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ENTIRE Travel Group is currently celebrating its 50 years of history by discounting its full range of holiday packages throughout the month of Mar.

Agents will score themselves a \$50 voucher for every holiday package booking made during the month, while every booking will also see advisors earn an entry into the draw to win a \$5,000 holiday package for themselves. See the **back page** for details.

Finnair slashes commission

EXCLUSIVE

FINNAIR has become the latest international carrier to reduce remuneration for Australian travel agents, advising its local trade partners of a revised commission structure effective 01 Apr 2023.

From that date, for tickets sold in Australia with a point-of-departure in Australia, AY fares will attract 3% BSP commission, down from the current 5%.

Tickets sold in Australia with departure ports in other parts of the world will continue to attract 0% Finnair commission.

The reductions will also apply for sales in New Zealand, the carrier confirmed.

All existing bookings with point-of-commencement in Australia and New Zealand for ticketing up until 31 Mar will continue to

attract 5% commission.

“We apologise for the inconvenience this might cause and we will continue to support our trade partners with the same high level of service,” the carrier said in an industry update.

The move comes just weeks after the 01 Jan closure of Finnair’s local office, which covered Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia (TD 02 Dec 2022), seeing the carrier’s popular former Regional Manager Arnaud Michelin made redundant.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest news including our **Sustainability** page, plus a full page from **Entire Travel Group**.

Tourism questions

A PUBLIC hearing will be held at 9.15am at Parliament House tomorrow for an inquiry into Australia’s tourism and international education sectors.

The inquiry will explore the challenges and opportunities presented to both sectors since the reopening of Australia’s borders, with evidence to be provided by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry - watch it live **HERE**.



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Travel Daily

Tuesday 7th Mar 2023

Airline GSA restructures

EXCLUSIVE

CVFR Travel Group's Airline Rep Services brand has snagged the services of former Finnair local regional manager, Arnaud Michelin, as its new GM.

The appointment arrives alongside the promotion of Gabrielle Vicari to the role of Vice President, who CVFR noted has already played a "pivotal role" in the growth of Airline Rep Services over the past eight months.

In her new position, Vicari will continue to drive the strategic direction of the company, while Michelin will oversee the day-to-day activities of the business and use his past experience to help drive the business forward.

"With Gabrielle and Arnaud at the helm, Airline Rep Services is well positioned for continued success as one of the leading Airline GSA representation companies in the region," Chief Operating Officer Nidhi Nijhawan

told *Travel Daily* this morning.

"Each company under the CVFR Group is seeing exceptional growth and Airline Rep Services is no different.

"We are excited to see them drive the company's growth and success in their respective roles," Nijhawan added.

Michelin had previously been with Finnair until it closed its Aussie office (*TD* 02 Dec 2022), a role he had held since 2018.

The latest appointments follow an exciting period for Airline Rep Services, which recently landed the role of GSA for Qatar Airways in Fiji (*TD* 04 Oct 2022), as well as parent group CVFR Travel Group restructuring its ranks to cater for sharper growth, a rejig which saw the elevation of Nidhi Nijhawan from Chief Operating Officer of the company's consolidation division to Chief Operating Officer of the wider CVFR Travel Group (*TD* 18 Jul 2022).

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Free Vietnam flights

LOW-COST Asian airline Vietjet is offering Aussie travellers the chance to take free flights in Vietnam as part of a new promotion it has labelled "the largest ever" in Australia.

Passengers who fly on Vietjet from Sydney or Melbourne to Ho Chi Minh City are now eligible for free connecting flights departing from Ho Chi Minh City to popular tourist destinations in Vietnam, such as Hanoi, Da Nang, Nha Trang, and Phu Quoc.

The offer will run until 25 Oct.

In further promotional news, Vietjet has also launched a special offering 50% discounts on SkyBoss and SkyBoss Business class tickets for purchases between today and 25 May, applicable to all domestic and international routes.

Travellers can use the codes 'ALL50SBB' for SkyBoss Business class and 'ALL50SB' for SkyBoss class to receive the special deals. More details available [HERE](#).

Experience some SA

THE Travel Junction has collaborated with the South Australian Tourism Commission to launch a new promotion offering agents access to self-drive itineraries across the state.

Advisors can use the HELiO platform to access package codes for unique itineraries leading in from \$795 per person, with trips including the Adelaide with Barossa Wine Tour, the City, Wine & Wildlife adventure, as well as the Adelaide, Flinders Ranges & Clare Valley tour - register [HERE](#).

Accor pays tribute

ACCOR has honoured co-founder Gerard Pelisson after passing away at the age of 91, with the group today offering its condolences to his loved ones.

Accor Chairman and CEO Sebastien Bazin described Pelisson as "a true revolutionary of our industry", adding "his vision and heart will forever be with us".

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Spain appoints local rep

SPAIN once again has a specialist representing the country's tourism sector in the local market, with news today confirming the appointment of marketing and communications agency, Helm, to support the activities of official Spanish Tourism Board, Turespana.

The appointment followed a competitive tender process, with Helm's brief to reinforce the presence of Spain among the ANZ travel trade and media.

Helm will assist in delivering the Aussie travel industry with market intelligence, networking opportunities, product updates, training, and much more.

Director of the Spain Tourism Board for ANZ Monica Sanchez said that while Spain has always enjoyed a presence in Australia, having a specialist agency will help to grow the number of travellers to Spain each year. "The support that Helm can

bring to the table will reinforce our marketing with a continuous physical presence in the market... we will keep working to show Australians and New Zealanders why Spain should be on the top of their list year-round," she said.

Helm was founded in 2021 by Andrew Cavallaro and Rachel Jones, describing itself as a purpose-led agency specialising in travel and tourism.

"Whilst [Spain] is already considered a popular destination for Aussies, we see much more potential & need to educate them on the full breadth of year-round experiences the country has to offer," Andrew Cavallaro said.

Spain was a growing market prior to the pandemic, with the most recent reports indicating that 436,000 Aussies visited in 2019, and while travel closures damaged outbound confidence, in 2022 that number had already rebounded to around 299,000.

G Adv ups purpose

G ADVENTURES has appointed Kate Hudson to the role of Global Purpose Specialist across the Victoria and Tasmania markets, where she will be responsible for informing partners about how they can give back to local communities around the world.

Hudson arrives at the business with plenty of experience in the overlanding and luxury adventure categories, with G Adventures now seeking to recruit for a similar role in Western Australia.

Indigo on Flinders

IHG Hotels and Resorts' premium boutique brand, Hotel Indigo, is set to make its Melbourne debut mid-year.

The group's Holiday Inn property on Flinders Lane will undergo a \$20 million transformation into a 216-key retreat, featuring a street-side Spanish tapas restaurant and bar, along with meeting facilities for up to 200 people.

Hotel sales now more than \$2 billion

AUSTRALIAN hotel sales moved beyond \$2.1 billion in 2022, representing the second highest transaction volume on record, according to new research conducted by CBRE.

The heightened demand from property investors has been spurred on by recovering occupancies and strong growth in average daily rates, the report contends, adding that significant equity capital is "still on the sidelines waiting" for the stabilisation of rising interest rates and inflation.

"While a high inflation and interest rate environment will place upward pressure on yields and initial rate of return expectations, improving tourism demand fundamentals...are likely to cushion any impact of higher credit-funding costs," CBRE's Australian Head of Hotels Research Ally McDade said.

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APT helps a paws-itive cause



A GROUP of Victorian Flight Centre Travel agents recently had the opportunity to cuddle up to cute animals during a volunteering day hosted by the APT Travel Group's Sales team at the Australian Animal Protection Society (AAPS).

As well as enjoying playtime with the adorable animals, the agents were also taken on a tour of the shelter and assisted with various tasks, including making cat toys, feeding, cleaning, and admin errands.

"The APT Travel Group is proud to be a sponsor of AAPS and the Victorian sales team was so grateful to be able to share this opportunity with some of their valued travel partners," a company spokesperson said.

APT Travel Group provides staff with two paid volunteering days a year, giving them the opportunity to help support worthy causes like AAPS, which is a not-for-profit, self-funded animal shelter that rescues, rehabilitates and rehomes thousands of animals.

AFTA UPDATE

from Nina Hedges, Compliance Manager



AN ASSOCIATION that reaches out to its members and beyond and specifically invites sentiments and perspectives to be shared, is a guild that is in touch with what it really means to be an association.

This is exactly what AFTA has done over the last week through the Proposed Constitution, and I could not be prouder to represent our association. AFTA's commitment to transparency, inclusiveness and increased member engagement has never been stronger. We understand that as Australia's peak body for the travel industry, it is vital that all members, regardless of which part of the industry they work in, are represented and provide the opportunity to be heard and considered. Equally as important is AFTA's dedication to engaging further with all of our members to gain a deeper understanding of how AFTA can support and advocate for each sector of the incredible industry that we represent. From tour operators all the way through to home-based travel advisors and

online marketplaces - we must continue to walk in your shoes and understand the opportunities and challenges that each sector faces. It is when we are armed with this genuine empathy and understanding that we are at our strongest and have the greatest power to influence positive changes for all involved in our industry.

As further evidence of AFTA's commitment towards advancing as an association, we are in the process of forming a Committee that will provide strategic advice to the AFTA Board on all operational matters relating to the Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS).

This will ensure that the ATAS Travel Accreditation remains the most recognised, trusted and respected scheme in the industry for travel agents, tour operators, wholesalers and consolidators.

Finally, I wish you well as we enter the final month of the first quarter of 2023 - how did that happen?!

I would also like to extend a large thank you to those who have already reviewed the proposed Constitution and to remind those who have not yet provided their thoughts to please do so prior to 18 Mar 2023.

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Work with TIME

TIME'S training program is currently seeking mentors to help guide and advise aspiring travel professionals in the sector.

The program runs over six months with two two-hour sessions a month - **CLICK HERE** to learn more details.

Aussie India reach

INBOUND tourism consultancy Australian Attractions is making a stronger push into the Indian market, appointing Auxilia Networks to handle both sales and marketing activities in the south Asian country.

Headed up by tourism veteran Paramjit Bawa, Auxilia will be charged with promoting marquee Australian experiences such as BridgeClimb & Pylon, Sydney Zoo in Sydney, Scenic World in the Blue Mountains, Oakvale Wildlife Park and Irukandji Shark & Ray Encounters in Port Stephens, and Hunter Valley Resort to Indian travellers, among many more.

COMMERCIAL MANAGER - ANZ

VisitBritain ANZ is seeking a Sydney based full time Commercial Manager who understands the tourism industry and Australia travel distribution landscape to drive growth in incremental visitation and visitor spend to Great Britain.

For an information pack and to apply for the role, please contact luke.skarbek@visitbritain.org



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A dive full of pride



SKYDIVE Australia conducted its first ever Pride Dive on 02 Mar to further celebrate World Pride in style in Wollongong.

The milestone plunge was held at Stuart Park, with the tourism operator providing opportunities for Aussies to meet the stars Ellawarra & Roxee Horror.

The jump was accompanied by

entertainment and games with the pride flag flying over the heads of the attendees before the main event tandem skydive from 4,500 metres.

Participants dressed in loud and proud outfits received a 10% discount on photo and video packages, with skydivers also able to score \$40 off bookings using the special code, RAINBOW.

New Cal appoints

SHOWPONI has secured Tourism New Caledonia as a client for the New Zealand market via a new 12-month contract.

The agency, headed up by founder Gordon Bayne, has also appointed Bianca Henry as its Account Director in Auckland to manage trade and MICE relationships for New Caledonia.

Bayne was previously the Chief Acquisition Officer for Travlr in Australia, and before that was the Head of Travel for Scoopon.



WOULD a chocolate bar depicting any other mountain taste as sweet?

Well consumers of the iconic Toblerone snack are about to find out, following news that the Swiss tourist attraction, The Matterhorn, is about to be phased out from its packaging.

With the pointy shape of the chocolate in ode to the famous mountain, you might well be asking why?

The reason is that in 2017, the Swiss Government implemented tough new measures about companies using national symbols in marketing efforts, and with the owner of Toblerone, Mondelez, moving most of the processing offshore to Slovakia, the depiction of the icon is no longer allowed.

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WTTC launches green scheme

THE World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has launched the Hotel Sustainability Basics verification scheme.

Announced at ITB Berlin, the scheme is described as “a globally recognised and coordinated set of criteria that all hotels should implement as a minimum to drive responsible and sustainable travel & tourism”.

The scheme is made up of 12 key criteria, and offers an “achievable starting point” for all hospitality businesses, regardless of size, to begin their sustainability journeys.

Accor, Louvre Hotels Group, Meliá Hotels International, Jin Jiang International, Meininger, and Radisson Hotel Group have joined the scheme as inaugural partners.

ACCOR ATTAINS GREEN CREDENTIALS

ALL Accor properties across Australia and the Pacific are set to become Sustainable Certified businesses, thanks to a new partnership between the hospitality company and Ecotourism Australia.

The Sustainable Tourism Certification program recognises tourism operators and businesses for best practice sustainability initiatives, assessing them across four areas: sustainable management, environmental impacts, cultural impacts, and socio-economic impacts.

The standard was introduced in 2022, and is recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC).

Accor Pacific CEO, Sarah Derry



(pictured), said, “sustainability is redefining our business model and we are proud to lead the industry forward by investing in our sustainability actions and activities in the region”.

“Our next phase of growth is built on our powerful sense of social, environmental and economic responsibility.”

Derry revealed the company’s next priority will be to remove single-use plastics from back-of-house operations and micro plastics in laundries, and to replace plastic water bottles.

“We know there is a lot more to do and our teams will continue to focus on driving sustainability actions,” she added.

MSC aids whales

MSC Cruises has teamed up with marine conservation charity ORCA to educate the line’s deck officers about the marine mammals they may encounter while sailing, such as whales, dolphins and porpoises, and ways to reduce the likelihood of collision.

The online training program will be trialled aboard *MSC Bellissima*, which is currently sailing in the Mediterranean, before being rolled out across MSC Cruises’ entire fleet of 21 ships.

Italy law change

ITALY has passed a law this week making it easier for airports to support their energy needs, allowing the use of airport land for sustainable energy production needs.

Secured through Italian aviation body ENAC, the changes simplify the approval process for installing renewable energy plants, declaring them “suitable areas” for new facilities.

ENAC said it will still make “necessary checks” before granting approvals.

Oscar becomes Chief Trash Officer

UNITED Airlines has welcomed a rather adorable new team member - *Sesame Street*’s Oscar the Grouch, who has joined the carrier as the first Chief Trash Officer.

The gruffy, loveable character will be the face of the new consumer education campaign, which promotes the benefit of using sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) through multiple videos, digital/social and out-of-home content - [CLICK HERE](#) to see.

“UA has enlisted Oscar to help us educate the travelling public of all ages about SAF



and rally them to the cause of fighting climate change,” Chief Communications Officer Josh Earnest said.

“From banana peels to fryer grease, Oscar is uniquely qualified to help us explain why trash could be the treasure that fuels the jets of the future.”

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MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.673

POSITIVE economic reports from China have helped the AUD/USD gain 0.6% over the last week, with the Asian country's performance having a positive impact on global markets and currencies

Meanwhile, currency exchange rates may be further affected as the Reserve Bank of Australia prepares to meet later today, on the table a hike of the cash rate, peaking at 3.6%.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.673
UK	£0.560
NZ	\$1.087
Euro	€0.630
Japan	¥91.48
Thailand	฿23.23
China	¥4.663
South Africa	12.28
Canada	\$0.916
Crude oil	US\$85.83

First Hawaii conference a hit!



MORE than 100 travel industry professionals recently gathered in Hawaii at the Alohilani Resort in Waikiki for 1000 Mile Travel Group's first global conference.

Attendees were able to network and swap ideas, gain insights and hear about new services and products from suppliers, as well as learn from industry experts on a range of topics, including the latest in travel tools and technologies, new travel trends and content, as well as professional and business development.

Participants also enjoyed plenty of network opportunities, including at a cocktail party sponsored by Highgate at the Alohilani Resort Wonder Club, and a White Party co-sponsored by the Marriott Waikiki Beach on its poolside deck with views of the sunset over the beach.

Wrapping up the event, co-CEO Nicola Veltman shared the group's upcoming plans, which include investing in technological enhancements, building access to a wider array of travel content globally, and expanding into new

growing markets.

According to CEO Ben Ross, the global conference was a crucial part of the company's commitment to provide its travel advisors with the best content and community.

"Fostering the connection between travel advisors from various nations to acquire knowledge and associate with each other is a crucial component of our mission to make sure that even when independent travel advisors work from home, or anywhere for that matter, they never work alone," he said.

Airline partner Delta Air Lines was present at the event, along with Hawaiian Tourism and other travel supplier sponsors, including Princess Cruises, Marriott Resort Waikiki Beach, Travelport, Viking, Virtuoso, Hilton, Norwegian Cruise Line, Collette, Royal Caribbean International, Carnival Cruise Line, The Travel Corporation, and more.

The 1000 Mile Travel Group also revealed the next annual conference will be held in Los Cabos, Mexico in Feb 2024.

Janu Tokyo imminent

JANU Tokyo is set to open its doors in the next couple of months, a sister brand to the luxury Aman hotel offering.

The 13-level resort will feature 122 rooms, each consisting of floor-to-ceiling windows, while the hotel itself will offer guests access to six restaurants with unique cuisines, several bars, wellness facilities spanning over 4,000m² as well as a spacious garden terrace area.

Time to GoFiji!

TRAVEL and hospitality vendors can now connect with visitors and residents in Fiji using new "super app", GoFiji, launched by travel tech solutions provider Smoove Xperience Pacific.

The mobile commerce platform gives travellers access to value-added services, discounts, promotions, and local information during their stay in Fiji.

The app initially features tours, activities, and attraction bookings, and an events calendar.

WebBeds parity tool

WEBBEDS has announced the launch of Parity Monitor, a new online tool for its hotel partners and the first phase of the company's initiative to resolve parity issues more quickly.

The tool will act as a global hub where hotels can submit rate discrepancies to WebBeds, which will then be tracked, monitored, reported back and resolved.

WebBeds has also announced the creation of a dedicated team, which will be tasked with responding to the parity issues raised via the new tool.

Ovolo HK room deal

OVOLO Hong Kong is offering 1,000 premium rooms for only HK\$945 (A\$178.86) per night, in celebration of the city's recently ended mask policy which was in place for 945 days (**TD** 02 Mar).

Rooms at Ovolo Southside in HK include long loft, corner deluxe, and family & friends rooms, all with access to a 24-hour gym, wi-fi, and breakfast at Komune.

Half of the revenue raised through the first 200 rooms booked via the promo will be donated to the Love 21 Foundation, a charity that works with the autistic community.



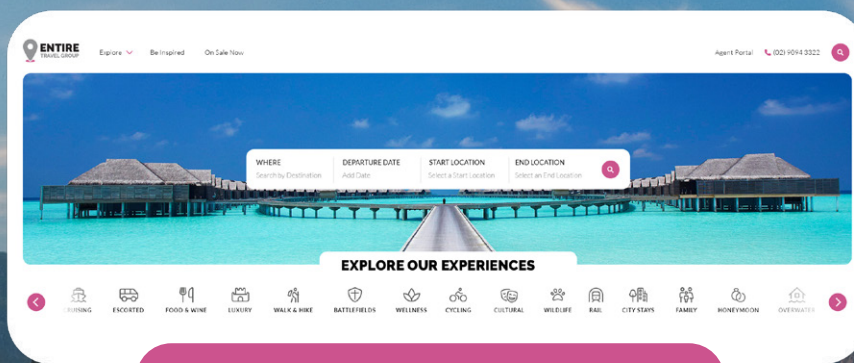
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