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Travel Daily First with the news

Tuesday 8th Aug 2023



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MTA Sandra di Benedetto

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SILVERSEA Cruises limited time offer of suite category upgrades, up to US\$1,000 onboard credit and reduced deposits is valid for bookings made by 31 Aug.

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It's Chooseday again

TRAVELLERS Choice is inviting independent travel agency owners to "choose a new future for your business" as part of its ongoing campaign to expand its membership across Australia.

Options available include 'Activate', 'Elevate' and







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*Book by 31 August 2023, terms and conditions apply.

Livn bought by ResPax

ACTIVITIES and experiences tech provider Livn Group has been acquired by Cairns-based booking software specialist ResPax, with the deal promising "business as usual" for Livn clients following the company's appointment of voluntary administrators (TD 23 Jun).

ResPax was among around 20 interested parties who responded to an invitation to buy the business, which had accumulated more than \$26 million in losses when its main backer, Tasmanian Kathmandu founder Jan Cameron, withdrew support.

The acquisition "is not just about combining businesses, it's about creating a stronger, more dynamic travel ecosystem that benefits all our valued partners and clients, as well as the broader travel community," according to a statement from ResPax Chief Executive Tony Bridgewater.

He said the company is

committed to "retaining the aspects that have made both ResPax and Livn cherished names in the industry, while leveraging our combined strengths to further elevate our services".

Bridgewater confirmed that ResPax had been a long-standing supporter of Livn as an early investor in the company, and had always maintained a close working relationship.

"When the opportunity to acquire Livn arose, it became evident that our missions and dedication to servicing the experiences sector were perfectly aligned," he enthused.

More details at respax.com.au.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including our Sustainability page, plus a front cover wrap from Travellers Choice, and a full page from Silversea.









Tourism tutorial

THE Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) will host an online tutorial on 'The Changing South-East Asian FIT Market' tomorrow at 11am AEST, which will cover how to tailor products and experiences for this market's needs - CLICK HERE to register.



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SIA delivers Aussie boost

THE Australian market will be a huge beneficiary of Singapore Airlines' newly unveiled global expansion strategy, with the carrier announcing it will start phasing in an extra 4,700 seats to/from Australia from Mar 2024 (*TD* breaking news yesterday).

The increase in capacity will be achieved through a combination of extra services and larger aircraft, with Sydney to see two of four B777-300ER aircraft replaced with A350-900s, marking a return of First class to the route.

Melbourne will also increase in capacity via a fifth daily service between Nov 2023 and Mar 2024, before being reinstated at the end of May 2024, while flights from Adelaide will see 238 seats a week added, marking a better capacity than pre-COVID levels.

Up in Darwin, flights will return to daily services via SQ251 and SQ252 on a 154-seat B737-8, commencing 31 Mar 2024, while

HLO issues shares

HELLOWORLD Travel Limited yesterday announced the proposed issue of 5,471,996 ordinary fully paid shares, which will form the \$15 million equity component of the company's \$70 million acquisition of Express Travel Group (*TD* 22 Jun).

The shares were priced at about \$2.74 each, based on the volume-weighted average price of HLO shares over the 20-day business period prior to 31 Jul.

in Perth, SIA will permanently add a fourth daily service from 31 Mar 2024, initially scheduled for four times a week from Nov 2023 to Jan 2024, before being extended as a regular daily service.

The major expansion news was rounded out with the announcement that SIA will operate its 303-seat widebody A350-900 aircraft in Cairns four times weekly, delivering an extra 442 seats from 31 Mar 2024.

AFTA flags big news

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) has invited members to register for a special online update next Tue.

The "very important and exciting member webinar" will cover a major evolution of the association and what it means for its membership across Australia.

Details of the important change will also be revealed to the wider industry in a separate session later in the day - to register to attend **CLICK HERE**.





Unlock European Trains with James Hooper

Here are my most used Top 5 resources available through agent.raileurope.com

- 1. System Connectivity shows the live connection status with the carriers. Always check here before booking.
- 2. Train Product fact sheets your "go to" for specific train routes, on board services, booking horizons, etc.
- 3. Under the 'Help', you have 'Planning/Booking/Traveling' articles. In 'Planning' there is How far in advance can I book train tickets.
- 4. In the same location, but under 'Booking' you have Getting started with your Eurail mobile Pass and How to book a Eurail seat reservation through Rail Europe or How your clients can book seat reservations directly through Eurail.
- 5. Finally at the very bottom of the 'Help' page is access to the contact support page, where you can request support with Aftersales with bookings, payment, booking an ad75, etc.

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New Solomons port

A SECOND aircraft in its fleet and soon-to-be-completed airport infrastructure in the western province will see Solomon Airlines increase its flight frequency between Brisbane and the Pacific Island nation from Oct.

Services between Honiara and the Queensland capital will rise to five times weekly from 02 Oct, while the carrier has also confirmed a restart of direct flights from Brisbane to the village of Munda - marking the first time the route has been flown since 2019.

The Munda service will be made possible because of the construction of the multi-milliondollar Munda International Airport Terminal Building, which the carrier confirmed is due for completion by the end of Sep.

Solomon Airlines has also hailed the timing as important because of the upcoming Pacific Games, starting on 19 Nov.

TA appoints new trio







TOURISM Australia (TA) has added new blood to its board this week, with the trio of Georgina Richters, Ian Horne and Linda Wayman coming aboard.

The move sees Bradley Woods, Alexandra Burt and Katie Page all depart Australia's peak tourism body, all of whom helped to steer the country's tourism strategy through the pandemic.

"Bradley, Alex and Katie were part of a team that drove a broad range of initiatives, from a domestic campaign, to industry support measures and the development and launch of a new international brand campaign,"

Tourism Australia Chairman Michael Issenberg said.

"On behalf of the Tourism Australia team and the tourism industry...I thank them for their dedication, expert advice and support during their tenures."

Richters (right) joins the TA board with 20 years of working in Indigenous affairs, and is currently the Deputy Chair of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Legacy Committee.

Horne (middle) brings a wealth of SA events knowledge, while Wayman (left) will be prized for her specialised corporate governance knowledge.



Window Seat

MANY Aussies are thanking their lucky stars they did not book themselves a trip to participate in the World **Triathlon Championship Series** in the United Kingdom.

Of the 2,000 athletes who participated in the event, which included a swim off Sunderland's blue flag Roker beach, close to 60 have suffered from severe diarrhoea shortly afterwards.

While no formal connection to the cleanliness of the water and the sicknesses have been made, the event took place on a stretch of coastline that has been at the centre of a legal battle over sewage discharges between campaigners and the local government.

We'd prefer a tsunami while swimming over a poonami!



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Big budget for USA

BRAND USA has announced a budget of US\$270 million for the 2024 financial year - the largestever budget in the DMO's history.

The news comes as Brand **USA CEO and President Chris** Thompson revealed plans to retire mid next year (TD 01 Aug).



CX Aria teases 'quiet luxury'



CATHAY Pacific has offered a first look at its new 'Aria' Business class suite, which is set to debut on the carrier's Boeing 777-300ER aircraft from next year.

The teaser video invites travellers to "savour the quiet luxury of Aria", revealing a few design elements of the suite, including a sliding privacy door, several storage spaces, and what looks to be wireless device charging capabilities.

The carrier is yet to provide details on seat dimensions or configuration, or announce the rollout plans for the new suite, apart from a 2024 launch date.

The sneak peak comes as Cathay Pacific continues to enjoy a strong rebound from the pandemic, having carried a total of 1,548,571 passengers in Jun a 931.9% increase on the same period in 2022.

Watch the promo video HERE.

AFTA has confirmed the withdrawal of Haberfield. Sydney travel agency Viatour Travel from the Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS).

The business failed to renew its membership as required under s2.5(n) of the ATAS Charter.

Meanwhile Helloworld Travel Mona Vale in Sydney has also failed to renew; when contacted by Travel Daily, the company's owner Dorothy Roberts said the plan was to jump back aboard in the next six months, citing administration challenges as the reason for dropping out.

Win Vietnam trips and support kids

INTREPID Travel is giving away five trips on its 10-day Vietnam Express Southbound itinerary valued at \$1,468 to top fundraisers in the company's annual charity event, the Blue Dragon Marathon Walk.

Taking place on 10 Sep, the marathon walk will raise funds for the Blue Dragon Children's Foundation, a not-for-profit charity providing shelter to young victims of human trafficking, with 300 people across 15 countries expected to participate.

Now in its sixth year, the Intrepid Foundation flagship event will for the first time offer the top two individual fundraisers and top three teams with tickets on its Vietnam itinerary, eyeing an overall target of raising \$250,000

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- see more information HERE.

A&K connects '24

A&K Australia has announced its Connections Boutique Group Journeys for 2024, which consists of eight European itineraries.

A springtime cruise through Belgium and Holland is on offer, as well as adventures ranging from eight to 11 days to Morocco, the Canadian Rockies, Spain, Portugal, Iceland, Greece, Switzerland and more.

Tours are limited to 24 guests, and include insider access. private transfers, boutique accommodations, exclusive local interactions, most gratuities, and 24/7 A&K on-call support.

Prices start from \$9,315pp for the eight-day Morocco: Imperial Cities itinerary, which explores Fez el-Bali, treads the ancient Roman paths at Volubilis, and takes in the sights and cuisine of Marrakech - learn more HERE.



Register your interest now!

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Switzerland rolls up in WA

SWITZERLAND

Tourism partnered with Entire Travel Group, Rail Europe and Lufthansa for a special product update in Perth yesterday.

More than 40 WA travel advisors enjoyed hospitality during a delightful lunch while getting the low-down on all the latest from the suppliers about their support for the trade selling the increasingly popular destination.

Antonio Khattar and Sonia Holt from Switzerland Tourism/The Walshe Group are pictured.

Phinda rebuild

ANDBEYOND has announced that its renowned Phinda Forest Lodge in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa will soon undergo an extensive rebuild.

The property is one of five lodges on the company's Phinda Private Game Reserve, and will feature a "new elegant and minimalist interior design" along with subtle references to its original 'Zulu-zen' decor when it reopens to guests on 01 Dec.

Additions will include a family suite, a library and lounge, a newly reshaped pool, a central fire pit and upgrades to the main dining and bar areas - more info at andbeyond.com.



Inspiring recruits

INSPIRING Vacations is hoping to fuel its ongoing "steep upward growth trajectory" with a search for remote sales talent.

Roles are available as "fully remote positions" Australia-wide, with the team managing Inspiring's high volume of customer enquiries predominantly via phone & email.

"Additionally, successful candidates will have the unique opportunity to connect with customers through in-person assistance at nearby nationwide events," according to CEO Paul Ryan, who attributed Inspiring's strong performance in large part to its award-winning flexible work culture which saw the company recently named the #1 Best Place To Work by the Australian Financial Review (TD 21 Apr) - see inspiringvacations.com/careers.

AFTA UPDATE

from Nina Hedges, Compliance Manager



help but feel a genuine sense of oneness in our industry that has certainly grown stronger in the last few years than ever before.

Although our sector is diverse in so many ways, at our industry's core we are united by a shared vision to be successful, to conduct our business at an elevated level and to support and stimulate the country's travel industry.

Whether we are a tour operator leading a tour group through the Himalayas, a travel advisor planning a once-in-alifetime holiday for our clients, a consolidator issuing a 16 sector round-the-world ticket or a wholesaler packaging up a weekend getaway for a consultant to present to their clients, we are all in this together as one industry and share the

same vision for the future of the Australian travel industry.

AFTA wishes to foster this unity and cohesion and ensure that each and every corner of our sector feels heard and supported by our association.

For this to be a success we must ensure that we are an association that allows each member to have their say and then, most importantly, we listen.

There is no doubt that when individuals come together with a common purpose and a shared vision, a space for positive change and accomplishment is created.

AFTA is proud to be that powerful driver, bringing the industry together under one standard of excellence to educate and advocate, ensuring we remain a self-regulated prosperous industry that future generations strive to be a part of.

Next week we will be sharing the next steps in our evolution, and we would love you to join us for our industry update next Tue at 6pm Sydney time. Register to find out about this big news by **CLICKING HERE.**

NDC session on Tue

NEXT week's BTTB Business Travel Conference & Awards in Sydney will include a presentation from Nathan Smeulders, Senior Manager of Distribution at Qantas who will speak about the carrier's NDC implementation.

Registrations are still open for the two-day event at Royal Randwick, with a special \$100 discount for TD readers by selecting the "Travel Daily" option during the registration process.

For more info on other sessions and to register CLICK HERE.

Vietjet adds Perth

VIETNAM-BASED carrier Vietjet this morning announced the first-ever non-stop flights between Perth and Ho Chi Minh City, with the new route set to kick off from 21 Nov.

Initially operating twice weekly, the new WA services bring the carrier's total Australian return frequencies to 19 per week including operations to Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne.

The services will utilise the airline's A321neo aircraft, with one way fares leading in at \$200.

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Venice in danger

MASS tourism in Venice is causing "irreversible changes" to the Italian city, UNESCO has warned.

The UN cultural agency has recommended Venice be added to the Heritage Danger List, citing a greater need for the tourist hub to do more to protect its assets.

Italian authorities were also called out for their collective lack of "overall joint strategic thinking", with UNESCO suggesting a continually delayed day trip tourist tax (*TD* 19 Jul 2022) fails to go far enough to protect the city.

Auckland prog

AUCKLAND is paving the way for sustainable tourism with The Taurikura Initiative, a capacity-building program designed to support tourism businesses to accelerate their sustainability journey.

The initiative, being delivered by Tataki Auckland Unlimited, is a free, 12-week course for businesses across the city that want to gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to charge their sustainability approach and create positive change.

It offers personalised oneon-one support, collaborative workshops, community building & action plan help.

RAIL COULD SAVE 1 MILLION CO2 TONNES

EUROPE could cut its carbon emissions in half by swapping out short-haul domestic flights for rail journeys, according to a new study from Mabrian.

The report looks at the potential CO2 emission savings if the short-haul flight ban that has recently come into effect in France (*TD* 26 May) was to be rolled out across multiple European countries.

The results show the potential impact of using high-speed trains to replace 554 domestic air routes across Europe that are less than two-and-a-half hours' travel time, and have a distance of less than 500km.

According to the analysis, the environmental impact would be massive if the transition were to take place, creating savings of more than one million tonnes of CO2 in a single year - equal to more than 200,000 cars running continuously for 12 months.

Bracing for Hurti

HURTIGRUTEN has partnered with Bracenet in a new upcycling initiative, deepening its onboard sustainability experience.

The cruise line will upcycle old fishing nets and other marine waste to create lanyards, bracelets and keychains for its guests and crews to hold key cards used throughout the sailing.



Spain was identified as the country with the highest potential CO2 saving at 360,000 tonnes per year, followed by Germany, which could potentially shave 238,000 tonnes; France, with 193,000 tonnes; Italy, with 189,000 tonnes; and Sweden, with 159,000 tonnes.

MEANWHILE, Australia's Transport Minister Catherine King has recently flagged high-speed rail as an alternative to air travel,

Planners plant

MORE than 100 of Australia's leading event planners have been gifted a tree to increase the habitat of tree-kangaroos on the Tablelands of Far North Qld.

The move was a thank you for attending the Cairns & Great Barrier Reef Business Events Regional Showcase in Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne last week.

particularly on the busy Sydney-Melbourne route.

"If we're going to get planes out of the sky and we're going to decarbonise aviation, train travel is one of those ways that we've actually got to do it," she said on ABC radio in Newcastle.

Australian Airports Association chief James Goodwin labelled King's comment as "shortsighted", arguing that high-speed rail is not even close to becoming a reality.

Frasers credited

CAPRI By Fraser Brisbane has become the first Queensland property to receive the status of Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard for Buildings.

The 239-unit Capri by Fraser Brisbane was identified as eligible to implement decarbonisation initiatives, which included a partial switch to renewable energy.

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MONEY

WELCOME to Money, TD's Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US\$0.657

THE Aussie has been sluggish the past week, mostly affected by a mixed US jobs report, moving the currency to its lowest point in three weeks.

The Australian dollar was mostly underwhelming against the US dollar and the Euro, down over \$0.02 on both.

The currency has also dipped slightly against major markets including the Japanese yen, Chinese yuan and more.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.657
UK	£0.514
NZ	\$1.077
Euro	€0.597
Japan	¥93.64
Thailand	ß22,91
China	¥4.726
South Africa	12.31
Canada	\$0.879
Crude oil	US\$86.24

I'm keeping my trips

CLOSE to 15% of Australians are not willing to part with overseas holidays despite the rising costof-living crisis.

The findings were contained in a report from Finder released this week, which asked over 1,000 Aussies which luxuries would you not be willing to part with in the current economic climate.

While it was reassuring to see overseas trips made the list, one in four did reveal that they have "dropped all luxuries" for now.

Seattle is a thing of brew-ty



THE Port of Seattle and the State of Washington Tourism recently held a FIFA Women's World Cup VIP event in Sydney (pictured), which included a screening of Australia's 4-0 defeat of Canada.

The two Pacific Northwest tourism partners invited VIP guests for drinks and canapes at Surly's American Tavern, ahead

Perth to Pinnacles

PERTH-BASED tour guide app Dark Stry has launched a new self-drive guided audio tour for the popular Perth to the Pinnacles road trip.

The tour combines audio storytelling with GPS maps, highlighting points of interest along the way and offering tips such as where to get the best food, as well as augmented reality filters, allowing the user to see what an area would look like when covered in wildflowers, if they are travelling out of season.

The Perth to Pinnacles tour is available to download now from the Dark Stry website for \$42.50, which includes access for up to five devices - learn more HERE.

of a screening of the game, in preparation for the United States' hosting of the next men's World Cup, which will include games played in Washington.

In addition to learning more about the destinations, guests enjoyed poutine and "Seattle dogs", which are commonly enjoyed by sports fans in the city, and differ from regular hot dogs by including the combination of cream cheese and sautéed onion.

Pictured: Jodie Collins, Luxury Escapes; Toni Murphy, Brand USA; Michael Turtle, TimeTravelTurtle blog; Ella Marelich, Brand USA; Celeste Arthur, Hawaiian Airlines; and Claire Bradley, Brand USA.

Ormina 2024 tours

ORMINA Tours has added three new tours to its 2024 season, which take in the rich cultures, landscapes and cuisine of Naples and the Amalfi Coast, Tuscany and Portugal.

For a limited time, travellers can secure their spot with a reduced deposit of only \$250 per person see the full T&Cs HERE and learn more about the 2024 itineraries at orminatours.com.

Niger shut down

AN ONGOING coup in the African nation of Niger has seen the new military junta close down its entire air space.

The decision was made in response to calls from the US and other African nations to end the coup diplomatically and to reinstall former President Mohamed Bazoum, with America also suspending all financial aid to the country.

Power was seized by Nigerian military officer Abdourahamane Tchiani on 28 Jul.

Her Majesty's tours

HER Majesty's Theatre in Adelaide is bringing back its guided tours by popular demand, allowing the public an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the venue ahead of its 110th anniversary in Sep.

Tours are on sale now with two sessions running daily - see HERE.

All Aboard Mr Legh

KELSIAN Group's recently acquired All Aboard America coach touring company has appointed a new CEO, with Graeme Legh coming on board.

The move will see long-standing CEO Bill Trimarco retire from the business, flagged back in May at the time of the purchase (TD 29 May), but he will remain with the business during an important transition period as a Non-Executive Director.

Legh arrives in the top role after being "instrumental" in Kelsian's acquisition of the All Aboard America, with MD Clint Feuerherdt stating Legh will be pivotal to the future success of the company's growth plan.

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