

## Azamara expands

**AZAMARA** Cruises is expanding its local operations, this morning announcing the establishment of a dedicated Australian reservations team as part of an enhanced global contact centre, led by Daragh Robbins, ex Royal Caribbean Group.

Azamara is also on the search for a sales and marketing support executive and a BDM to help grow its Australian operations which are headed up by Victoria Chigwidden.

The company will also next month introduce its new Versonix Seaware Touch booking system via the new Azamara Alliance travel partner program, using new technologies and tools to create a seamless experience for trade partners.

More in today's *Cruise Weekly*.

## Qantas Hols adds touring

**QANTAS** continues to make inroads into the travel sector, after this morning announcing the expansion of its Qantas Holidays product range to include Qantas Tours-branded ready-made private and small-group tour packages (**TD** breaking news).

The range will initially feature 10 packages, including a luxury island getaway in the Maldives and Sri Lanka, a southern Italy sojourn, a Balkan river cruise, Egyptian getaway, and a tour of the highlights of Japan.

The packages include Qantas or partner flights, premium accommodation and detailed itineraries led by a local guide, with the carrier revealing it will gradually expand the collection over the coming months.

Additionally, Qantas Frequent Flyers can earn three Qantas Points for every dollar spent on their Qantas Tour Booking, or use their Qantas Points to book and receive "45% more value".

"Qantas Tours will offer our members unforgettable experiences in destinations they may not have visited before without having to plan or manage the logistics of travel," Qantas Loyalty CEO Olivia Wirth said.

"Our research has shown that two-thirds of our members are

interested in tour packages, and the launch of our premium itinerary holidays will help meet and grow this demand."

"With this latest expansion of the Qantas Holidays portfolio, we're giving frequent flyers more opportunity to make great holidays possible with their Qantas Points and growing the ways they can boost their points balance," Wirth added.

The packages are curated by Byron Bay-based TripADeal, which is now majority owned by Qantas since the acquisition of a 51% stake last year (**TD** 24 May 2022).

Today's Qantas Tours reveal follows confirmation of the new Qantas Luxury Holidays offering (**TD** yesterday) which clearly sees the business also targeting rival Luxury Escapes.

## Marriott SIA deal

**SINGAPORE** Airlines KrisFlyer miles can now be converted to Marriott Bonvoy points, an expansion of the partnership which for almost two years has seen points able to be changed in the opposite direction only.

KrisFlyer members can convert their miles to Marriott Bonvoy points at a 2:1 ratio, compared to the 3:1 ratio the other way, with 3,000 points able to be converted at a time, and 180,000 in a calendar year.

The transfer request can take up to four days.

## Today's issue of TD

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

## US flight chaos

**MORE** than 7,100 flights in the United States were delayed and over 1,100 cancelled yesterday following a system outage that grounded all departing aircraft.

The outage to the Notice to Air Missions System, which alerts pilots about closed runways, equipment outages, and other potential hazards along a flight route, prompted the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to order a nationwide ground stop at around 7.20am Eastern Time, just as flights were ramping up.

International flights bound for the US were not impacted, and domestic flights already in the air were allowed to continue to their destinations.

Flights gradually began to resume across the country at around 9am the same morning, however several airlines, including United Airlines, Delta and American Airlines, have continued to delay or cancel flights due to ongoing congestion.

The cause of the outage is unclear, with US officials saying they have found no evidence of a cyber attack so far.

President Joe Biden has ordered the US Transportation Department to urgently investigate the incident.



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## New NCL sales boss

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line (NCL) has promoted Jason Krimmel to Head of International Business, where he will oversee the cruise line's sales and marketing outside of the United States and Canada, including the Asia Pacific region.

Krimmel has been with NCL for 19 years, with his most recent role being Vice President International Marketing and Global Creative Strategy.

He takes on the role recently vacated with the departure of Eamonn Ferrin alongside other senior NCLH execs (**TD** 16 Dec).

For more appointments, see **page five**.

## SALES MANAGER - AUSTRALIA

Rocky Mountaineer is seeking an experienced travel sales professional to join their global sales team as their Sales Manager - Australia.

The successful candidate will be responsible for driving and maximizing revenue potential for retail, wholesale, custom groups, and group tour block accounts.

This role is open to applicants in Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane.



**ROCKY MOUNTAINEER**

For more details and to apply please click [here](#)  
Applications close 20 January, 2023.



## AFTA invites agents to update details

**BUSINESSES** which are members of the Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) are being urged to update their listings on the [atas.com.au](https://www.atas.com.au) website, with AFTA noting that “as Australians rediscover Australia and the world, booking with an ATAS travel professional has never been more important”.

Details can be updated via the My Afta platform - [CLICK HERE](#).

## Air China resumes

**BEIJING-BASED** Air China is the latest carrier to announce an expansion of its Australian operations, with thrice weekly flights to Sydney and Melbourne to resume in the coming weeks.

Tickets are now on sale for the Star Alliance member services which commence in early Feb, ramping up to daily frequencies effective from 26 Mar.

## Accor heads off to sea

**ACCOR** is the latest hotelier to expand into the cruise sector, this morning revealing plans to debut two newbuild ultra-luxury ships under its upmarket Orient Express brand.

The French hospitality behemoth will deploy what it’s describing as “the world’s largest superyacht”, the 220-metre *Orient Express Silenseas*.

The three-masted ship, which will accommodate 120 passengers in 54 suites, will cruise Mediterranean and Caribbean routes, starting in the northern spring of 2026.

Reservations will open next year, with Accor partnering with Chantiers de l’Atlantique for the construction of *Silenseas* and one other sister ship, which is scheduled to be delivered in the first quarter of 2027.

*Silenseas* will feature two swimming pools, two restaurants,

an oyster bar, a speakeasy bar, a spa, an amphitheatre-cabaret and even a private recording studio.

The ship will use a hybrid propulsion system with wind as her primary source of energy when weather permits, as well as an LNG-powered engine.

*Silenseas* will also be built ready for green hydrogen use in the future, and will utilise shore power, as well as a sonar system to detect sea mammals on her route to avoid collisions.

Accor CEO Sebastien Bazin laid down the gauntlet, saying guests can expect *Silenseas* to be much more luxurious than the recently launched *Evrima*, The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection’s first foray into the cruise sector (**TD** 19 Oct 22).

Accor’s ship will be roughly the same size as *Evrima*, but will host just half the capacity, and will be twice as expensive, Bazin added.

More in today’s **Cruise Weekly**.



## Window Seat

**IT APPEARS** that the appetite for half-naked commuter travel may have dissipated during the pandemic, with New York’s No Pants Subway Ride this week called off for the third year running.

The event has been an annual fixture since 2002, and while the pandemic put paid to the festival of semi-nudity for the last two years, it appears its future still remains in doubt according to founder Charlie Todd.

Each year about 2,000 New Yorkers and visitors undress for the event, which takes place in the middle of winter and calls for subway riders to board trains without pants as an “international celebration of silliness”.

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## Hilton's new Spark

HILTON Hotels & Resorts has unveiled a new "premium economy" brand, Spark by Hilton, with more than 100 property deals already said to be in the pipeline and the first anticipated to open later this year.

The introduction of Spark aims to deliver "reliable essentials and friendly service" according to Chief Brand Officer Matt Schuyler, who promised that Hilton's Spark would "deliver the consistency missing from the growing economy segment".

He said that Spark also leverages an "innovative conversion model" to offer a compelling investment option for hotel owners, which is cost-effective but still provides a consistent look and feel across each location.

## SeaLink revamp

SEALINK has launched a new unified SeaLink digital experience, after a project to merge nine individual ferry websites into one.

The move offers a "single launch pad to look and book any one of our SeaLink ferries, no matter which destination around Australia you are looking to travel to," according to SeaLink Marine & Tourism GM National Marketing, Phil Boyle.

The new portal also centralises all SeaLink career opportunities. See [sealink.com.au](https://sealink.com.au).

## CLIA showcase

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia is set to showcase 15 new cruise ships in an online education series for travel agents.

The 2023 Ocean Debut Virtual Showcase will run from 06 Feb to 15 Feb, delivering live online sessions presented by 14 CLIA cruise lines, including Scenic, Celebrity Cruises and Seabourn.

The showcase will be exclusively available to CLIA member travel agents, who can register online for the individual sessions via the CLIA Members Hub.

Participants will earn CLIA points and have a chance to win prize packs.

## Silver Nova reveal

SILVERSEA Cruises has unveiled all of its new ship *Silver Nova's* venues, which will include one of the line's largest choice of bars, lounges, and restaurants.

The 728-guest *Nova* will host 10 bars and lounges, eight distinct restaurants, and an array of additional public venues when she launches in Aug.

*Nova's* asymmetrical design and horizontal layout will heighten the ship's sense of spaciousness and provide a natural flow between venues, Silversea said.

The ship will also introduce all-new public spaces, positioned mainly on decks 3, 4, 5, and 10.

## Rex forecasts 2023 profit

THE board of Rex Airlines yesterday reaffirmed predictions that the company will return to profitability this year, after a third consecutive month in the black for its domestic jet operations.

An ASX update said pre-tax monthly profit on the "golden triangle" 737 operations which restarted in Feb last year had grown about 40% to \$2.8m in Nov.

Nov also marked the third month running that Rex's regional operations have been cash-flow positive since COVID, with EBITDA doubling to \$2.2 million, up from the positive \$1 million for the month of Oct.

The carrier believes its regional Saab operations will return to monthly overall profitability in

the current quarter - despite the "predatory actions of Qantas".

The overall Rex Group achieved a profit for the second consecutive month, with Oct pre-tax profit of just over \$3 million - a huge increase on the \$800,000 PBT for the month prior.

## Skip the sushi?

JAPAN Airlines is now offering a new option which allows "ethical travellers" to help save the planet by skipping inflight catering.

The new "JAL Ethical Choice MealSkip Option" is now available on all international flights.

The carrier said it would make a charity donation for each customer who skips a meal.



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You will lead a team of Key Account Managers/Sales Managers to maximise all sales opportunities, proactively create new opportunities and achieve sales targets. A strong focus will be on developing and managing relationships with industry partners and working with them on business growth opportunities beneficial to all parties.

### How to Apply

Applications close Monday 30 January 2023

Apply on the Web at <https://kelsian.expr3ss.com>



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## AIME 2023

**THE** Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) has unveiled its Knowledge Program for 2023, which will take place from 13-15 Feb at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre (MCEC).

The program will be centred on the theme 'Your Industry. Your Opportunity. What is the opportunity for the events industry now?', and will include an address from former Australian tennis star, Jelena Dokic.

Discussion points will include the future of work, how to build resilient cultures, what to do in a crisis, upskilling and wellness, with Professor Ben Hamer, author of *The Kickass Career*, one of the confirmed speakers.

For more details on the program, [CLICK HERE](#).

## NT EVENT PROGRAM RECIPIENTS

**THE** Northern Territory's events line-up for 2023 has just received a major boost, with the NT Government's Event Funding Program (EFP) to provide \$2.4 million to 39 events.

Administered by Northern Territory Major Events Company (NTMEC), the program saw 25 of the events offered multi-year deals, including the Darwin Symphony Orchestra.

The EFP will support the Orchestra to hold amphitheatre concerts over next three years, starting with the Rhythm of the 90s concert, which will take place at the Darwin Botanic Gardens Amphitheatre on 24 Jun.

"This funding allows us to continue bringing this much-loved event to life, and further enhance the audience experience for Territorians and visitors," Darwin Symphony Orchestra General Manager Kate Stephens said.

One of the new funding recipients is The Big Name, No Blankets NT Community Tour - a touring rock-and-roll theatre showcasing culture and dance from Central Australia.

While other popular events such as Darwin Lions Beer Can Regatta, Katherine Junk Festival, Alice Springs Beanie Festival, Chariots of Thunder Sprintcar Series and the Barunga Festival have again received funding, and are expected to attract thousands of locals and tourists during both the high and low seasons.

The EFP provides funding under five categories: community, event development, mass participation, and major event.

"We are proud to support this program, and recognise the value it contributes to the NT from an economic and social standpoint," NTMEC Head of Events and Operations Coryn Huddy said.



"The Territory's events calendar boasts a plethora of incredible festivals and events, and we are thrilled to see the calendar grow year on year."

Twenty-two supported events that took place in 2021-22 delivered a gross expenditure stimulus of \$39.8 million to the Territory, and generated 110,194 visitor nights.

**Pictured:** One of the successful recipients, the Darwin Lions Beer Can Regatta.

## MyCEB appoints

**MALAYSIA** Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) has announced the appointment of Noor Azlan Abu Bakar as its new Director of Convention & Exhibition, effective 03 Jan.

With 32 years of experience, including planning convention and exhibition activities at the Convention Division at Tourism Malaysia, the role will see Azlan tasked with growing the number of international business events in the Southeast Asian country.

## TCEB, THAI deal

**THE** Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) has signed a deal with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited (THAI) to promote Thailand in 2023 as a MICE destination.

The two bodies will collaborate to create trade shows and roadshows, particularly targeting Europe and the Asia Pacific region, including Australia.

## AV1 finds a bigger and better home

**AUSTRALIAN** audio-visual production company AV1 has relocated its headquarters to a 1,287m2 premises at 64 Burrows Road in Alexandria, Sydney, as well as investing \$1 million in equipment upgrades.

The bigger facility includes a dedicated space for set up and rehearsal of live events, training capabilities, studios for content production and remote recordings, and more.

AV1 also revealed the opening of new permanent positions and an 18-month training program to upskill existing staff and attract new team members.

Managing Director Keith Wootton said the relocation and investments confirms the company's dedication to the delivering live and hybrid event productions, adding 2023 will be a "landmark year" for AV1.

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## Booking.com WorldPride pact



**BOOKING.COM** has announced a partnership with this year's Sydney WorldPride festival.

The online accommodation giant will be the major partner for two key events at WorldPride, including the Pride Villages, which will see Oxford Street closed to traffic to create a free festival hub, where travellers from all over the world can come to celebrate together.

Booking.com is also sponsoring the three-day Human Rights Conference hosted at ICC Sydney, said to be the largest LGBT rights conference ever held in APAC.

The partnership is an extension of Booking.com's Travel Proud program, which facilitates more welcoming and inclusive travel experiences for the LGBT community.

"In addition to celebrating the revitalisation of the Australian tourism sector, our sponsorship of Sydney WorldPride is a symbol of our continued investment in supporting rainbow communities everywhere and our commitment

to enable truly inclusive travel experiences in even more places around the world," Booking.com Senior Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer Arjan Dijk said.

**MEANWHILE**, Byron Bay Cookies has launched a PRIDE cookie, alongside Qantas Airways and LGBT family charity Rainbow Families.

It will be available on QF flights next month, with 10c from each sale going to Rainbow Families.

## Key to DayAway

**ONLINE** experience booking platform DayAway (**TD 26 May**) has launched Founder's Key, an NFT membership token providing in-real-life experiences, benefits, incentives, discounts & upgrades.

Costing US\$2,500, there is a limited run of just 500 Founders Keys available on the Opensea Web 3 trading platform, with DayAway also promising to buy back the NFT from any primary purchaser who wants to return their membership in the future.



## Manitoba rebrand

### **MANITOBA** CANADA'S HEART IS CALLING

**TRAVEL** Manitoba has unveiled a refreshed tourism brand including a new logo (**pictured**).

With a series of new videos using the tagline 'Canada's Heart Is Calling', the brand focuses on the feelings generated by the destination's holiday experiences.

## Samoa easing

**THE** Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has reissued its Smartraveller advice for Samoa, reducing the overall level to "exercise normal safety precautions".

DFAT noted that Samoa had lifted all COVID-19 related travel restrictions, with flights to and from Australia continuing to operate.

## 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.

**Debbie Monk** has recently assumed the role of New Zealand Sales Manager at **Princess Cruises**. This is not her first time with the cruise line, having worked as Deputy Cruise Director between 2007-2012. Monk's industry experience also includes roles at travel insurer Cover-More Group, Go Holidays - Cruise, and Cruise Holidays.

**Minor Hotels** has appointed **Martin Zarybnicky** as General Manager of Anantara Bangkok Siam Hotel. The Czech national joins from InterContinental Bangkok and Holiday Inn Bangkok, where he held the role of Complex General Manager.

**Hugo Montanari** has been named as **Rosewood Hotel Group's** new Managing Director of Rosewood Hong Kong, replacing Hoss Vetry who has been promoted to Vice President of Operations for the Rosewood Hotel Group's Asia-Pacific region. Montanari has more than 17 years of global luxury hotel experience, including stints with Fairmont Hotels and Resorts in Dubai and at The Plaza Hotel in New York.

**American Queen Voyages** has expanded its leadership team. Reporting to President Cindy D'Aoust, **John Kingston**, who was appointed as Vice President of HR in Nov 2022, will be joined by **Angela Composto**, Vice President of Marketing, and **Alex Dormoi**, Project Management Officer.

**Jen Pagett** has taken a new role with **Uniworld Boutique River Cruises** as Key Accounts Manager. She returns to The Travel Corporation brand after about 12 months with Virtuoso.

**Ponant** has recruited former italktravel Castle Hill's **Penny O'Leary** as a Reservations Specialist.

**Emily Soden** has started a new position as Head of Financial Control & Reporting, Global Supply at **Flight Centre Travel Group**.

**John Staub** has been promoted to become Regional Sales Director at **Airplus International**. He's been with the organisation since 2015, most recently as Regional Sales Manager Vic/Tas/SA/NZ.