



EXPLORE

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ETG plots major growth

EXPRESS Travel Group CEO Tom Manwaring is expecting the firm's air business to "double in size" as a result of its acquisition by Helloworld Travel Limited.

Speaking this morning at the company's ETGX conference in Singapore, Manwaring told the 300-plus members and suppliers in attendance that an initial approach to HLO in relation to its Air Tickets platform had quickly become a discussion about a full takeover of the business.

"It all happened at the speed of light," he told delegates, adding that the benefits of increased scale became increasingly clear.

"In terms of partnerships, I copied Helloworld, ETG was basically a little mini Helloworld... we have the structure, divisions, staff, but couldn't afford new systems," he said.

The tie-up with Helloworld means "we are very confident about the future," he added.

Going forward "we have to keep

growing" he said, with aspirations to improve information sharing back to head office, make the business more agile, continue the record performance of Creative Cruising and offer the products agents want to sell.

Manwaring stressed that despite the acquisition he will be remaining with the business.

"I want to reiterate that I'm not going anywhere, I want you to know that I'm not the cut-and-run type of guy," he said.

ATAS to offer deals

THE revamped Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) website will allow members to promote their own travel offers to the hundreds of thousands of consumers currently visiting the site each year.

The move was unveiled this morning in Singapore by Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) CEO Dean Long, who said the initiative was the result of industry feedback that "you are looking for more return on your ATAS investment".

"We want to make sure that if we've got 100,000 people coming to our website, checking if you're ATAS accredited, that you have an opportunity to put a deal up on that website and direct them to your business," Long said.

"That is a game-changer for us... it will allow you to get further leads, and it will allow you to sell more travel," he added.

Today's issue of TD

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

A luxurious career

VIRTUOSO is inviting luxury travel advisors to enhance their career by joining its Advisor Recruitment Program, which provides participants with the tools needed to attract and retain high-value clients - see **page six**.

QF, EK get the tick

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has given Qantas and Emirates the green light to continue co-ordinating their operations (**TD** breaking news yesterday).

The approval allows the two airlines, as well as Qantas subsidiary Jetstar, to cooperate across their networks until 28 Sep 2028, and follows the recent interim decision in favour of the deal (**TD** 23 Jun).

However, the ACCC said it will monitor the Sydney to Christchurch route over the next five years to see how the alliance impacts competition, as Air New Zealand is the only other airline operating that route.

The authorisation comes in spite of several objections against the partnership, including from the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) (**TD** 30 Jan).

Qantas and Emirates first lodged an application for the renewal of the authorisation in Nov 2022.

Travel Daily
ON LOCATION

SINGAPORE

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of **Express Travel Group** which is holding its **ETGX conference in Singapore this weekend**.

ETGX delegates from across Australia are experiencing the luxe Pan Pacific Collection Marina Bay Hotel (formerly the Mandarin Oriental).

After business sessions this morning, attendees will get to experience some welcome R&R later in the day in a Gardens by the Bay Experience.

Tomorrow's agenda will provide opportunities for members to discuss the state of play alongside panels covering responsible tourism, followed by a Product Exchange, a keynote from Alisa Camplin and the celebratory gala dinner.

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Travel Daily

First with the news

Friday 18th Aug 2023



Window Seat

ONLY weeks after being dyed green by climate activists, the Trevi Fountain in Rome is in the headlines again, this time because of a tourist's quest for a unique type of thirst quench.

Footage of the woman has emerged online, showing the visitor filling up her water bottle from the fountain's waters before being led away by an angry guard.

While it's unknown what happened to the parched tourist, fines for illegally entering the tourist landmark can set troublemakers back around A\$850.



HOW much would you expect to pay for three glasses of orange juice, one Aperol Spritz and a portion of squid and shrimp?

Well, according to the DK Oyster restaurant on the Greek island of Mykonos, the lofty answer is A\$1,200.

The irate Italian tourists who were slugged with the bill slammed the eatery on Tripadvisor, stating "they [DK Oyster] are the biggest cheaters and thieves of Mykonos...they damage the image of Mykonos".



EK partnerships

EMIRATES has extended its codeshare partnership with Air Canada to include flights to and from Montreal, following the launch of its new daily direct service to the Quebec capital last month (**TD** 07 Jul).

In addition to connections from Toronto, the partnership now allows Emirates customers to easily connect to 11 Canadian destinations via Montreal.

MEANWHILE, the UAE flag carrier has also expanded its interline agreement with Philippine Airlines, allowing Emirates' passengers to reach more destinations in the Philippines via Cebu and Clark.

The codeshare expansion means Emirates now covers all three gateways in the Philippines, including the previously announced Manila.

Uniworld at the flicks

AGENTS can invite their clients along to the latest round of Uniworld's consumer events around Australia, to learn about the brand's 2024/25 program.

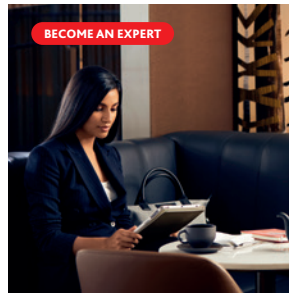
The 'Aperitivo at the Pictures with Uniworld' events include a private screening of Agatha Christie-inspired movie *A Haunting in Venice* along with beverages and finger food - RSVP to come along **HERE**.

Discover Eclipse II

AGENTS wanting to learn more about *Scenic Eclipse II* now have the chance to hear directly from Scenic's discovery experts Jason Flesher and Mike Cusack about what the ship has to offer cruisers in the Kimberley.

Clients are also welcome to attend the online Zoom session, with experiences covered to include the helicopter program, options on board the ship itself, VIP tours of the Darwin Aviation Museum and much more.

The session will take place on 24 Aug at 10-11am (AEST) - **CLICK HERE** to register.



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AIR CANADA

GET STARTED

Aussies still flock to Bali

INDONESIA maintained its spot as the top destination for short-term trips taken by Australians, accounting for 15% of all resident returns in Jun, ABS figures show.

Despite the sabre-rattling by authorities in Bali to crack down on unruly tourist behaviour, Aussie travellers appear for now to be undeterred, with 112,370 trips taken, well ahead of second placed New Zealand (67,340).

The Indonesian figure is getting very close to pre-pandemic parity (114,280), and dwarfed the numbers travelling to the country in Jun last year (48,780 trips).

Other markets enjoying good month-on-month growth include the UK, which saw short-term resident returns rise from 41,040 in May to 61,260 in Jun, while Italy also surged ahead, up around 70% on May and overtaking the pre-COVID Jun 2019 figure by 5%.

Fiji was another solid mover,

with added air capacity from the country's national carrier helping to keep volumes growing, increasing by 2,290 trips to 32,200, pushing the Pacific nation up the list into seventh spot.

Local tour operators running trips to China might be a tad disappointed however, with numbers remaining flat in Jun, only adding 250 trips on May.

Overall, short-term returns rose by 3% month-on-month to 729,540, only 13% short of pre-pandemic levels in 2019.

Finnair adopts Avios

FINNAIR has announced its rewards program, Finnair Plus, will adopt Avios as a new loyalty currency in early 2024.

All Finnair Plus award points will be automatically converted into Avios using a 3:2 ratio, with the value of customers' existing points to remain the same.

Additionally, the Finnair Plus program will also transition to become a spend-based model, with customers to collect tier points and loyalty currency based on how much money they spend on flights and travel & extra purchases, instead of the ticket type or booking class and region, which was in place previously.

Avios is the loyalty currency for Finnair's oneworld partner airline loyalty programs, British Airways Executive Club, Qatar Airways Privilege Club and Iberia Plus.

AC helps Yellowknife

AIR Canada doubled its flights departing Yellowknife in Canada to four yesterday as the city faces the threat of a massive wildfire and residents evacuate.

The carrier has also added an extra B737 flight in addition to the usual two flights for today.

AC has also been forced to deny claims of hiking prices for tickets, claiming it proactively placed a cap on fares from Yellowknife.

The Chat
with Jenny

A Conversation with Debra Fox
of Abercrombie & Kent

CLICK HERE to listen



Rex lands in HBA

REX Airlines landed in its sixth capital city this week, linking the Tassie capital of Hobart to its network through new flights from Melbourne (TD 08 Jun).

The new route is operated by a Boeing 737-800NG and provides the airline with an additional 128,000 seats a year between the two southern capitals.

DoubleTree Kyoto

THE seven-storey, 158-room DoubleTree by Hilton Kyoto Higashiyama has opened its doors, offering guests an all-day dining restaurant, a premium lounge bar, a 24-hour fitness centre, and a public bath.

The property is primarily targeting families, couples, and solo leisure travellers.

Qantas widens the gap

CLOSE to three in 10 of all international passengers flying in and out of the country in Feb were carried by Qantas Group flights, the latest figures from BITRE show.

The combination of Qantas and Jetstar flights accounted for 27.1% of all passengers for the month, a solid rise on the 17.9% of the market the group held during the same month last year.

Fierce debate continues to rage in the sector about how far the Federal Government should go to protect the interests of the Flying Kangaroo, with the latest figures suggesting the Aussie carrier is widening the passenger gap on its foreign rivals.

Of the overseas headquartered carriers, Singapore Airlines led the way with 10.1% of overseas traffic, however the number was only half of what it was in 2022, carrying only 131,718 passengers.

Qatar Airways' share of the pie also shrank from 10% in Feb last year to only 4.5% in Feb in 2023, while Emirates also dropped from 13.8% to 5.8%.

Air New Zealand managed to buck the trend however and grow its market share by 5.3% to 8.2%.

Faber Park in Q4

HOTEL Faber Park Singapore - Handwritten Collection hotel will open its doors in the fourth quarter of this year.

The property will offer a choice of 194 rooms, a restaurant, lobby bar, and a swimming pool, and is in close proximity to major Singaporean attractions such as Sentosa Island, VivoCity, and the Singapore Cable Car.

Accor has partnered with Global Premium Hotels Limited to make the project a reality.



The report also shows that Virgin Australia had only grown its overseas routes by meagre volumes in Feb, with flights to Fiji, Bali and New Zealand the only overseas services offered, part of an ongoing strategy to focus its efforts primarily on domestic, moving from zero services in 2022 to 2.6% of total international passenger traffic.

Meanwhile, the report shows that low-cost carriers represented 18.4% of the market, comprised of services operated by AirAsia X, Cebu Pacific Air, Indonesia AirAsia, Jetstar, Scoot Tigerair, Thai AirAsia X and T'Way Air.

Australia saw 53 airlines operate passenger services in total for the month, carrying 2.43 million passengers, well up on last year (436,390) but still shy of 2020 volumes (2.805 million).

VA, Boeing mentor

VIRGIN Australia and Boeing Australia have launched a joint mentoring program, marking one of the first initiatives under the organisations' sustainability partnership, inked in Jun.

The 12-month program falls under a key focus area of the MOU (organisational development and inclusion) and aims to advance the careers of upcoming leaders at both companies.

TNZ seeks success

TOURISM New Zealand's (TNZ) 'If You Seek' global campaign contributed to a record-high brand preference of 45% during its first year, new International Visitor Survey data shows.

Visitors influenced by the campaign spent 6% more, stayed an extra day, visited 11% more regions and were 17% more likely to consider sustainability.

Confidence still up

AUSTRALIANS are optimistic about their future travel plans over the next 12 months, despite more than half reporting financial concerns, according to Booking.com's new APAC Travel Confidence Index (TCI).

Although 51% said they are feeling the pinch, a majority (65%) are still confident about travel, with 63% reporting they have no intention of postponing their holiday plans, and a further 53% intending to increase both the trips they take and their travel budgets for the year.

Many Aussies are implementing cost-cutting strategies in order to save money while travelling, with 58% opting for budget-friendly accommodation options, 36% booking their holidays during off-peak times, 34% spending less on food and activities, and 31% selecting cheaper destinations.

A goal for tourism

INTERNATIONAL searches for travel to Australia more than doubled (130% week on week) between May and Jul in the lead up to the FIFA Women's World Cup match between Aussie team The Matildas and England's The Lionesses earlier this week, new data from Expedia Group shows.

The majority (60%) of the searches made by overseas travellers were to Sydney, the host destination of the semi-final game, with the US making up the largest chunk of visitors, accounting for 25% of total international interest.

Travellers from South Korea (10%), Japan (10%), New Zealand (10%), and Hong Kong (5%) also showed interest in visiting Sydney, while Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth were also popular Aussie location searches, particularly among travellers from Canada and Singapore.

Nearly 70% of searches to the five Australian cities were from domestic travellers, up an average 155% week on week.



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Travel Daily

CORPORATE UPDATE

Sustainability key for sector

THE rising prominence of sustainability considerations is having a significant impact on corporate decision making, with strong implications for the corporate travel sector, according to Ord Minnett Senior Research Analyst, John O’Shea.

Speaking at the BTTB Conference in Sydney earlier this week, O’Shea provided a stark comparison between the “old world” and “new world” of travel, with environmental factors increasingly feeding into the amount and type of travel being undertaken.

Figures indicate a big shift in corporate travel patterns globally, including a reduction in

“same-day” business trips and a mentality shift in relation to “bleisure” travel where business and leisure trips are combined.

“Employees want to share the benefits of business travel with their partner/spouse...bleisure travel has become the accepted norm,” O’Shea noted, with predictions that global bleisure travel spending will increase from US\$150 billion in 2021 to US\$360 billion by 2027.

In fact, in the last 12 months 26% of business travellers in Australia extended their trips for leisure purposes, O’Shea noted.

Other key trends include the opportunity for new technology, with legacy systems under attack and emerging platforms “expected to change the face of the industry in coming years”.

The pandemic precipitated a shift towards more managed travel by TMCs, highlighting the value of advice particularly in terms of duty of care.

But increasing competition for corporate business amongst TMCs and suppliers has intensified, which is good news for buyers, O’Shea added.

CX corporate push

CATHAY Pacific has revamped its Business Plus corporate loyalty program and travel management platform, with the upgrade said to allow SMEs to self-serve their own travel requirements.

Business Plus members can now earn Asia Miles loyalty points for their corporate account, which can in turn be redeemed for rewards such as lounge passes and Cathay Silver Membership.

Asia Miles can also be transferred to any employee’s individual CX account, and the program also offers priority baggage and seasonal campaigns where members can earn extra miles, lounge passes or upgrades.

See cathaypacific.com.

Elf FCM global role

MELISSA Elf has been promoted to become Global Chief Operating Officer at FCM Travel.

She’s been with Flight Centre Travel Group for 17 years, and was most recently the company’s MD Corporate Australia & NZ.

Keep up to date with Travel Daily on the go



Travel Daily



Free wi-fi imminent at FJ



WHILE leading a tour of the Business class cabin on board Fiji Airways’ new A350 this week (**TD** 15 Aug), CEO Andre Viljoen confirmed guests in the premium cabins will soon be able to enjoy complimentary full-flight internet connectivity.

The airline’s chief said the technical team is “busy installing the updates now”, alongside the installation of a revamped entertainment offering on board for all passengers, providing access to content from both Disney and HBO.

Currently, Business class passengers have to pay US\$24.95 for the fastest and largest data wi-fi package (500mb), scaling down to US\$11.95 for standard (200mb) and an unlimited chat-only option for US\$7.95.

Other Fiji Airways updates include a refreshed Business class menu, featuring a range of “fresher” meal options.

The airline prides much of its success on customer service, with efforts this year rewarded at the Skytrax Awards, where it won Best Airline in the Pacific.



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Aircalin is now offering return flights from Melbourne to Noumea from only \$649. Through its Bonjour Melbourne Sale which began yesterday, the airline's offer is valid until 31 Aug for travel commencing 08 Dec through to 31 Mar 2024. Flights operate every Tue, Fri and Sun - book tickets at www.aircalin.com.au.

Receive up to \$2,000 of flight credit per couple on selected 2024 and 2025 ocean itineraries with **Viking**. The cruise line's promotion ends on 28 Aug with applicable sailings including the 13-day Mediterranean Odyssey from Barcelona to Venice or vice versa from \$10,495pp, and the 29-day Greenland, Iceland, Norway & Beyond from \$20,495pp. Call Viking on 138 747 or visit viking.com for more details.

Low-cost carrier **Vietjet** has launched a huge incentive for Aussie travellers to celebrate the upcoming Vietnam National Day taking place in the country on 02 Sep. Up to two million tickets starting at \$200 are available until 22 Aug for travel between 06 Sep 2023 and 31 Mar 2024. The special discounted tickets are up for grabs now at www.vietjetair.com or via the carrier's mobile app.

Earlybird prices are currently on offer with **Regent Seven Seas Cruises'** 2024 European voyages. Discounted prices on select sailings start from \$13,840pp, launching alongside other incentives, including a free two-category suite upgrade, a low 7.5% deposit, and up to US\$500 of onboard credit on selected Europe itineraries departing between Apr and Nov 2024. To view and book the deals, see [HERE](#).

Make your booking by 30 Sep to score a complimentary mini stay on a 15-night sailing from Perth to Melbourne with **Cruise Traveller's** 2024/25 festive season of voyages. Departing Perth on 20 Dec 2024, travellers will voyage to Melbourne aboard the 702-guest *Azamara Pursuit*, which boasts premium amenities like swimming pools, multiple jacuzzis, six restaurants and more. Call 1800 507 777 for more information.

Travelmarvel has launched an extensive range of Australian tours with earlybird savings available for bookings made by 31 Oct. Eligible itineraries include the 10-day Kimberley Coast Adventure cruise from Broome to Darwin from \$9,395pp (see [HERE](#)) and the 18-day Kimberley Coast 4WD Adventure from \$14,240pp (see [HERE](#)). Also on offer is the 10-day Grand Tasman tour from \$3,995pp (see [HERE](#)).

Ending on 01 Sep, **Rail Europe** is offering 20% savings on its Eurail Passes in both First and Second classes across all passenger categories. Available on train operators including SNCF, SBB, Eurostar, Thalys and Trenitalia, the deal is available for travel until 17 Nov. Travel advisors are advised to book the passes via Rail Europe's portal [HERE](#).

Accelerating accessibility



SPINAL Life Australia has partnered with disability support app Cerge to launch the Access Accelerator program on the Sunshine Coast to help make tourism more accessible, inclusive, and welcoming to travellers with diverse accessibility needs.

Backed by the Queensland Government's Accessible Tourism Enablers Grant, the program aims to provide businesses with tools to develop accessible tourism destinations through disability awareness training and technology.

"The Access Accelerator program will give tourism operators on the Sunshine Coast the tools to better cater to the accessible tourism market," Visit Sunshine Coast CEO, Matt Stoeckel said.

Sunshine Coast tourism operators can get involved in the new program [HERE](#).

Pictured: Visit Sunshine Coast

CEO Matt Stoeckel (far left) poses with key stakeholders and beneficiaries from organisations such as Spinal Life Australia and disability communications platform Cerge.

Skyscanner campaign

ONLINE travel search engine Skyscanner has launched its first above-the-line campaign in Australia, the first push for the brand Down Under using TV, outdoor media, digital and social media platforms.

The quirky Ultimate Travel Hack campaign focuses on four characters, including a travel agent, and is designed to tap into Australians' interest in post-pandemic travel.

A parallel, global partnership with Exceptional ALIEN has also been formed to launch a range of curated creator guides to six cities frequently visited by Australians.

"It's an especially timely launch as concerns around cost, inflation and complexity increase, the desire and demand for travel has returned but the financial barriers are sobering," Skyscanner's Executive Creative Director, Andre Le Masurier said.

Avoid Mali travel

THE kidnapping risk of foreign nationals in southern Mali is increasing, DFAT has advised Aussie travellers this week, with terror attacks also listed as an increasingly likely event.

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



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