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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest travel industry news including a photo page from **Viking** and our **Luxury** feature page, plus full pages from:

- Silversea
- MSC Cruises

FCTG enjoys strong rebound

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's Total Transaction Value (TTV) grew by 112% to \$21.9 billion for the FY23, up from \$10.34 billion last year (**TD** breaking news).

The positive result was boosted by improved market conditions, the company noted, with total revenue increasing by 127% to \$2.28 billion, while underlying EBITDA also improved by 265% from a \$183 million loss last year to a \$302 million profit.

Flight Centre also announced a healthy cash and investment position of \$1.4 billion for the 12 months to 30 Jun, with previously flagged tight cost controls in place contributing to the strong result, reflected by 92% of pre-pandemic TTV achieved by only using 75% of the 2019 cost base.

Summing up the better-than-expected results, CEO Graham Turner said the combination of travel restrictions being fully removed and strategies the business locked in place have

been the biggest factors in ensuring "we re-emerged in a position of strength."

"Sales more than doubled group-wide, as our leisure and corporate divisions both delivered more than \$10 billion in annual TTV for the first time," he said.

"Our leisure business is also on a steep TTV trajectory, with several businesses, including online and the independent agency network, delivering record sales," Turner added.

The FCTG chief also noted the impact of airline commission reductions, noting that as well as pursuing margin improvement opportunities, the business is working with airlines to increase Total Available Margins.

Vote 1 for MSC!

MSC Cruises has been nominated in the NTIA's Most Popular Ocean Cruise category - lend your support on **page nine**.

Silversea Academy

SILVERSEA Cruises is today promoting its new and improved online training academy, which offers travel advisors the opportunity to become an even bigger expert on the company.


For more information on how to get involved, visit **page eight**.

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up to
15%
on over 400
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*T&C's apply. Valid for land only tours.

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*T&Cs apply

New tour operator debut

TITAN Travel, the newest entrant into the local tour operating sector (**TD** breaking news), will have a strong focus on the trade, with a call centre dedicated to Australian travel agents and a bespoke brochure featuring over 100 itineraries.

Represented by Ascend Travel, the business recently formed by Julie Primmer and Lynda Wallace (**TD** 27 Jul), Titan is part of the UK-listed Saga Travel Group which is headed up by John Constable, formerly the Helloworld Limited Group GM (**TD** 22 Jun 2021).

Titan operates under the tag line "adventure made effortless" with a full portfolio of departures across all seven continents.

The comprehensive offering also includes small group

tours, dedicated solo traveller departures, active tours, as well as more relaxed single and two-centre holidays.

While Titan's product in the UK generally includes charter flights, the Australian offering will be land-only, allowing travel agents to package the trips with their own air and other travel products.

"We're confident that Titan's product will be greatly received by travel agents across the country looking to sell award-winning, expert-led touring holidays, and will bring an exciting, innovative and expansive range of product choice to Australia's already established touring market," Constable said.

"We look forward to welcoming our first Australian customers on one of our tours soon," he added.

Wallace and Primmer confirmed Ascend will act as Titan's General Sales Agent (GSA) in Australia to drive sales through strategic commercial agreements and activity with selected partners.

A video showcasing the new product is now live at traveldaily.com.au/videos, while the new Titan Travel dedicated brochure is available for order online via titantravel.co.uk.

Aspire to Hire: ATIA

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) is set to host its Aspire to Hire webinar on 05 Sep at 12.30pm AEST, pledging to offer viewers valuable tips on hiring strategies.

Hosted by ATIA's Director of Membership Richard Taylor and Travel Achievers Rosyln Ranse, the guest speaker will be respected travel recruiter Richard Kellaway, with discussions to cover a range of key areas, including the current landscape, how to advertise company and culture, as well as the challenges and benefits of offshore staff.

Interested participants can register for the Aspire to Hire session by registering **HERE**.

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*T&Cs apply

AIR CANADA

GET STARTED

Batik cuts commish

BATIK Air Malaysia has announced the reduction of its travel agency BSP base commission from 5% to 3%.

The change is effective from 01 Sep and applies to all trips issued under OD (816) ticket stock via Australia and NZ BSP.

Agents are urged to ensure all applicable bookings are ticketed by 31 Aug to receive the current higher commission level.

Personalised tours

TOURING and travel experiences company Global Group Travel Services (GGTS) has launched its Hybrid Wholesale Travel platform, offering agents access to hundreds of bespoke itineraries via 150 DMCs located around the world.

The value of the new platform is embedded in the ability for advisors to select from a wide array of touring and package deals - mainly featuring four- to five-star premium product.

Further highlights include the ability for agents to personalise their GGTS-hosted website with their own logos, contact details, and branding.

An in-built booking system is also on offer via the platform, boasting a live accounting process, automated PDF presentations, a destination search bar, and a chat box that allows real-time info exchanges between the GGTS team and users - more details **HERE**.



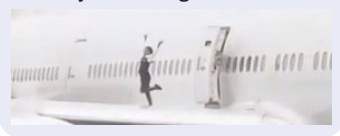
STORIES about travellers getting in harm's way for the sake of a selfie are all too common these days, but you don't expect to hear about professionals within the travel industry doing this.

Some SWISS International Air Lines employees, however, are reportedly in "serious trouble" for doing just that, after travellers at Buenos Aires airport filmed three of the carrier's cabin crew standing on the wing of a Boeing 777-300ER to pose for selfies.

As well as being dangerous, given that the wings of the aircraft are nearly five metres above the ground, the unusual photoshoot could also have compromised critical components of the aircraft.

Concentrated loads in certain areas can damage the wing, which contains the aircraft's fuel tank and other crucial parts, including the flight controls responsible for banking the plane.

Some X (formerly Twitter) users believe the selfie session was a "genius marketing stunt", while others said they were "just having fun".



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DriveAway

Category 23: Most Outstanding Wholesaler - Product/Service

Travel Daily

Wednesday 30th Aug 2023

CATO reviews its T&Cs

THE Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) has flagged an update to its 'Industry Standard Booking Terms and Conditions' in line with legislative changes on unfair contract terms, which will become effective on 09 Nov.

CATO first introduced the new documents almost three years ago (**TD** 13 Aug 2020), at the time claiming the offering was a "landmark best-practice move" and offering to licence the standard T&Cs to CATO members.

CATO board member Aaron Zoanetti from Pointon Partners, who also runs sports travel specialist Green and Gold Army,

will undertake the review, noting that "significant penalties may apply to businesses that include unfair contract terms in their standard form contracts.

"For tour operators and travel wholesalers active in the Australian market, this relates to their booking terms and conditions," Zoanetti said.

CATO members who are already paying for a licence to the standard T&Cs will be provided with suggested amendments "to make particular provisions commonly applied within the industry less likely to be considered unfair", CATO said.

MD Brett Jardine said it was "critical that member businesses implement a mitigation strategy to reduce the risk of enforcement action being taken".

He reminded new members they have access to the T&Cs at special rates which include a 30-min consultation with Zoanetti.

NZ LAX shuffle

AIR New Zealand will deploy Boeing 787-9 aircraft on selected Auckland-Los Angeles flights in Sep and Oct, rather than the previously scheduled 777s, according to GDS screens.



QF discounts QDP Tasman fares

TRAVEL agents can now benefit from discounted trans-Tasman & Australian domestic fares booked via the Qantas Distribution Platform (QDP).

Effective from yesterday, travel agents accessing QDP content via one of the carrier's Approved Technology Partners can access discounts of up to 5% on flights to and from New Zealand, and up to 4% on Australian domestic fares, compared to other indirect booking systems.

The price difference "applies to the published fares excluding applicable taxes, fees and carrier charges", Qantas noted, adding that variations may also occur depending on the route, class of travel and time of booking.

Qantas said lower pricing aimed to encourage more agents to access QDP content "and ultimately drive better outcomes for our mutual customers".

TM's Future is Fit

CLOSE to 200 agents in the TravelManagers' network will be in attendance at the company's upcoming annual National Conference, with the three-day event scheduled to take place in Christchurch, New Zealand from tomorrow until 02 Sep.

Highlights from the event are set to include a number of tradeshows and presentations from more than 80 partner suppliers, as well as talks from experts on themes like resilience, innovation and adaptation.

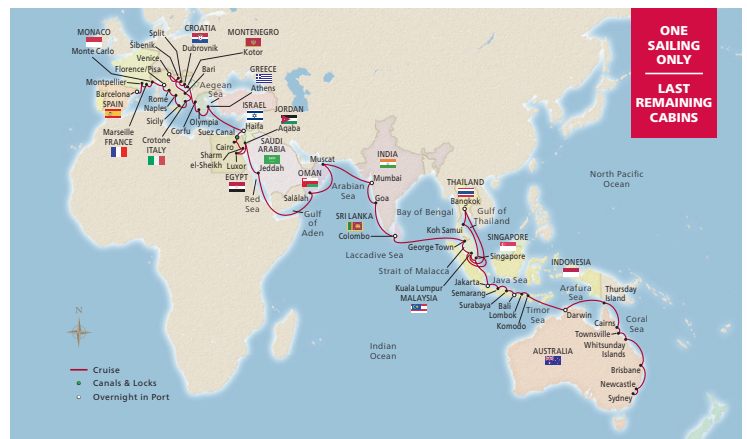
The stage will see 2023 Australian of the Year Taryn Brumfitt deliver a presentation, as well as futurist Gihan Perera & the Mind Body Brain Institute's Paul Taylor facilitate workshops.

Pre- and post-conference family experiences will take place to showcase New Zealand tourism attractions, with attendees to be buoyed by the conference theme of a 'Future Fit Makeover' - more updates to come soon.

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See website for full T&Cs

ATIA meets with Leigh



THE Australian Travel Industry Association's (ATIA) Director of Public Policy & Advocacy, Ingrid Fraser, hosted travel industry stakeholders to hear from MP Andrew Leigh at the National Press Club yesterday.

Currently serving as the Federal Assistant Minister for

Competition, Charities, Treasury, & Employment, Leigh is a big advocate for creating more business competition.

He spoke about the recently announced Competition Policy Review, as well as the importance of a competitive aviation sector, and its benefits for consumers.

Pictured is Fraser with Tourism & Transport Forum Manager - Tourism Policy & Government Relations Mitchell Coveney, Leigh, and Virgin Australia General Manager Government Relations & Industry Affairs Todd Reynolds.

Taiwan gets windy

THE Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has warned Australian travellers to Taiwan that the destination may be impacted by Typhoon Saola over the next few days.

High winds, heavy rain and storm surges are expected, along with possible disruptions to essential services and transport.

The Smartraveller advice for Taiwan remains at the lowest "exercise normal safety precautions" level.

Jetstar Taipei boost

JETSTAR Japan has scheduled a second daily flight on the Tokyo Narita-Taipei Taoyuan route from early next year.

GDS screens indicate the new A320 service will operate from 09 Jan 2024 departing NRT at 0630.

Rex profits off NJE stake

REX Airlines has announced a statutory profit after tax of \$14.4 million for the year ended 30 Jun, compared to a loss of \$46.1m in the corresponding prior period (**TD** breaking news).

The airline was able to report the statutory profit due to the \$44.5 million positive fair value contribution from the acquisition of 50% of National Jet Express (NJE) in Sep (**TD** 30 Sep), which is compared to the operational loss before tax of \$37.1 million foreshadowed in its profit guidance in Jun.

"The legacy effects of COVID continued to smash the aviation industry in FY23 manifesting itself in acute pilot shortages and severe dislocation of the supply chain," Executive Chair Lim Kim

Hai explained.

He noted the prospects of the 2024 fiscal year seem much brighter across the company, with the planned delivery of Rex's eighth and ninth 737-800NG aircraft in the first quarter, which will bolster its domestic expansion plans and revenue.

A 10th aircraft is also due later in the next financial year.

NJE's foray into Queensland will set the stage for further expansion opportunities, Rex also observed, particularly catering to the increasing demands of resource companies in the state, as well as in the mining capitals of Western Australia and SA.

Group revenue is also expected to increase as passenger demand benefits from Rex's tie-ups with travel agency groups and corporate accounts.

Etihad, TK to Africa

ETIHAD Airways and Turkish Airlines have expanded their codeshare agreement, with the EY code now appearing on TK flights from Istanbul to Abidjan in Cote d'Ivoire, Douala in Cameroon and Chad's capital, N'Djamena.

The new codeshare flights became effective earlier this week.

Jayne slams Joyce

VIRGIN Australia chief Jayne Hrdlicka has condemned Qantas' efforts to block Qatar Airways from expanding its operations in Australia, arguing that travellers will now miss out on cheaper international fares.

"The statistics say that two-thirds of the seats that were flying in and out of Australia pre-COVID are back and one-third of those seats are not yet back," Hrdlicka told ABC's Radio National.

"So if we get those seats back, airfares will be as low as they possibly could be."

She also said the Federal Govt's decision to "protect Qantas profits" was "super surprising and very disappointing".

Kelsian rides wave

KELSIAN Group, formerly known as SeaLink Travel Group, has released positive full-year results for FY2023, reflecting the rebound in domestic tourism.

The Aussie transport company's revenue increased by 9.3% to \$1.41 billion compared to last year, with its Marine & Tourism division representing around 20% of the total revenue.

The group's underlying EBITDA was up by 3.9% versus last year, while its operating cash flow was up by 12.2%.

During the year ending 30 Jun, Kelsian's Marine & Tourism division acquired six new vessels, including three for Sydney Harbour, two for Southeast Queensland, and a passenger ferry for Whitsundays, with another five vessels under construction.

It also secured several contracts, including SeaLink Sydney Harbour securing a 15-year extension for its Lane Cove ferry service.

The company anticipates a full recovery in international tourism during FY25.

URBAN AIR MOBILITY IS NO FLY-BY-NIGHT FAD

The once-fanciful aerial transport is now within reach, and aerospace manufacturers are furiously working on getting the concept of Urban Air Mobility off the ground.

[CLICK HERE TO READ](#)

travelBulletin

Curtain call on Viking's roadshow

VIKING'S legendary Vor Training Night finale dropped anchor in Newcastle last Wed, attracting well over 100 agents to the area for an evening of fun-filled learning.

As agents savoured a three-course meal and sipped on drinks, they were informed about Viking's latest news, product releases, and updates.

Enhancing the already memorable evening, Viking distributed over \$40,000 in cruise rewards and prizes.

The night's highlight was the Kahoot challenge, with Jane Fowler from TravelManagers, Natalie Adamson from itravel Raymond Terrace, and Claire Winnel from Cruise & Travel Authority Terrigal clinching cruise prizes.

This event marked the culmination of six record-setting Vor nights, navigating through Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Canberra, and naturally, Newcastle.



NEWCASTLE Vor Night.



JOSH Mitchell and Siobhann Edwards, Flight Centre Cardiff.

THE team from Home and Afar Travel The Junction.



HUNTER Travel Group's Clarees Purkiss, Georgia Rossi, Kieran Mackenzie, Donna Howarth Lucy Edwards, Emily Hartley and Amber Mitchel.



SHAUN Kavanagh, Viking, and Jen Winter, Helloworld Travel Erina Fair.



GUESTS dancing the night away.



VIKING Vor Night Newcastle; Tamara Galloway, Helloworld Wauchope; Shaun Kavanagh; Kate Walsh, Helloworld Wauchope; and Sharyn Hinton, Helloworld Taree.



NARELLE Melhuish and Tash Melhuish from Holiday World.



GUESTS get involved in some of the fun and games on the night.



NATHALIE Fagan, Viking; Natalie Adamson, itravel Raymond Terrace; Jane Fowler, TravelManagers; Claire Winnel, Cruise & Travel Authority Terrigal; and Keira Smith, Viking.



CLAREES Purkiss, Cruise Travel Centre, winning a river cruise, and emcee Andrew Gill.

Tasmanian luxury

TASMANIAN luxury lodge Saffire Freycinet has teamed up with luxury expedition cruise operator On Board to launch a series of all-inclusive, six-night expeditions.

The Coast-to-Coast Luxury journeys combine a three-night stay at Saffire Freycinet, located on the east coast's Freycinet Peninsula, with a three-night sailing through the remote southwest corner of Tasmania's Wilderness World-Heritage Area.

Priced from \$27,000, the package features all dining and drinks, three seaplane transfers and several expert guided experiences.

There are three departure dates available between Dec 2023 and May 2024 - for more info, [CLICK HERE](#).

SCOTT DUNN PAYING DIVIDENDS

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's luxury collection of brands contributed a record TTV result for the business in the latest financial year, the company's FY results released today show.

The encouraging numbers were helped along greatly by the recently acquired luxury tour operator and travel agent Scott Dunn (**TD 31 Jan**), which the latest report stated was already delivering "strong early returns", and "trading in line with expectations".

Flight Centre is now looking to unlock more revenue synergies for Scott Dunn through its first foray into wholesaling to Flight Centre's leisure brands, as well as engaging with FCMs to explore more cross-sell opportunities.

Growth in the US market is also being viewed as a strong pipeline for future sales, with Flight



Centre opening a New York office this month, which will look to leverage the company's existing property infrastructure and share services already operating in America.

Scott Dunn continues to demonstrate positive momentum in a range of overseas markets, including Singapore, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

Customer trends in the report also showed that the average booking value for customers

of the Travel Associates and Scott Dunn brands is increasing, with travellers booking a higher proportion of international and multi-centre travel than they were in 2022.

Luxury has been identified as one of four key leisure pillars for Flight Centre, with the premium arm growing its value from \$200 million to \$800 million in the last 12 months, with its weighting expected to grow even more over the next year.

Soho House to grace Sydney during SXSW

LUXURY global hotel chain and private members' club, Soho House, is taking over The Old Clare Hotel in Sydney's Chippendale from 15-22 Oct, as part of the South by Southwest (SXSW) event.

The Soho residency will feature three spaces: a ground-floor bar, main restaurant and a rooftop pool and bar, where daily programming and events will be held.

MEANWHILE, La Collection

has announced Savenio's Melinda Ford as the winner of its Blue Palace webinar prize.

The lucky travel agent will enjoy three nights' accommodation at the luxury resort, which is located on the Greek island of Crete.

There are still plenty of prizes up for grabs for viewers of La Collection's 10 Minute Visit webinar series, with the NoMad London session available to watch [HERE](#).

Vietjet lux retreats

VIETJET has partnered with two luxury resorts in Cam Ranh in southern Vietnam, to offer travellers exclusive luxurious retreat promotions when they fly with the carrier.

Available until Dec, the packages include stays at the Ana Mandara Cam Ranh or Pax Ana Doc Let Resort, offering savings of up to 40% off, with rates leading in from \$220 per night.

APT Private Jet '24

APT has released its 2024 Private Jet Air Tours, featuring five itineraries covering Australia, as well as a new tour flying over the Great Australian Bight.

The collection features new destinations, including Rottneest Island, Magnetic Island and K'gari.

Guests can save up to \$4,000 per couple for bookings made by 31 Oct - for info call 1300 278 278.

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 Travel Daily
 A Conversation with Danielle Galloway of Travel Associates
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ACCOMMODATION

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Three of the **Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Centre's** restaurants will be revitalised with an addition of a fourth dining experience located in the Grand Lodge. Along with the culinary offerings, the centre will enhance its events space capacity, as well as add a new events pavilion. Set to be completed in 2024, the multi-phase plan will see the opening of Embers Lodge Bar and The Fortunate Prospector in spring 2024.



&Beyond Mnemba Island will undergo a comprehensive transformation of its lodge from 11 Jan to 01 Oct 2024. Changes will include a refreshed guest area, as well as a new dive centre along with various new facilities. Guests will also be able to enjoy a new Wellness Banda as well as solar power throughout the entire area once completed. &Beyond is offering savings up to US\$1,135 per person for bookings taken before Oct.



Savour a new Mediterranean-inspired dining concept at **Trisara**. The luxurious resort in Phuket now houses the new flavour of Southern Europe restaurant, the only Michelin starred venue in the city, and is a short walk away from the beach overlooking the ocean. The menu includes grilled sardines with Provence olive oil and parsley, Pissaladere Provencal tart with caramelised onion, anchovies, black olives and thyme, and much more.



QT Queenstown has launched a new art gallery at its property, along with a chocolate bar that offers guests some of New Zealand's most distinct flavours. Gallery 6 is a 12-metre long space located on the sixth level of the hotel, and showcases the local stories of the region. An inaugural exhibition 'Double Up' is currently on display until Mar 2024.



The 197-key **Gramercy Park Hotel in New York City** will reopen after shutting its doors in 2020. With its recent acquisition by MCR, the five-star hotel will operate once again with new looks to its lobby, restaurants and bars on the first floor, as well as all of its guestrooms and suites. The hotel boasts a 650m² rooftop bar with a view of the exclusive Gramercy Park.

Rex recruits experts

THE Regional Express Group (Rex) has appointed new members to its Antarctic Advisory Panel (RAAP), which the company hopes will improve its chances of landing a Federal Government tender to support the Australian Antarctic Program.

The new panellists include former CEO of the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystem Cooperative Research Tony Press, helicopter specialist Bill English, Antarctic aviation expert Stuart McFadzean, experienced military jet leader Nigel Meadows, fixed-wing aircraft authority Andrew Noonan, and aviation regulatory guru Craig Martin.

"The panellists are amongst the world's foremost authorities on aviation operations in the Antarctic and with their guidance and active involvement, we are confident that Rex's proposal will exceed the expectations of the Australian Antarctic Division," Rex's Executive Chairman Lim Kim Hai said.

First digital passport

A TRIAL moving towards digital passports has kicked off this week in Finland, with the Nordic country's government rolling out a soft copy of the document for its citizens travelling to and from the UK on Finnair flights.

The test phase involves flights travelling between Helsinki Airport and hubs in London, Manchester, and Edinburgh, with passengers able to opt in to use Digital Travel Credentials.

The digital passport program will also be tested between Finland and Croatia's Zagreb Int'l Airport later this year.

Air NZ kicks ahead

PASSENGERS flying on Air New Zealand's wide-body aircraft will now be able to access live sport on board, including 24 channels featuring the Rugby World Cup, the NRL, and the Premier League.

Available on the airline's 787 and 777 planes, the new live sport option is part of the carrier's ongoing effort to upgrade its in-flight entertainment offering, however, standing up and cheering throughout games mid-flight is being actively discouraged.

New Croisi cruises

CROISIEUROPE has launched two brand-new and exclusive coastal itineraries on board *La Belle de l'Adriatique*, which will operate in Europe between Nov and Dec.

The cruises will feature the best of the Mediterranean and the Italian coast - **CLICK HERE**.

UK airport delays

THERE were major disruptions in flight operations across multiple airports in the UK on Mon due to a "technical issue" from the National Air Traffic Services (NATS), with DFAT urging Aussies to contact airlines.

The issues were reportedly resolved three hours after the initial announcement, yet the disruption caused a large volume of backlogged flights, creating significant delays.

London Heathrow has been limiting its departure capacity but the arrivals have continued per normal schedules.

NATS operates approximately 2.5 million flights across 15 airports in the UK annually.



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