



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of news including our **Luxury page** and a full page from **Regent Seven Seas Cruises**.

TNZ feedback

TOURISM New Zealand is inviting agents to complete a survey providing feedback on how Aussie agents can better sell NZ holidays - survey expires 5pm on Fri, [CLICK HERE](#) to complete.

Explore guarantees

EXPLORE Worldwide has announced that all 2023 departures will be guaranteed, as a "further show of commitment to travel advisors".

The move follows the launch of a dedicated Australian office for the operator, led by Ben Ittensohn (*TD* 09 Jan).

"We know just how crucial guaranteed departures are for travel advisors, and this year they are more important than ever - travellers want the security of knowing their trip will go ahead.

"That certainty message to travellers is super powerful for agents," he said.

Ittensohn confirmed that trade sales were an ongoing priority for the business, with a new brochure - a key selling tool - now available **ONLINE** while hard copies can be ordered via TIFS.

Training and updates on Explore product are available by emailing info@evolutiontc.com.au.

Intrepid set for record '23

EXCLUSIVE

INTREPID Travel is expecting to transact \$650 million in sales during the current financial year, with bookings already exceeding pre-pandemic levels in most of the company's global markets.

Although Australia and NZ are lagging slightly, the local market is expected to catch up with the US and the UK shortly, where demand is already surpassing the figures for 2019.

Speaking to *TD* this morning, MD James Thornton and ANZ chief Brett Mitchell said being able to source customers from across the globe had given the business resilience over the last few years, with overall bookings running 15% ahead of previous records set three years ago.

Departed revenue and overall booking numbers are also expected to exceed pre-pandemic figures this year, they confirmed, with the demand allowing for an increased number of confirmed departure dates for clients.

It's now just under two years since the company took on investment from French group Genairgy (*TD* 11 Mar 2021), with the move giving Intrepid the

financial muscle to undertake a series of investments, including in "tiny house" accommodation provider CABN, NZ-based Haka Tourism Group, US operator Wildland Trekking, Perth's JOOB and Chimu Adventures.

Thornton and Mitchell confirmed they were still on the lookout for more acquisitions, with a focus on deals which provide more vertical integration and control of the product, such as accommodation offerings.

The average age of Intrepid clients is steadily increasing and is now in the 40s, they said, and also noted the company's longstanding focus on purpose made it well-placed to appeal to the wider market which is increasingly seeking sustainable travel options.

CX eyes 70% by Dec

CATHAY Pacific has confirmed it expects to be operating 70% of its pre-pandemic capacity by the end of 2023, with the airline recently outlining a strong commitment to rebuilding its operations and the wider Hong Kong International aviation hub.

The latest traffic figures indicate in Dec it carried 801,000 passengers - almost eight times the figure 12 months prior, but still down 73% on Dec 2019.

No TD tomorrow

JUST a reminder to our wonderful readers that *Travel Daily* and *Business Events News* will not be published tomorrow due to the Australia Day public holiday this week.

Regular scheduling will resume again from Fri.

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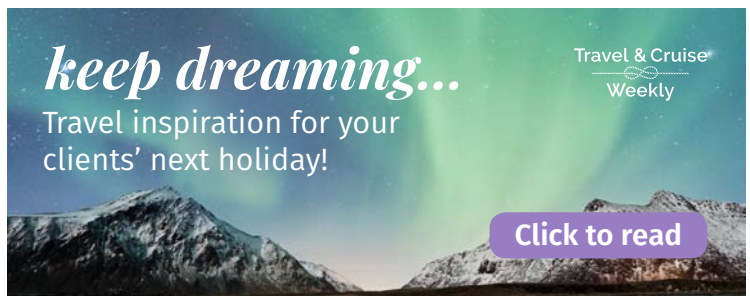


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Aussie salaries on the rise

THE average Australian salary in the travel and tourism sectors rose by 16.4% in 2022, according to the latest *Salary & Employment Trends* report from Singapore-based ACI HR Solutions.

Based on a relatively small sample size and converting all pay packets to equivalent US\$ figures, the poll found Aussies (7% of the total 798 responses) in the sector at the end of 2022 were on an average salary of US\$100,926, with general managers at the top of the pile with a yearly package of US\$200,000.

Aussie travel managers were at the lower end of the scale with an average salary of US\$56,741, behind sales managers (US\$62,424), account managers (US\$65,130), business development managers (US\$69,352), operations managers (US\$72,759), and marketing managers (US\$74,483).

As well as Australia, the survey

included respondents from the tourism hospitality and travel sectors in Southeast Asia, the subcontinent and Middle East, with the vast majority of recruitment managers also indicating that they intend on expanding their teams over the next 12 months, with 58% confirming plans to improve headcount in 2023.

A quarter of hiring managers said they would recruit this year but only to replace outgoing staff, while only 5% noted they would not be looking to hire this year.

The study also showed that age seniority was an important factor in achieving a higher salary, with those aged 56 and over in the APAC region earning an average US\$121,262, ahead of 46-55s on US\$113,298, 36-45s, while workers aged between 17 and 28 were on the lowest scale, only earning US\$44,368 a year on average by comparison.

Whitsundays wonder

TOURISM Whitsundays' new iteration of the 'Wonders of the Whitsundays' campaign is being launched this week.

The push "throws down the challenge" to holidaymakers who want action and adventure, and other moments of wonder, as part of their bucket-list Whitsundays experience.

Sailing, kayaking, snorkelling, diving, and skydiving all feature as part of the latest marketing push, which will run primarily through online, social and radio channels.

CLIA opportunities

CLIA Australasia is planning "a big year of opportunities" for agents this year, with MD Joel Katz noting that new education options and live events will be announced in the coming weeks.

Those interested in becoming a CLIA member can email info-us@crusing.org and also view the benefits of joining [HERE](#).

Douglas quick exit

FORMER Etihad CEO Tony Douglas has reportedly departed his new position heading up the soon-to-launch Saudi Arabian carrier RIA after only two months.

Local media quoted a source inside the investment group behind RIA, stating that Douglas is "no longer involved" in the brand's operations.

The Saudi Government has invested heavily in getting the new carrier RIA off the ground, funnelling an estimated US\$30 billion in a bid to make the airline a major player in the international market.

Travelex pay rise

TRAVELEX has announced a staff pay rise in Australia and select overseas markets to help offset the rising cost of living.

The move is part of Travelex's employee value proposition, which wants the business to be the "go-to employer of choice".

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Window Seat

WHO said customer service on planes in the US is dead?

A steward on a recent Endeavor Air flight travelling from North Carolina to JFK International Airport in New York has melted hearts across the globe after going above and beyond to comfort a nervous flyer.

A video captured by a fellow passenger shows Floyd Shannon-Dean (**pictured**) crouched down in the aisle and holding the fearful traveller's hand as he explained all of the regulation noises and bumps being made during the flight.

The videographer, Molly Simonson Lee, posted online that the attendant "radiated kindness and warmth and he even said 'if no one else has said it to you, I love you'."



AC invites VIPs to Come From Away



AIR Canada last night invited a number of trade partners to see the musical *Come From Away* at the Theatre Royal Sydney.

AC sponsored the production, and hosted around 50 partners to see the musical, in partnership with Destination Canada.

Come From Away is based on events which took place in the Canadian town of Gander during the week of the Sep 11 attacks, when 38 aircraft, carrying approximately 7,000 passengers, were ordered to land unexpectedly at the local airport when American airspace was shut indefinitely.

Attendees were received by pre-show drinks and canapes at the RBC Lounge, and at the end of the night, had the opportunity to mix with the cast members.

Pictured with some of the players are Air Canada's Sales Account Manager Zoe Gentle, Sales Manager Leisure Rick Pomery, and local General Manager Vic Naughton.

Kiwi Adv startup bounces back

QUEENSTOWN adventure startup exploreGO has confirmed its first million dollar sale in a single booking, secured late last year, following a delayed start due to the global pandemic.

Initially launched as an online marketplace for adventure travel, the company has expanded to offer bespoke bucket-list concierge adventures in more than 21 countries for high-end travellers and groups.

The service is designed for travellers who are seeking a "more personalised travel experience, built by industry-leading adventure experts that promise a once-in-a-lifetime adventure".

ExploreGO aims to further tap into the US\$852 billion global adventure travel industry, which is predicted to exceed an annual revenue of \$2 trillion in the next five years.

CATO speakers

SOME of the panellists for the Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) upcoming International Women's Day lunch on 08 Mar (**TD** 19 Jan) have been revealed.

The esteemed panel of speakers for the event include Australian Pacific Holdings co-owner Lou Tandy, World Expeditions CEO Sue Badyari, The Travel Corporation's Managing Director Touring Brands Toni Ambler, Evolution Travel Collective's joint-CEO Ingrid Berthelsen, and Globus Family of Brands MD Australasia Gai Tyrrell.

Aussie journo Julia Zaetta will be hosting the event, which takes place in Sydney at a cost of \$125 per ticket, inclusive of a two-course lunch, drinks, and entertainment - purchase **HERE**.

Rydges Melbourne

RYDGES Melbourne is currently undergoing a major makeover which is expected to be completed by autumn.

When the property emerges from its renovation, it will boast 70 fully refurbished rooms in a configuration of 310 king standard rooms, 35 suites and the addition of 25 apartments.

Upgrades include Rydges DreamBeds in all rooms, and kitchenettes, laundries, separate lounge/dining spaces and spacious bathrooms for all apartments catering to the growing bleisure market.

A new restaurant will also be opened - more updates on **P5**.



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Dorchester reborn

THE Dorchester has reopened this week, unveiling a new ground floor after being closed for a year to undergo renovations.

The luxury London hotel now features a completely transformed lobby, with a white and soft sage green ceiling finished with gold leaf accents and vibrant furnishings, such as blue sofas and deep pink chairs.

The property also revealed its new Artists Bar, which features a mirrored piano, a grand crystal chandelier and pastel blue seating.

Also new is the Vesper Bar, a cocktail venue inspired by the elegance of the 1930s, featuring an outside terrace with views of Hyde Park.

A&K PARTNERS UP WITH EXPRESS

LUXURY travel operator Abercrombie & Kent (A&K) has signed a preferred partnership agreement with Australian-owned travel agency Express Travel Group (ETG), which came into effect on 01 Jan.

The agreement will see its global travel portfolio promoted through ETG agency member networks, including Independent Travel Group, Independent Travel Advisors, Select Travel Group, italktravel & cruise, and Alatus.

"We are beyond delighted to be partnering with Express Travel Group in 2023 and beyond," A&K Australia's Managing Director Deb Fox and Head of Sales & Partnerships Susan Haberle enthused.

"As A&K embarks on an exciting journey building our brand presence, we truly value this



partnership, and we are confident that Express Travel Group members will be thrilled with the standout product offering A&K brings to them and their clients.

"We look forward to supporting ETG to build their luxury business, welcoming their clients to enjoy

many once-in-a-lifetime moments with A&K," Fox concluded.

Pictured: Susan Haberle; Tom Manwaring, ETG CEO; Amber Kelly, ETG Head of Product & Events; Ari Magoutis, ETG Executive General Manager; and Deb Fox.

Hotelbeds grows luxury

HOTELBEDS has partnered with The Leading Hotels of the World (LHW) to expand its luxury collection.

The new vendor agreement means Hotelbeds' clients will be able to access a significant luxury portfolio for the first time, including high-end properties in more than 80 countries around the world.

Hotelbeds has seen an increase in luxury bookings over the past 12 months, with many destinations experiencing growth above 50%.

Aman launches new luxury Amangiri packages

AMAN has announced four exclusive new packages at Amangiri and Camp Sarika by Amangiri, located at Canyon Point in Utah.

The journeys offer guests a sense of adventure, wellness and relaxation, with activities including yoga and meditation, canyon tours, horseback riding, water adventures and private dining experiences.

One of the packages on offer is 'Restore & Rebalance', a

two-night stay available until 21 Dec, which includes full board and offers guests a choice between climbing via Ferrata, a Three Canyon Tour or horseback riding.

The package also includes a romantic in-suite dinner, a 60-minute massage per person, a 15-minute wellness consultation and a 30-minute Crystal Sound bath.

To discover more about the new packages, [CLICK HERE](#).

Food & wine tours

BELLE Bois, a luxury hosted getaway in NSW's Capertee Valley, is launching a two-night, all-inclusive food and wine discovery experience.

The event will give guests a behind-the-scenes look into the valley's farms, where they can meet the farmers and discover how they manage their land and produce food.

The boutique tour will take place 17-19 Mar - [CLICK HERE](#) to learn more.

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ACCOMMODATION

WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



The **Adina Apartment Hotel Melbourne** on Flinders St has renovated its rooms and six adjoining warehouse-style apartments on Malthouse Lane. Updates include new decor and designs that are intended to reflect the nostalgia of Malthouse Lane's history, with rooms now boasting black metal fittings, aged brass finishes and sooty charcoal tones. The lobby also features a new Rosso Levanto marble reception desk.



The **Westin Resort & Spa, Himalayas** has launched to the market this month, boasting 141 guest rooms. The hotel offers an infinity pool, swim-up bar, heated spas, as well as event spaces and a Grand Ballroom. The hotel also features an all-day dining venue called Akasa, serving up international and local dishes.



The **Ned Doha** has open its doors in Qatar. Offering 90 bedrooms and suites, with most containing sea views over the balcony and room designs inspired by Qatar's noble heritage. The Ned Doha also features a pool and club lounge, a health club with spa, salon and fitness centre, as well as a spacious area to accommodate large-scale events. There are also seven restaurants in operation on the site for guests to choose from.

Enjoying a major HOOT in Thailand



A BELATED famil was recently enjoyed by TravelManagers' top selling personal travel managers (PTMs) in Phuket after a delay forced by the pandemic.

The group of travel advisors included Ally Casey, Annette Fyfe, Belinda Hackett, Carli Hester, Deahann Urqueza and Merran Anderson, who scored a spot on the trip by being crowned members of the TravelManagers' top 10 best-selling with HOOT HOLIDAYS in 2019.

The 'Hoot Legends' were treated to a Phuket trip for five days via several different itineraries, which included private snorkelling sessions at the Banana Beach on *Panwa Princess* courtesy of Cape Panwa Hotel, as well as an adventure to the Andamanda Water Park.

Carli Hester, TravelManagers' rep in Mt Duneed enthused "we were all so grateful that we could still go on our 'Hoot Legends' trip from 2020".

TravelManagers' Chief Operating Officer, Grant Campbell, added that the famil was "very much a reward in which PTMs get to

experience the destination as favoured guests."

Pictured: Pre-dinner drinks at the Phuket Marriott's famed Rum Shack bar were well worth the wait: Belinda Hackett, Merran Anderson, Annette Fyfe, Joe Araullo, Stephanie Jones, Deahann Urqueza, Carli Hester and Ally Casey.

WA outdoor tourism

THE Western Australia Government has announced it will pour \$395,798 in funding into outdoor recreation tourism activities throughout the state.

Grants of between \$5,000 and \$50,000 will be spread across 20 projects, including mountain biking activities, camps for vulnerable young people, swimming and surf safety initiatives, training for outdoor recreation leaders and trail-related programs.

The Outdoor Active Recreation Participation Grants Program is designed to support projects that deliver accessible, inclusive and diverse tourism experiences.

Accor expansion

ACCOR plans to develop more than 20 hotels in Thailand, Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia this year in partnership with hospitality company Ennismore.

Among the new properties to open will include: the 178-key Mercure Bangkok Sukhumvit in Q4, the 666-key ibis Styles Bangkok Twin Towers, the 133-room Mercure Rayong Lomtaly Villas & Resort in Thailand, as well as the Novotel Sihanoukville Holiday Resort & Novotel Phnom Penh Boeng in Cambodia.

MSC green push

MSC Cruises has launched a new global brand campaign entitled 'Discover the future of cruising', promoting the cruise line's ongoing commitment to becoming more sustainable.

The company has pledged to reduce its carbon footprint by 40% before 2030, with the push filmed aboard *MSC World Europa*, billed as "the most environmentally advanced ship to date".

Water treatment, shore power and exhaust cleaning systems are just some of MSC ships' features.

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