

FLY YOUR WAY

From the 3rd of March 2023, Fiji Airways will offer customers the option to customise how they travel based on their needs with four categories, **Lite**, **Value**, **Comfort**, **and Plus**.

All categories will include meals, beverages, inflight entertainment and a carry-on bag, with increasing value add-ons from Lite to Plus, such as checked baggage, ticket change and cancellation flexibility, seat selection and boarding priority.



VISIT FIJIAIRWAYS.COM



Travel Daily First with the news

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest news including our **Sustainability** page, plus a front cover wrap from **Fiji Airways**, a product update from **Bench Africa** and full pages from:

- Viking Cruises
- Switzerland Tourism

Fiji it your own way

FIJI Airways customers will soon be able to customise how they travel based on their own needs, with four new categories: Lite, Value, Comfort, and Plus.

Meals, beverages, in-flight entertainment and a carry-on bag will all be included with each category, with increasing value add-ons from Lite to Plus, such as checked baggage, ticket change and cancellation flexibility, seat selection and boarding priority.

For more information on the brand new categories, see the **front cover**.

Wallace lands big QF gig

QANTAS has announced former Air New Zealand senior executive Cam Wallace as its new CEO of International and Freight, amid a number of major changes to its Group Management Committee (*TD* breaking news yesterday).

From Jul, Wallace will take over from Andrew David, who has overseen Qantas' Domestic and International operations since the two roles were combined early on during the pandemic.

David will stay on as CEO of Qantas Domestic until he retires from the company altogether in Sep, with the search to begin soon for his replacement.

Qantas Group CEO Alan Joyce said "at the start of the pandemic, we rationalised the two CEO roles for Qantas Domestic and Qantas International down to one, given what was happening to our business".

"With Andrew retiring and given the amount of investment now in the pipeline, it makes sense to again have separate CEOs for the international and domestic businesses, which are both back to generating billions in revenue each year," he added.

Drawing on more than two decades of aviation experience, Wallace will be charged with growing Qantas International's capacity to 100% of pre-COVID levels and beyond, as well as guiding preparations for Project Sunrise through to the first flight in late 2025.

"The Qantas Group has always been able to attract top talent and Cam Wallace is one of the best airline executives in the region," Joyce enthused.

He also thanked David for his huge contribution over 10 years, adding that he "has been pivotal, especially during the incredible challenge of putting the airline into hibernation and bringing it back again".

www.traveldaily.com.au Tuesday 28th Feb 2023

Airtrain gets smarter

PASSENGERS using Brisbane Airport's Airtrain service to the CBD and the Gold Coast can now use debit/credit cards with Translink's Smart Ticketing.

Travellers can also choose to use smartphones, smart watches, or other smart devices to pay.

New Viking voyages

VIKING has announced new ocean sailings for 2024-25, such as the 21-day Passage to India itinerary from Athens to Mumbai, with couples able to save up to \$3,600 as part of Viking's Explorer Sale - see **page eight** for details.

Gain Swiss-pertise

AGENTS are invited to level up their knowledge of Swiss public transport through the new Swiss Travel System Excellence Program, with prizes up for grabs too - for all of the information, head to page nine.

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Bench bucket list

BENCH Africa is highlighting its three-day Ultimate Bucket List Challenge, which gives travellers the incredible opportunity to get up close with the mountain gorillas of Rwanda and includes a stay at Mountain View Lodge - go to the **back page** to learn more.



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AFTA details summit line-up

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents Limited (AFTA) has revealed further details about its Women in Travel Summit, including the panellist line-up.

Taking place on 13 Mar at the Swissotel Sydney, the all-day event will focus on "workplace learnings to drive change", with Head of People and Process at Express Travel Group, Alisha Dopper, announced as emcee. AFTA also named Travel Agent Achievers, NTIA Finalist and mobile travel professional at itravel, Roslyn Ranse, as the moderator for the panel sessions. Lyn Wells, Travel Consultant at American Express Global Business Travel, will lead the first

Business Travel, will lead the first panel session alongside Angela Middleton, Senior Manager Sales AUS/NZ at Norwegian Cruise Line and Kerrie McCallum, Editorial Director - Premium Food, Travel and Health at News Corp. The second session will see Nicola Strudwick, General Manager - Sales at Travellers

Upskill reminder

TODAY is the last chance to save 15% on Sharon Stanley Consulting's client account management coaching program, which covers account management function, client engagement skills, and more.

For more details or to register, call 0412 584 950 or contact sharon@sharonstanleyconsulting. com before 01 Mar. Choice, Kathryn O'Brien, General Manager Australia at Air New Zealand, and Abbe Lunn, Key Partnerships Manager at Intrepid Travel, discuss career opportunities and challenges.

"Why is it that so many women choose to work in travel? This is the question ATAS-accredited business and other suppliers will be answering in our discussions at the Women in Travel Summit," AFTA CEO Dean Long said.

To get tickets, **CLICK HERE**.

Explore sales staff

EXPLORE Worldwide has announced the appointment of two new sales consultants, almost two months after it revealed plans to establish a direct presence in Australia and New Zealand (*TD* 09 Jan).

Kyran Rose joins the adventure travel brand with over five years of retail travel experience, including roles at Flight Centre and Phil Hoffmann Travel.

Explore has also welcomed Kelly Bravey to the team, who will draw on her decade of travel selling experience, which has seen her work for esteemed brands like Topdeck, Tour Radar and Luxury Escapes.

"Kelly and Kyran's breadth of industry experience and destination knowledge will ensure our customer service delivery is second-to-none," Explore Regional Director for Australia & New Zealand, Ben Ittensohn, said.

Rail Online links ETC

RAIL Online is ramping up its growth trajectory in Australia with the appointment of Evolution Travel Collective (ETC) to help increase brand awareness among travel agents.

ETC will educate Aussie travel trade on the benefits offered by Rail Online via a number of product training initiatives, including visiting agents across the country and hosting webinars, as well as representing the rail specialist at key trade expos and conferences.

"Given the unprecedented demand for rail travel in 2023, and the rate at which our portfolio of products and services is expanding, it's vital Australian travel agents are fully across the benefits Rail Online provides them and their customers," Rail Online General Manager Australia and New Zealand Kirsty Blows said.

Sabre adds Jin Air

SABRE has signed a new multiyear agreement with Korean lowcost carrier Jin Air, a move the airline believes will see it power revenue and better connect with travel agents globally.

Under the terms of the new distribution deal, Jin Air will be able to put its offers and fares in front of travel agents, while agencies will also be able to book and ticket Jin Air content via Sabre's GDS.

Jin Air network offers flights across Japan, China, Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia.



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Tuesday 28th Feb 2023

Connection the key for CT

AUSTRALIA'S largest

independent travel management company has this week flagged its return to the CT Partners network from 01 Mar.

Connections Group brings three recognised brands to CT Partners, including CT Connections, Edge Connections and Totem Connections, boasting a presence in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia.

Speaking about why the company opted to return to CT Partners, Connections Group Director Gary Reichenberg suggested strength in numbers was key to resonating with corporate travellers.

"The travel landscape has changed significantly in recent years and collaboration and transparency are key value differentiators," he said.

"The Connections Group is guided by the underlying belief



that connections are what drives us all as human beings, hence our tagline 'Be Connected'".

CT Partners CEO Matt Masson added that the latest news was testament to the "success in our strategy of driving exceptional value for members".

Pictured: CT Partners CEO Matt Masso, CT Partners GM Supplier Partnerships Nicole Boyer with Connections Group Chief Executive Officer Ryan Potts.

keep dreaming...

Travel inspiration for your clients' next holiday!

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CLIAs entertainment

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia has partnered with Brent Street, an Australian leading performing arts training centre, to provide the entertainment for its upcoming CLIA Awards taking place next month in Sydney.

"The cruise industry is a major employer of dancers, singers, musicians and other performers and we want to help showcase the amazing talents of our young entertainers," MD Joel Katz said.

Vista cooks up Giada

CELEBRITY chef Giada De Laurentiis has been named godmother of Oceania Cruises' new ship *Vista*, which is set to debut in May.

De Laurentiis will lead the star-studded christening event in Malta, which will also feature Harry Connick Jr - for more details on the announcement, see the full story in today's **CW**.

Passport price rise

Travel & Cruise

Weekly

THE cost for a new 10-year passport has increased from \$308 to \$325, with the rise attributed to increased security measures incorporated into the new R series document by the Federal Government's security agencies.

The Aussie passport is currently ranked the eight most powerful in the world, according to the Henley Passport Index, with Australian travellers able to visit to 185 nations.

The price of issuing a 10-year passport has now surged even further away from neighbouring countries like New Zealand, whose cost is only A\$180.

The Australian Passport Office only recently commenced rolling out the new R series passport, which includes new features to secure it against identity theft and counterfeiting.

These include being made from a tougher, high-security, layered plastic, as well as cutting-edge ultraviolet elements.

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If you are interested learning more about this exceptional opportunity, please contact Gemma Ledbury at u&u recruitment partners on **07 3232 9138** or email **nicola.ballinger@uandu.com** for an information pack.







Tuesday 28th Feb 2023

Jetstar Japan deal

TRAVELLERS who book Jetstar return flights to Japan departing from late Apr will be able to score the return leg for free when they purchase tix in the next 72 hours.

The deal applies to travel to Tokyo and Osaka through Jetstar's first Return for Free promotion in four years.

Club Jetstar members will also enjoy 12 hours of early access to the sale, which ends this Fri at 11.59pm.

MW Tours hosts China evening



(<u>Gunn</u>)

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2023 marks our 130th anniversary and to celebrate, we're offering up to $2,000^*$ in cabin discounts on our history-making voyage, The North Cape Express.

MW TOURS and the China National Tourist Office (CNTO) recently hosted a select group of travel agents in Sydney for an informative update on Jiangsu Province and Nantong, China.

Led by MW Tours Business Travel Manager Karen Robertson, the evening of learning, networking and delicious cuisine took place at the China Cultural Centre in Sydney's CBD.

Pictured: The group gathered for a picture after brushing up on their knowledge of China.

Tauck lands more

TAUCK has announced an increase of its small group land departures by 35% this year. In total, Tauck will feature small group departures on 75 land journeys in Australia, as well as multiple departures in Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and New Zealand.

Most of the operator's trips will average 24 passengers, while most African safaris will feature as few as 18 people.

Window Seat

EVER find yourself in need of more space when travelling in the air?

An Aussie photographer, Chelsea Badger, has recently revealed a "hack" to extend some personal room when travelling with Qantas.

The secret sauce is to whip out your Qantas app 10 minutes prior to boarding and look for seats or rows that have not yet been booked.

The next step, the travel influencer said, was to make a quick note of the seat number that you wish to change to, then approach the service desk with a polite tone to ask for the swap.

The method was shared and seen by many on TikTok, sparking debates throughout the comments section about whether the 'hack' would work on any other airlines, with the Aussie claiming her cheeky methods had worked multiple times previously when boarding with Qantas.





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Rex closer to profitability

WHILE Rex Airlines has managed to narrow its losses for the six months to 31 Dec, the airline failed to join the likes of rival Qantas in moving back to profitability during the same period (TD 23 Feb).

The carrier's parent company **Regional Express Holdings Limited** announced an after-tax loss of \$16.5m for the period, an improvement of 55% over the same six months last year.

Rex added that working more closely with travel agency groups would be a strong factor in propelling the business to profitability in H2 of 2023.

The latest result was negatively impacted by regional operations, which Rex conceded had been a "drag on the group's performance", as well as a \$23 million hit resulting from mark-to-market valuation of the Convertible Note and Warrant facility entered into with PAG in

2020 (**TD** 22 Sep 2020).

"This loss is not cash in nature and was brought about by the increase in value of Rex shares," Rex was careful to point out.

An operating loss after tax of \$1.9 million was also incurred. but in more positive news, cash in the bank almost doubled compared to the prior period.

Further highlights from the update included domestic jet services returning to profitability from Sep 2022 onwards, with operations achieving consistent growth for four consecutive months to the end of the period. While conceding that its

regional division had adversely impacted the bottom line for the six months, Rex also pointed out that regional demand had now returned to a positive EBITDA for the last four months of the period, with this trend expected to see a return to monthly profitability in Q3 FY23.

TRAINING ACADEM

Lindeman Island sale falls through

SHAUN Juniper's proposed purchase of Lindeman Island off the coast of Airlie Beach coast in Queensland (TD 21 Nov 2022) has fallen through.

The prominent Qld developer has reportedly pulled out of the \$10m buy, with the tourism asset to stay in the hands of Chinese company White Horse Group.

Juniper's abandonment of the purchase is a major blow to the Sunshine State's tourism industry, with the now-defunct deal seeking to restore the island to its "former tourism glory".

Lindeman was formerly home to a Club Med resort and boasts several private beaches.





Jetstar most hated

JETSTAR is Australia's most hated airline, according to new data published by S Money.

The report used Twitter sentiment as the basis for its findings, with lost and damaged luggage emerging as a central gripe among Aussie travellers.

While 67.5% of tweets about Jetstar were found to be negative, the budget carrier was closely followed by its sister airline Qantas, which saw Twitter users post criticisms of the brand around 60% of the time.

Virgin Australia was next on the list with 50.7%, followed by Link Airways (40.3%), Rex Airlines (37%), Air Link (21.2%), Qantas Link (17%), Skytrans (16.8%), and Alliance Airlines (16.7%).

The carrier to score the lowest hate rating among the unforgiving Twitter community was the small WA-based charter service Aviar (formerly Slingair Heliwork), which only had 7.5% of its tweets be negative.

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First Nations mentoring prog

THE Federal Government has introduced a \$10 million First Nations Tourism Mentoring Program (FNTMP) to provide free, one-on-one mentoring services to First Nations tourism businesses across the country.

The program is being delivered by First Nations consulting business, PwC's Indigenous Consulting (PIC), alongside Intrepid Travel and not-for-profit organisation, Welcome to Country.

"We're pleased to... go beyond our existing commitment to First Nations experiences in our trips by also working with emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses," Intrepid Travel Managing Director ANZ Brett Mitchell said.

FNTMP is currently seeking mentors, with requirements including knowledge and experience working within the tourism industry, experience mentoring businesses or have owned their own business, and who work with First Nations businesses and communities in a culturally appropriate and respectful way.

Organisations interested in becoming mentors are being invited to submit an application via the website **HERE** before 11 Apr.

UA LAUNCHES SUSTAINABLE FUND

UNITED Airlines has launched a sustainable flight fund to support start-ups who are focused on reducing the aviation industry's carbon footprint via sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) research, technology and production.

The United Airlines Ventures (UAV) Sustainable Flight Fund kicks off with more than US\$100 million in investments from United and its first fund partners -Air Canada, Boeing, GE Aerospace, JPMorgan Chase, and Honeywell.

"It's not about offsets or things that are just greenwashing... instead we're creating a system that drives investment to build a new industry around sustainable aviation fuel, essentially from scratch," United Chief Executive Officer Scott Kirby explained.

Companies of any industry can invest in the UAV Sustainable



Flight Fund, which will funnel the capital raised into technology, advanced fuel sources and proven producers, all with the aim of scaling the supply of SAF.

Individuals can also participate, with anyone who purchases a United flight ticket on the airline's website or app given the option to contribute US\$1, US\$3.50 or US\$7.00 to the fund.

The first 10,000 travellers who choose to contribute will be thanked with 500 MileagePlus Miles each.

UA also revealed it will provide customers with an estimate of each flight's carbon footprint in their search, highlighting lowercarbon options.

In-vesting more

KOREAN Air has repurposed its retired cabin life vests into eco-friendly cosmetic pouches, with proceeds from the sales to be donated to a global environmental organisation. The pouches, produced in partnership with Korean beauty brand "107", feature six different travel-size skin care essentials, with a limited number (4,000) up for sale on Korean Air's e-Skyshop.

Travel & Cruise

Weekly

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EK recycles a plane's worth of bottles

EMIRATES recycled an entire plane-load's worth of plastic and glass over the course of 2022, by collecting discarded bottles on board its flights.

The 500,000 kilograms of discarded bottles - which is almost the same weight as a fully loaded Emirates flagship A380 aircraft - was sent to a recycling plant in Dubai.

The glass will then be sent to glass manufacturers in the UAE to include in their batch mix for

new bottles, while the plastic bottles will be repurposed to make other products.

The idea for the onboard glass and plastic recycling initiative was put forward by Emirates Cabin Crew in 2019, as part of regular webinars and events, where they are encouraged to give feedback and share ideas.

Emirates has a number of other recycling initiatives in place, including reusable onboard amenity kits.

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MONEY

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



THE Aussie dollar has tumbled from its mid-Jan high of 0.687 US cents, amid predictions that American interest rates could stay higher for longer.

The Reserve Bank of Australia confirmed that additional rate hikes would likely be necessary in the coming months, stressing that a break in the tightening cycle was not an option due to higher-than-anticipated inflation and wage rises.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.674
UK	£0.559
NZ	\$1.093
Euro	€0.635
Japan	¥91.79
Thailand	ß23.57
China	¥4.679
South Africa	12.41
Canada	\$0.915
Crude oil	US\$76.32

GC Airport glitch

OPERATIONS came to a halt at Gold Coast Airport yesterday morning, after an IT systems outage affected all check-in counters and baggage claim carousels from around 5am.

Hundreds of passengers were unable to check in for their flights or collect their luggage, and only three out of 16 flights that were scheduled to depart before 9.30am took off, while only four out of 11 scheduled arrivals touched down at the airport.

Cancellations and delays continued after all systems came back online again by 10.30am.

Friends of Anaheim see Sydney



FRIENDS of Visit Anaheim held a VIP partner event on the weekend, with attendees enjoying a private sightseeing

Tuesday 28th Feb 2023

Radisson in Hua Hin

RADISSON Resort & Spa Hua Hin has opened its doors to guests in Thailand this week.

The former Thai royal family retreat is only hours from Bangkok, featuring 243 modern designed rooms and suites with access to a water sports hub, outdoor pool, fitness centre, spa, skate park and beachfront access.

Uruguay downgrade

SMARTRAVELLER has released an update to advise international visitors they are no longer required to undertake a COVID-19 PCR test and provide proof of vaccination to enter Uruguay in South America.

Travellers must, however, still have comprehensive travel insurance on arrival to enter.

tour to explore some of the best Sydney has to offer.

With many of the Friends of Anaheim delegation having never been to Sydney before, the group was taken to some of the key tourism spots.

Guests met at View Sydney, where they were received by a Big Bus Tours open-top, sightseeing tour bus, which took passengers through downtown Sydney to famous Bondi Beach, and up Oxford Street ahead of the Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras.

The group then set down for a brunch at Three Blue Ducks Rosebery, where attendees enjoyed a modern Australian breakfast including kale bowls and avocado toast.

Pictured is the delegation from Friends of Anaheim: Disneyland Resort, Citadel Outlets, Karmel Shuttle, Desert Palms Hotel & Suites, Best Western Stovall's Hotels, Sheraton Park Hotel, The Westin Anaheim Resort, and South Coast Plaza.

Swedish terror alert **SMARTRAVELLER** is advising

Australians to exercise a high degree of caution when travelling in Sweden due to an increased the threat of terrorism.

The Swedish Government has recently assessed the risk of terrorism as an "elevated threat", an equivalent threat level of three out of five.

This rating means an attack "could happen", with Australians advised to always be alert, and to take official warnings seriously.

Ovolo RoomStay

OVOLO and RoomStav are "disrupting" the hotel industry by offering PlanPay, the first digital lay-by payment option.

Travellers will be able to use their own money to pay before they stay, rather than credit, with zero fees and zero penalties.

Guests can also play in flexible installments, and can lock in room rates ahead of time - up to two years in advance.

Amadeus returns

AMADEUS returned to an annual profit for the 12 months to 31 Dec 2022, according to the company's financial results, which have seen it able to resume paying a dividend.

Global air traffic's continued recovery last year, coupled with solid commercial activity, contributed to stronger revenue (€4.49 billion), EBITDA (€1.64 billion), and adjusted profit (€742 million) compared to 2021.

Air Distribution bookings were recorded at 396.3 million for the period, representing 92% more than the bookings taken in 2021 or 68.3% of 2019 bookings.

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Don't delay, the Explorer Sale offers must end 31 March 2023.

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What better way to cap off an unforgettable Bench Africa safari in East Africa than with one of the world's most extraordinary wildlife encounters? Embark on a journey to the heart of Africa and come face to face with some of the world's most magnificent creatures: the mountain gorillas of Rwanda. With just over 1,000 individuals remaining in the wild, encountering these gentle giants is a once-in-alifetime experience. Led by expert guides, the trek can last anywhere from 15 minutes to 8 hours, but it's all worth it to spend an hour in the company of mountain gorillas lounging in the foliage or playfully tumbling with their young.

But it's not just about the gorillas. This journey to Rwanda is a rollercoaster of emotions, from stark reflection at the Gisozi Genocide Memorial to breathtaking wonder at the foot of the majestic Sabyinyo Volcano. And all along the way, you'll be touched by the warmth and kindness of the Rwandan people, who will welcome you with open arms, whilst enjoying a comfortable stay at Mountain View Lodge.

So, we welcome your clients to discover Rwanda, a land of beauty, diversity, and inspiration, where the gorillas reign supreme and the memories last forever.

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