** for details.

Added Fiji perks!

AGENTS can earn up to 15% commission on selected Fiji accommodation through The Travel Junction, as well as access some amazing packages to the popular Pacific destination - see the **back page** for the full details.

GROUPS CONSULTANT AND SUPPORT

If you have previous groups, wholesale or retail travel experience, an abundance of drive, passion and customer service then this is your perfect move! Chris Watson Travel Group are now hiring.

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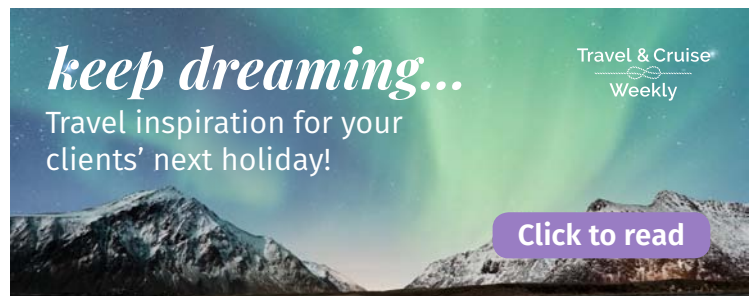
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Agents cool off with some AC



A **LUCKY** group of travel agents recently had the opportunity to check out Air Canada's B787 Dreamliner in Brisbane.

While inspecting the widebody aircraft, which operates direct flights from Brisbane to Vancouver, agents were able to enjoy the view of the Air Canada Signature Class, as well as the Premium Economy and Economy Class cabins.

The cohort were delighted when the Captain in Command welcomed them into the cockpit, where they were able to sit and "steer" the plane for photos.

Pictured with Captain William Cove (centre) and his crew: Debra Gibb and Melina Vrettos from Why Travel; Michelle Stark, Australian Travel & Tourism; Gavin Schofield, Air Canada Airport

Operations Manager; Rebecca Pennington, Helloworld Everton Hills; David Streek, Consolidated Travel; Andrew Graham, Student Horizons; and Janis McDonald, Air Canada Sales Account Manager.

AirJapan's 1st route

ANA Holdings' newest aviation brand, AirJapan, will commence its first flights in Feb 2024 with Narita to Bangkok services.

Specialising in the medium-haul market, AirJapan is targeting both leisure & business pax to support the Japanese Government's ambition of attracting 60 million visitors to the country by 2030.

Its concept of "fly thoughtful" seeks to offer customisable and convenient air experiences.

ATAS withdrawals

SEVERAL travel companies have recently exited AFTA's Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS), including Encore Journeys (ABN 41160364554), which failed to renew its membership in the required timeframe.

ATAS records also show that Melbourne-based Oceania Travel Agency is no longer accredited after failing to meet eligibility criteria to retain membership.

When contacted by **Travel Daily** for comment, Oceania Travel Agency said that it intends to re-apply for ATAS accreditation once it has reregistered a new ABN, which recently changed as a result of a business restructure.

The company also added that it wants to apply for an IATA accreditation, and believes its chances of being granted membership will be improved if it retains its accreditation with AFTA's ATAS scheme.

Meanwhile, two companies chose to voluntarily withdraw from ATAS as well, including luxury small group European tour specialists Tiki Tours.

Director Danielle Venn said the reason for the exit was because she feels the business will be more appropriately represented by CATO's accreditation scheme, because "we feel that we are, first and foremost, small group tour operators - not travel agents".

"We believe we will be well represented by [CATO] in the future," she added.

On Show Travel also chose to voluntarily withdraw from ATAS.

Oaks Perth debut

OAKS Hotels, Resorts & Suites is preparing to launch its first property in Perth on 18 Aug.

Located in the CBD close to transport hub Yagan Square and Elizabeth Quay, the newly acquired 190-key hotel offers spacious self-contained studio accommodation options with fully equipped kitchenettes, generous desk space, Foxtel TV and views of the city.

Oaks Perth Hotel also includes a 45-seat Oak & Vine restaurant and two events spaces.

Wildflowers in WA

ONE of the greatest flower shows on earth has begun to bloom in Western Australia, as wildflowers burst into colour in the state's Golden Outback and Coral Coast regions.

The botanical display is set to last until Nov - learn more **HERE**.

A sea of chocolate!

COSTA Cruises has teamed up with chocolatier Barry Callebaut to offer cruise passengers an entire sailing dedicated to sweet, sweet chocolate.

Departing 17 Nov, the delicious ChocoCruise will visit Genoa, Marseille, Barcelona, Cagliari, Naples, and Rome, all boasting themed chocolate visits from breakfast to dinner (including some savoury dishes), as well as talks from renowned pastry chefs such as Riccardo Bellaera, Alberto Simionato, Philippe Bertrand and Alexandre Bourdeaux.

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Don't crack tourism open

EXCLUSIVE

ANY moves to limit the time Working Holiday Makers (WHM) can spend in Australia would be "like killing the goose that lays the golden eggs", according to Accommodation Association (AA) National Chief Executive Officer Michael Johnson.

Speaking with *Travel Daily* this week, Johnson strenuously objected to any notion that WHM visas should be shortened to only one year, a proposal put forward by an independent migration review panel currently sitting before the Federal Government.

The panel's findings are motivated by a need to reduce what it labelled "exploitation" of WHMs, and while Johnson said the AA was supportive of actions to protect migrant workers, the proposed policy was not the right mechanism to resolve the issue.

"These concerns have tended to be concentrated in other industries where business models have developed which encourage people to come purely to work, which is not the idea of this visa," he observed.

Johnson added the tourism and accommodation sectors are "understandably very concerned about the recommendation" to limit the WHM to just one year, arguing the idea be pushed back upon for at least two reasons - tourism work shortages and much-needed visitor spend.



"The second and third years [of the WHM visa], including the current requirement to spend some of that time working in regional Australia, are critically important to accommodation employers having access to a mobile, seasonal workforce," Johnson argued.

"There are simply not enough Australians who seek seasonal work - particularly in Northern Australia.

"On top of supplementing the workforce, WHMs are also highly beneficial to the tourism economy, they largely spend what they earn and are a huge economic benefit to the regions."

While clearly troubled by the recommendation, Johnson said from his talks with government, they have a "strong appreciation" for the benefits to the economy and to the tourism workforce - particularly in the regions - that the current WHM brings.

In its submission to the migration review, Tourism Australia said WHMs are a valuable travelling segment as they stay longer and spend more than other overseas arrivals.

Dusit Thani Kyoto

DUSIT International has continued to grow its portfolio in Japan, with Dusit Thani Kyoto set to open in Tokyo's Hanganji Monzen-machi district this Sep.

The new luxury property contains 145 guest rooms, event spaces for up to 240 guests, a fitness centre, indoor swimming pool, a signature Devarana Wellness centre, and an array of dining options, including a speciality Teppanyaki restaurant.

The hotel marks Dusit's second property in Japan, following the opening of ASAI Kyoto Shijo in Jun (TD 09 May).

Queensland tourism funding apps open

QUEENSLAND tourism operators can now apply for more funding to deliver new and enhanced tourism infrastructure or experiences, specially in the areas of coastal and marine tourism; heritage and coastal tourism; and ecotourism.

Between \$1-4 million in funding is available on a matched contribution basis for eligible projects, such as marine tourism terminals/jetties.

Applications are open until 11 Sep - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Turbulence ahead!

TRAVELLERS should brace themselves for more severe turbulence in the coming years, according to new research cited by *The Wall Street Journal*.

The amount of clear-air turbulence (CAT) in the mid-northern hemisphere is expected to double in the next three to six decades, as flying altitude conditions become hotter.

"One problem with CAT is that it can occur during a flight's more docile cruise phase, and it often occurs unexpectedly and without visual cues," Pilot and MicroTau Head of Aviation Business Development Alexander Robinson explained.



Window Seat

WHILE it's rare that a traveller's luggage goes on more of a holiday than the traveller themselves, this is what recently occurred for Melbourne-based comedian and musician Michelle Braiser.

After landing in Scotland for her show at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival on Wed, Braiser was unable to collect her six suitcases (which contained expensive instruments and clothing for the opening night show), despite them being only 50 metres away from her.

According to the Aussie performer, the airport staff said they didn't have the authority to allow her to collect her luggage, and advised her to fill out a report.

Despite following protocols, Braiser's bags sat at the airport for several days, before eventually finding their way back to her in unusual ways.

One bag was spotted by Braiser's friend, who arrived in the city on a later flight and was able to simply walk up to the bag and take it, claiming that the airport staff didn't appear to care.

Another suitcase was eventually delivered to Braiser's accommodation, after she and her team bemusedly watched it embark on "an absolute tour of Edinburgh", which they were able to track via AirTags.

The Aussie traveller blamed baggage handlers Swissport, and airlines Etihad and KLM for the strange debacle, and told *Edinburgh Evening News* "it's clear the staff on the ground at Edinburgh Airport need more support".

A spokesperson for Swissport told the news station that they are "working hard to reunite them with their luggage".

The Chat with Jenny

A Conversation with Jodie Hart

of Oceania Cruises & Regent Seven Seas Cruises

[CLICK HERE to listen](#)



CORPORATE UPDATE

Travelport extends two

TRAVELPORT has ramped up its operations after recently signing a number of new deals, including the renewal of a multi-year agreement with United Airlines,

which will see the carrier's New Distribution Capability (NDC) content become available to Travelport customers.

Travelport-connected agencies, starting with those across the US and the EMEA region in Aug, will be able to search, compare and book United's NDC offers, as well as service NDC bookings, including modifications and cancellations.

Also announced by the global technology company this week, NDC content from British Airways is now live on the Travelport+ platform for agencies in the UK and Ireland, and will roll out globally shortly after that.

The deal will enable agents using Travelport+ to easily search, compare, book and service British Airways' content all in one place, with access to a wide range of content, fares, and offerings.

Ruffles disposes half

FRESH from assuming the role of Corporate Travel Management's CEO of Australia/NZ/Europe and Asia following a restructure (**TD** 17 Jul), an update on the ASX yesterday indicated that Laura Ruffles has disposed of half her share appreciation rights in the company after they lapsed due to vesting conditions not being met.

The update showed that Ruffles still holds 62,500 share appreciation rights, in addition to 50,000 ordinary shares.

CTM embraces AI

EXCLUSIVE

CORPORATE Travel Management (CTM) has revealed to *Travel Daily* that it is currently benefiting strongly from a two-year investment in AI, which is seeking to improve robotic processes throughout the B2B travel business.

Using the Australian market as a test case, CEO Jamie Pherous said that so far CTM had achieved "really good results".

"In the last quarter in particular, we are starting to see some really wonderful results," Pherous noted, adding that the nature of the AI integration related primarily to how customers can interact with CTM.

"We want customers to transact with us any way they want, whenever they want, which is via phone, email, chat etc... and internally [AI] is helping out with mundane tasks like cancellations and changes so that our consultants can carry on with dealing with the stuff that really matters," Pherous said.

The full benefits of its AI investment strategy will be talked about in more detail when the company releases its full-year results later this month.

Connect with your clients and ramp up your social media content

Travel & Cruise Weekly

Travel & Cruise Weekly have ready-made social media toolkits to inspire your clients.

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Please take a new seat



IN A push to revitalise its ethos and vision, Thompson Aero Seating has revamped its logo and website, along with the new strapline 'Together, we inspire'.

Based in Northern Ireland, Thompson Aero Seating manufactures premium and Business class airline seating which is used by carriers like Qantas and American Airlines.

The rebranding intends to capture the company's aim of creating an "inspired flying experience", encompassing the values of creativity, vision and brilliance, and has since been rolled out through its social media channels, correspondence, signs, and more.

The new website is now viewable **HERE**, where the new Dynamic Test Facility and various partnerships between Thompson and its major airline customers, as well as new products, are on full display.

MEANWHILE, Keith Anderson

has been appointed as its new Chief Executive Officer, who will continue to steer the company into success after the departure of Neil Taggart.

The experienced operations professional has enjoyed a successful career, having worked with an array of reputable organisations, including his recent role as the chief operating officer at IQE, as well as business unit director in premium seating at Rockwell Collins prior to that.

Commenting on Anderson's appointment, Chief Financial Officer Andy Morris praised him as "a collaborative executive leader with a wealth of manufacturing and leadership experience... for consistently transforming organisations and teams to deliver outstanding results".

"I am excited about the prospect of guiding Thompson Aero Seating...and I look forward to leading the team to deliver these targets," Anderson said.

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SPECIALS

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Hurtigruten is now offering savings of up to 25% for a second guest on selected Classic Voyages when bookings are made on or before 31 Aug. Coinciding with the cruise line's 130th anniversary, the second traveller deal applies to the North Cape Express voyage from Sep 2023 to Mar 2024 and the Svalbard Express sailing between Jun 2024 and Sep 2024. Learn more about the deal [HERE](#).

Located in the heart of Hunter Valley food and wine district, **Tower Lodge** is offering Grand Midweek Winter Escapes where guests can stay for three nights for the price of two. Exclusively available in the Tower Lodge's Grand Suites, guests will also enjoy daily breakfast, lunch and dinner, and an in-suite bar that is replenished daily. The deal is available until 30 Sep and excludes Fri and Sat. Call 02 4998 7022 to book.

Score 15% off select departures with **AAT Kings'** Last Minute Deals. The tours on offer include the 13-day Perfect Tasmania from \$6,298pp for departures between 15 Sep and 08 Dec, the five-day Remarkable Adelaide to Kangaroo Island from \$2,146pp on 16 Sep and the 17-day New Zealand Uncovered from \$7,777pp for select tours travelling in Oct. Learn more about the deal or book [HERE](#).

Aranui Cruises is offering a flash sale of up to 25% off its Marquesas Islands Cruise, representing savings of more than \$1,700. The offer is valid on selected voyages from 02 to 13 Dec, priced from \$5,955pp. No single supplement fees also mean solo travellers can stay in their own room for the usual twin share stateroom fare of \$7,751pp. For further information, see [HERE](#).

Save up to 30% on winter apartment hotel stays with **Nesuto** across Australia and New Zealand. The new travel deals allow travellers to have "Your Stay, Your Way" for bookings made from now until 30 Nov, valid for stays until 30 Dec. Stays per night start from \$195 at Nesuto Canberra Apartment Hotel, and from \$172 per night at Nesuto Stadium Hotel and Apartments in Auckland. Reserve your discount stay [HERE](#).

Travellers can earn up to 2,000 bonus Velocity Points on eligible **G'day Parks** accommodations when they spend \$350 or more in one transaction. Book online or on the G'day Parks app for stays from now until 21 Sep to validate the offer. Guests can also earn two points per \$1 spent between qualifying stays. Deal ends on 14 Aug, book [HERE](#).

With its inaugural flights between Seoul and Sydney commencing from 08 Aug, **Asiana Airlines** has partnered with **Falmont Ambassador**, Seoul to provide VIP services for the airline's Business class passengers. Eligible passengers can enjoy benefits such as chauffeur airport transfers and hotel Gold Lounge access. [CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

More Aussies at the Gate



THERE has been a surge in Australians visiting The Menin Gate Memorial in Ypres, Flanders, as it undergoes a full-scale restoration to ensure its long-term preservation ahead of its 100-year anniversary in 2027.

The nightly Menin Gate Last Post ceremony will continue

uninterrupted at 8pm each evening throughout the duration of the restoration.

Guests are also able to enjoy free entry to a special 'Menin Gate Moments' exhibition at the CWGC Centre, which showcases works by artist Tom Cole.

For more details on the special exhibition, [CLICK HERE](#), and to learn more about the Menin Gate restoration, [CLICK HERE](#).

US Mongolian 1st

DIRECT passenger flights between the United States and Mongolia will commence operations from next year, under a new landmark bilateral agreement signed this week.

The US has described the move as a major win for tourism, with an Air Transport Agreement to be signed soon that will pave the way for direct flights, which are likely to fly into the Mongolian capital of Ulaanbaatar.

No US cities have been detailed yet as departure points, but the deal is being viewed by analysts as an important geopolitical wedge against China, amid a backdrop of rising tensions between the two superpowers.

EK hails 20 yrs of NZ

THIS week, Emirates is marking 20 years of flying to New Zealand, carrying more than 16 million passengers on 49,000 services between the island country and Dubai since 2003.

Barry Brown, Divisional VP for Australasia at Emirates, said the milestone highlights the airline's ongoing commitment to the New Zealand market.

Emirates currently runs 14 weekly flights to NZ from Dubai, while earlier this year, NZ became the first country to exclusively operate Emirates' new four-class A380 on all its services.

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

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KORO SUN RESORT



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