

NCL last chance

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) is reminding agents that today is the last chance to qualify for commission payments on NCF components of cruise fares, which come into effect this month for new reservations made 120 days prior to cruises departing from 01 May 2023 onwards.

To participate in the initiative, trade partners must submit a marketing plan to the NCL Sales Support Team by COB today.

Norwegian yesterday noted that for agencies which are part of a consortia and have not received an official confirmation from their head office "it is highly likely that you are not currently registered for this initiative".

Individual agents are strongly recommended to submit a marketing plan directly to the NCL Sales Support Team, with a full template and more information available by **CLICKING HERE**.

Submissions must be sent to AUNZPartnerships@ncl.com.

VA to add Samoa, Vanuatu

EXCLUSIVE

VIRGIN Australia looks set to further ramp up its short-haul international operations later this year, with the carrier flagging the commencement of flights to Samoa and Vanuatu in Mar.

GDS screens confirm plans for VA flights to Apia, Samoa from Brisbane and Sydney, with Virgin offering two weekly Boeing 737-800 frequencies from each city.

VA's Sydney-Apia flights will commence 21 Mar, operating each Tue and Sat with a daytime departure from SYD at 9am, arriving at 5pm in Samoa and the return service departing Apia at 6.05pm, landing at 9.40pm.

Kicking off two days later on 23 Mar, VA's new Brisbane flights to Samoa will operate as an overnight sector, departing BNE at 9.25pm each Wed and Sun and arriving at 5.10am the next morning, while the return service will depart Apia at 6.10am and

arrive back in BNE at 8.55am.

Virgin will also return to Vanuatu with five weekly Brisbane-Port Vila services effective from 10 Mar - dropping back to three per week between 08 May and 16 Jun.

A VA spokesperson confirmed the new routes, telling **Travel Daily** this morning "the addition of Samoa and Vanuatu to Virgin Australia's network will give holidaymakers and those looking to reconnect with family and friends a greater choice of Pacific Island destinations".

Riviera Aussie offer

RIVIERA Cruises is offering exclusive savings for Australian passengers of up to \$500 per couple on seven night European river cruises and up to \$2,500 per cabin on 14-night 2023 itineraries.

The deal is valid for bookings before 28 Feb - call 1300 857 437.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of news including our regular **Business Events News** feature.

IATA slams China restrictions

IATA Director General Willie Walsh has slammed the decision made by several countries, including Australia, to COVID-test travellers from China as "extremely disappointing".

"Research undertaken around the arrival of the Omicron variant concluded that putting barriers in the way of travel made no difference to the peak spread of infections.

"We have the tools to manage COVID-19 without resorting to ineffective measures that cut off international connectivity, damage economies and destroy jobs," he said, adding that governments are "prioritising politics over facts".



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Halekulani appoints

DAVIDE Barnes will join Hawai'i's Halekulani as Hotel Manager, with responsibility for overseeing the day-to-day management and operations of the 453-room Oahu-based property from 16 Jan.

Barnes has over 20 years of experience, with his most recent role as Director of Operations at The Lodge at Kukui'ula for Destination Residences Hawai'i/Hyatt Hotels & Resorts in Kauai.

For more appointments, including several other Halekulani roles, see [page five](#).

BA's big AS deal

BRITISH Airways and Alaska Airlines will expand their codeshare partnership this year, with the addition of the BA code to several new AS domestic routes within the USA.

The additions are progressively rolling out this month and include Alaska Airlines services from San Diego to Fresno, Sacramento, San Francisco and San Jose CA.

Also new is a codeshare on San Francisco-Palm Springs, Austin-San Jose CA and Seattle-Reno.

New at Graceland

THE worldwide success of Baz Lurhmann's *Elvis* movie has prompted the opening of a new exhibition at the late superstar's home Graceland in Memphis.

The "Making of Elvis" exhibit will open with a fanfare this weekend, coinciding with Presley's birthday on 08 Jan.

MU increases SYD & MEL

THE easing of COVID-19 restrictions in China has seen a quick response from China Eastern Airlines, which has announced it will increase its Sydney-Shanghai service to three weekly flights starting 16 Jan.

The route has only been operated once per week over the pandemic-impacted period.

MU's Melbourne-Shanghai flights will also operate on a thrice weekly basis from 23 Jan.

The Shanghai-based carrier, which partners with Qantas on the China route, revealed it plans to further increase both direct services to daily flights again before the end of Mar.

Agencies can access the GDS for ticketing, and eligible passengers will be able to use the Qantas lounge in the Sydney and Melbourne International

COVIDSafe closure

THE Federal Health Department has confirmed that its COVIDSafe app has now been totally decommissioned, with all versions no longer functional.

An update from Health Minister Mark Butler this week also noted that "all COVIDSafe app data has now been deleted from the National COVIDSafe Data Store", with users advised to delete the app from smartphones.

In addition the Government's WhatsApp Channel for COVID-19 has been decommissioned and is no longer functional.

departure terminals.

Prior to the pandemic, China Eastern operated 10 weekly flights on both the Sydney and Melbourne routes.

China Eastern and Qantas recently applied to extend their alliance to coordinate operations between Australia and mainland China until 31 Mar 2024, with a draft ruling on the matter expected soon (**TD** 09 Dec 2022).

The two carriers' Australian Competition and Consumer Commission approval for their existing Extended Joint Coordination Agreement expires on 31 Mar (**TD** 12 Feb 2021).

Africa specialist appoints receivers

MELBOURNE-BASED Tourica Tours has been placed into administration, with a formal notice from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission confirming that a first meeting of creditors will take place tomorrow.

Stephen Dixon from Hamilton Murphy Advisory has convened the meeting for 11am at 114 William St Melbourne, with creditors urged to submit proof of debts and proxies to the Administrator by 4pm today.

The company's website is still operational, promoting its African Music Safari products which in the past has featured Aussie musicians such as Kasey Chambers and John Williamson.



Window Seat

PERHAPS travelling a little less comfortably than on a coach tour, a unicycle rider is nearing the end of his journey from Maine to Florida, entering his destination state earlier today with just a few hundred kilometres ahead of him.

The intrepid 19-year-old is unicycling his way to Key West in the Straits of Florida to raise money and awareness for the East Coast Greenway, a project aimed at creating a network of connected cycling trails into one complete route down the east coast of the USA.

Avery Seuter said he travels about 20 to 30 miles per day (30-50 kilometres), meaning he expects to complete the rest of his journey in about five weeks.

"It only goes about eight or nine miles an hour," he said.

Seuter has relied on the hospitality of strangers during his journey through 15 states.

"Everybody who I stay with gets to sign my helmet, so I've collected a lot of names," he told local media, adding "It's kind of a record of everyone I've met along the way".

It's hoped that if he succeeds in his quest to have the cycling network created, it will also be available for use by riders of two-wheeled bikes, rather than just unicyclists.

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Ignite fires up for Christmas



THE Ignite Travel team made the most of a big year at their recent Christmas party, with attendees (**pictured**) clearly enthusiastically embracing the “hats and wigs” theme. It was Ignite’s first big get-together since celebrating the Melbourne Cup (**TD** 04 Nov 2022).



Airbus aims for stars

THE defence division of aircraft manufacturer Airbus is partnering with space technology firm Voyager to develop and operate Starlab, a “free-flying space station which will serve NASA and a global customer base of space agencies and researchers”.

Voyager and its operating company, Nanoracks, were awarded a US\$160 million Space Act Agreement from NASA in Dec 2021 to create the space station, for which Airbus Defence and Space will provide technical design support and expertise.

Starlab, which replaces the International Space Station and is expected to launch in 2028, will be used to conduct investigations and advance scientific discovery.

Jean-Marc Nasr, Airbus Defence and Space Executive Vice President, said the partnership with Voyager Space was “the first step toward fielding the next generation of space stations to serve international astronauts”.

India gets a voco

IHG Hotels and Resorts is preparing to bring its voco brand to India for the first time, after signing an agreement to rebrand Corbet Aamond Spa & Resort, located in northern India’s Uttarakhand State.

The property is set to be transformed into voco Jim Corbett by Jul 2024, and marks the introduction of the seventh brand from IHG’s global portfolio to the Indian market.

The hotel will feature an outdoor pool, a gymnasium, a spa beyond, an all-day dining restaurant and a bar, as well as indoor and outdoor banqueting spaces.

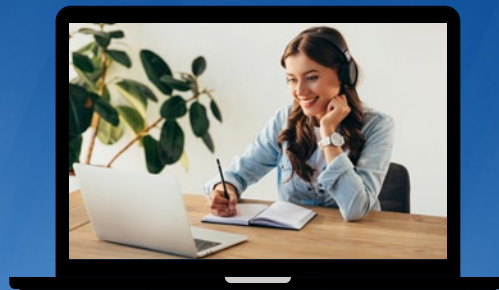
Olive this route!

AEGEAN Airlines has announced new seasonal flights between Athens and Kalamata.

The route will operate using ATR42 aircraft four times weekly over the Northern Summer period from 19 May-18 Sep.

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ICMSA updates

AUSTRALIAN professional conference organiser ICMSA says it had one of its best years on record in 2022.

By the end of Nov, it had run 20 conferences and events, including nine for international organisations and 11 for domestic clients, which brought in a collective 13,500 delegates and represented a value of over \$4 million.

ICMSA also revealed it is preparing to roll out a new five-year plan, which so far has over 16 conferences in the pipeline, as well as events secured to 2027.

As of last month, it was confirmed that ICMSA will be managing IChemE in Auckland in Oct 2023, and the 32nd ACM International Conference on Multimedia in Melbourne in 2024.

The last quarter of 2022 also saw ICMSA renew contracts with some of its long-term clients, including the University of Melbourne.

ADELAIDE: THE CITY OF EVENTS

ADELAIDE is highlighting its world-class line-up of events and festivals for 2023 in the new 'ADL IS ON' campaign developed by the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA).

The promotion kicked off on 26 Dec with the aim of encouraging suburban and regional South Australians to visit the city.

The campaign video puts a diverse range of events in the spotlight, including Adelaide Fringe, WOMAdelaide, Adelaide Festival, Tasting Australia presented by RAA Travel and Adelaide Motorsport Festival, as well as Adelaide Oval which hosts Gather Round, BBL, Ed Sheeran and Marsh One Day Cup.

"There aren't many cities in the world that can claim they are home to both the largest festival of cycling and largest arts festival in the southern hemisphere, all within the first four months of the year," AEDA Managing Director Ian Hill said.

"Events and festivals are an integral part of the city and that is why AEDA, as a subsidiary of City



of Adelaide, invests more than \$2.5 million into this area every year," he enthused.

Adelaide's visitor spend between Jan and Apr 2022 was \$1.20 billion, up from \$1.19 billion for the same period in pre-pandemic 2019, data from AEDA revealed.

The city is also leading the national COVID-19 recovery, with the latest Tourism & Transport Forum statistics showing total visitation was at 86% of pre-pandemic levels, ahead of Brisbane (74%), Melbourne (71%), and Sydney (67%).

Hill said the city's recovery

was being propelled by hotel bookings, which are reaching high occupancy rates in line with major events - hotel room bookings reached 90% for the World Cup Cricket semi-final match on 10 Nov 2022 and again for the Guns N' Roses concert on 29 Nov 2022.

Additionally, new data from Festival City Adelaide shows its members, which includes OzAsia Festival, contributed more than \$108m to the Gross State Product in 2021/22 - up 30% on the same time last year.

You can view the campaign video [HERE](#).

keep dreaming...

Travel & Cruise
Weekly

A month-by-month guide to travel through the year, and more destination inspiration for 2023!



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Summer in Syd

MORE than 145,000 people flocked to the Royal Botanic Gardens for Noel Sydney, a 16-night Christmas festival held from 09-24 Dec.

The festivities included digital Christmas trees, light projections on Macquarie Street heritage buildings, drone shows, market stalls selling products from around the state, and nightly variety performances.

Noel Sydney was part of the NSW Government's Summer in Sydney event series, which also included OPEN FOR LUNCH, a day of al fresco lunch parties across the city on 02 Dec, and the ELEVATE Sydney festival, which is currently on until 07 Jan.

Tourism Towards

REGISTRATIONS are open for this year's annual Tourism Towards 2030 Conference, held by Tourism NT, Tourism Top End and Tourism Central Australia.

Under the theme 'Attracting the new travel consumer', the conference provides tourism businesses with a full-day program of speakers designed to inspire and grow the Northern Territory tourism sector.

The event will take place on 21 Feb at the Alice Springs Convention Centre, and 23 Feb at DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Esplanade Darwin.

The full day conference fee is priced at \$25 per person - [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up.



ACI ramps up Aussie office



SINGAPORE-BASED recruitment specialist ACI HR Solutions is in growth mode for its Australian operations, recently expanding the local team with the appointment of Kiran Abbasi as the company's Sydney-based Executive Consultant.

CEO Andrew Chan, who's **pictured** with Abbasi and the company's local Senior Consultant, Kathy Fatseas, said that like all travel businesses, ACI had been impacted by COVID-19 over the last two years.

"We started seeing green shoots from Q3 2022 and have been ramping up strongly since," Chan

Azamara offer

AZAMARA has announced a new wave season promotion, with savings on all cabin categories plus US\$300 onboard credit.

The offer applies to select sailings departing between 28 Feb 2023 and 03 Apr 2024, including the Spain Intensive Voyage and the Greece & Turkey Voyage - more details **HERE**.

told **Travel Daily** this week. "We're cautiously optimistic on a strong rebound coming into 2023 with the jobs already on our books," he added.

"Operations and sales talents have been in high demand across the sector as companies look to rebuild, and at ACI our focus remains on finding middle to senior management for our clients."

The company can be contacted via email on info@acihr.com.

ET reboots SIN

ETHIOPIAN Airlines has announced the resumption of non-stop flights between Singapore and Addis Ababa effective from 25 Mar this year.

The Star Alliance member will operate the services four times weekly using a Boeing 787-9, with the flights including a tag-on sector to Kuala Lumpur.

All fares and schedules are now available for immediate booking via GDS platforms - more details via World Aviation 1300 600 001.

Manchester United, Marriott team up

MARRIOTT Bonvoy Moments has teamed up with Manchester United for the fourth year in a row to offer fans behind-the-scenes access to matches for the rest of the 2022/23 season.

Members can bid on exclusive packages, including an overnight stay at Old Trafford Stadium, pitch access, and a chance to travel to Barcelona with the team.

Opportunities available also include 'Play on the Pitch', which gives members the chance to play in a match at Old Trafford coached by Manchester United football legends.

For further details, **CLICK HERE**.

flydubai Ashgabat

FLYDUBAI will reinstate twice-weekly flights to Ashgabat, the capital and largest city in Turkmenistan, from 23 Jan.

The Ashgabat service grows flydubai's network in Central Asia to nine destinations in five countries, also including Almaty and Astana in Kazakhstan; Bishkek, Samarkand and Osh in Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe; and Tashkent & Namangan in Uzbekistan.

The airline will also launch flights to seven new destinations this month, including Cagliari, Corfu, Gan, Krabi, Milan Bergamo, Pattaya and St Petersburg, expanding its offering to 116 destinations in 53 countries.

APPOINTMENTS



WELCOME to Industry Appointments, **Travel Daily's** Thursday feature which has the latest job appointments from across the industry. If you have just appointed someone to a new position and would like to update the industry email appointments@traveldaily.com.au.

Hilton Hotels & Resorts has promoted **Michelle Carter** to a new position as Sales Executive - Australian Sales, moving from her previous role as Sales Manager for the Hilton & Doubletree Hotels in Cairns.

Hawaii's Halekulani Resort has welcomed **Lisa Matsuda** as its new Director of Sales & Marketing, with responsibility for all domestic and international markets. She was formerly Director of Marketing & Communications at Hyatt Regency. The property has also named **Joseph Diver** as Director of Food & Beverage Operations and **Eva Taba** as Director Rooms.

Former Melbourne Convention Bureau head **Karen Bolinger** has taken a new position as Interim CEO at **Destination Gold Coast**.

Kirsten Bain has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer at The Travel Corporation's **Destination America** division. Bain has been with sister brand **Contiki Holidays** since 2005.

Flight Centre Travel Group's **Travel Associates** has announced the return of **Adam Townson** as its new National Product Leader for Australia. Townson rejoins the brand after two years as Head of Marketing and Events at Tourism Noosa.

Gate 7 has welcomed **Angela Khoudair** to its growing team as PR Account Manager, with responsibilities including Travel South.