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## Free Singapore gems

**SINGAPORE** Tourism has launched its SingapoRewards exclusive benefits for international travellers.

Eligible short-term visitors to Singapore can redeem complimentary experiences, many to lesser-known areas.

The program will run throughout the year - more [HERE](#).

## Bamboo bargains

**BAMBOO** Airways is inviting travellers to explore Vietnam via flights from Sydney to Ho Chi Minh City, and Melbourne to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City - see the **front page** for more details.

## Journey Beyond role changes

**JOURNEY** Beyond has announced several new role expansions which will see Justine Lally become Executive General Manager Marketing & Product and Alicia Triggs step into the role of Executive General Manager Sales & Partnerships.

Lally's new brief has been widened to also include international marketing representation for American Queen Voyages (AQV), which became a sister brand when US company Hornblower Group bought Journey Beyond in early 2022 (**TD** 13 Jan 2022).

"We're excited to welcome AQV

into the fold", Lally said, adding she was looking forward to taking on oversight of product along with marketing to ensure the business builds a strategy that aligns with the business vision.

The expanded role for Triggs will see her oversee international sales for AQV, in addition to Journey Beyond, with the role charged with strengthening existing trade relationships in Australia for both brands.

In further staff news, Joshua Munt has become Executive General Manager Revenue & Analytics, expanding his role to include the oversight of the revenue management function at Journey Beyond.

**MEANWHILE** Journey Beyond's The Ghan has been interrupted by flooding in the NT, with the company advising **Travel Daily** that the closure of a rail track between Alice Springs and Katherine will unfortunately impact its first departures.

Northbound, The Ghan will travel through to Alice Springs as scheduled, with some guests completing the final leg of the journey on a charter flight, while southbound, guests will be flown to Alice Springs to start their journey, which will include a stop in Coober Pedy, due to Katherine being inaccessible at this time.

Journey Beyond is offering guests the option of deferring their travel, with the time the portion of track will be out of action too difficult to determine.

## Today's issue of TD

**Travel Daily** today features nine pages of news including **Business Events News**, photo pages from **Ponant** and **CATO**, plus a front cover wrap from **Bamboo Airways** and a full page from **Entire Travel Group**.

## AFTA tix sold out

**TICKETS** to the Australian Federation of Travel Agents' (AFTA) Women in Travel Summit taking place on 13 Mar have sold out, an event that will see 150 attendees hear from expert panellists about the status of women in the industry.

"The Women in Travel Summit provides a valuable opportunity to draw on the collective lived experience and professional expertise of ATAS businesses and explore why so many women choose to work in travel, identify opportunities for improvement and set targets for the future," AFTA CEO Dean Long said.

Air New Zealand is the major sponsor for the Summit in Sydney, with the carrier's General Manager Australia Kathryn O'Brien stating the alignment with AFTA's Summit is a great opportunity to further the aims of women working in the sector.

"We're lucky to work within an industry that has wonderful representation of women already thriving within it, but ensuring we continue to nurture and provide development opportunities to attract and retain female talent needs to continue," she said.



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## WA eyes Vietnam tourism

**THE** Western Australian Government has opened a new Investment and Trade office in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, as part of moves to strengthen tourism ties between the state and the popular Asian destination.

The announcement was made by WA Deputy Premier Roger Cook while on a four-day trade mission in Vietnam to improve economic relations.

“With 2023 marking the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Australia and Vietnam, it is the perfect time for WA to open a new office in Vietnam,” he said.

“The new Ho Chi Minh City office provides future opportunities for Western Australian companies to do business in Vietnam and attract investment into the state.

“We are committed to growing the strong relationship between WA and Vietnam, which is

underpinned by strong people-to-people connections, and substantial trade and investment links,” Cook added.

The Vietnam office arrives after a recent report criticised the state’s tourism economy, calling for a raft of changes, including making it easier for int’l students to come and study.

### Vanuatu update

**FOLLOWING** last week’s dual cyclones in Vanuatu, Bauerfield International in Port Vila has been cleared for commercial airline operations to resume.

Air Vanuatu and all other airlines flying to the country are in contact with their passengers with new flight schedules.

Meanwhile, port agents are working with cruise lines to prepare approval for cruise berthing in Port Vila, as well as diversions to Luganville.

## Hoda highlights value of travel



**A STAR** was born yesterday at CATO’s International Women’s Day Luncheon in Sydney, with *Travel Daily’s* very own Hoda Alzubaidi delivering a moving keynote address to the crowd.

Commenting on her speech, which detailed her amazing life journey and foray into the travel sector, Alzubaidi said the day was a great opportunity to speak about important issues in the sector, and what great value

tourism can provide to women all over the world.

“If we don’t speak about these things there will always be racism and there will always be people who don’t understand that tourism actually plays such a critical role in developing countries, and this is why I’m here today,” she said.

Alzubaidi is **pictured** with CATO’s Lisa Pagotto yesterday - more details on **page eight**.



## The Brand USA MegaFam is BACK!

**Agents:** Experience one of five exciting itineraries showcasing East to West of the U.S. mainland plus Hawai’i.

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## Air NZ resumes MCY

AIR New Zealand is set to re-launch its seasonal direct services between Auckland and the Sunshine Coast in Queensland from 25 Jun until 15 Oct.

The route will operate on the Kiwi carrier's A320/A321 aircraft three times a week on Wed, Fri and Sun, with tickets now on sale.

"We've always seen great success on this route, and we expect this season to be no different," Air New Zealand General Manager, Short Haul, Jeremy O'Brien said.

## CX promotes Ryan

CATHAY Pacific has promoted Ryan O'Connell to the role of Trade Sales Manager.

Prior to the new position, O'Connell was Trade Account Manager at the Hong Kong-based airline, joining the business in Jan 2020 after a stint at Rocky Mountaineer as its Sales Manager ANZ - more staff moves on p9.

## Bicton enjoys record Feb

BICTON Travel recorded its most profitable period on record last month, with gross sales exceeding forecasted targets and placing the company in its most profitable position since 1998.

The WA-based agency said the pleasing numbers were testament to its ability to foster a strong client base, whose loyalty is proof of the value offered to travellers by its trusted travel advisors.

"We are thrilled to hit this record-breaking target, with Western Australia being the last state to reopen to the world after the COVID crisis, clients are embracing the opportunity to get away for that long-awaited holiday," Bicton Travel Director Phil Smethurst said.

"It's great to see the pandemic recovery in full swing in the west," he added.

The strong performance also followed the agency conducting a post-pandemic restructure, a

move which saw the company assimilate each of its previous four sub-brands under the broader Bicton Travel name.

The reshuffle of brands was then cemented by a newly renovated premises and the appointment of two travel advisors in recent months.

## RSSC goes long!

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) has announced a new 154-night 2026 World Cruise, its longest in history.

Sailing 10 Jan 2026 round trip from Miami, it will explore more than 40 countries across six continents on board its *Seven Seas Mariner* vessel.

In total, the cruise will visit almost 80 ports, and offer travellers the choice of 431 free shore excursions along the way.

The cruise will also visit three new ports of call to RSSC.

## Travel trends summit

THE inaugural Travel Trend Summit is set to be held on the Gold Coast on 19 May.

Hosted by Travel Agent Runway Director and MTA travel agent Stephanie Myers, the gathering will be emceed by CLIA's Peter Kollar, with attendees to be motivated to create and sustain a strong digital footprint.

Also speaking will be Dana Brown from Wild Hearted World, and Elsa McLean from Regent Seven Seas Cruises, which is also the major sponsor for the event.

## Saudi FIFA doubts

PLANNED sponsorship by Visit Saudi of the FIFA Women's World Cup is in doubt after strong pushback from host nations Australia and New Zealand.

FIFA is now reportedly having a "rethink" of the mooted deal based on responses from the chairs of the Australian and New Zealand soccer federations.



CANADA

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## QF on the nose with pax

**MORE** travellers submitted complaints about Qantas than any other airline in 2021/22, the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) has revealed.

The latest *Airline competition in Australia* report showed the consumer watchdog received 1,740 contacts involving Qantas - up a huge 68% on the year prior.

The number of complaints made about the airline were over a third higher than the second-most reported carrier, while in contrast, complaints about Jetstar and Virgin Australia were down by 33% and 27%, respectively.

Contacts do not always mean that a company has acted in breach of the Australian Consumer Law (ACL), and include instances where consumers have enquired about their rights on an issue.

However, the ACCC emphasised, "such an increased level of contacts is generally indicative of

a high level of dissatisfaction with that company, and issues with that company's ability to handle and resolve customer complaints".

"Qantas needs to do more to adequately invest in its systems, processes and people to dramatically improve its customer contact services and customer dispute resolution," it wrote.

The ACCC said it is continuing to investigate issues raised by consumers about Qantas, and whether these issues raise concerns under the ACL.

## QF ups Cook Islands

**QANTAS** has been granted approval by the International Air Services Commission (IASC) for 232 seats of capacity on the Cook Islands route for a period of five years, beginning 07 Mar 2023.

The capacity can be used by either Qantas or Jetstar, subject to certain conditions.

## TFE restructures

TFE Hotels has announced three new global leadership appointments, all based locally.

Brisbane-based Amanda Hoolihan has taken the newly created Global Revenue Officer, and will work to enhance TFE's revenue management practices and drive innovation and results for the company.

Joining her will be Katia Giurtalis, who has been tasked with driving a brand-centric cultural shift as the company's new Global Marketing Officer.

She will be responsible for steering the global growth of TFE's brands, and ensuring guest experiences are enhanced through digital technology.

Meanwhile, Shahnaz Bakhshay, who has played a prominent role in the success of TFE's sales over the past 19 years, has become the new Global Sales Officer, where she will focus on developing and implementing worldwide sales strategies.

## There's so much more to Canberra

**VISITCANBERRA** has launched its first campaign, informing domestic tourists the city has more than it is telling us.

The new campaign sheds light on the many lesser-known gems in Canberra, while showcasing the charm and warmth of its people, tourism operators, and more.

## VV entertainment

**VIRGIN** Voyages has announced its new fleet-wide entertainment lineup for 2023.

From up & coming musicians, to brand-new stage acts, to immersive fleet-wide experiences, the entertainment lineup promises to offer "something for everyone".

It will include small and intimate solo performances at The Dock House, as well as epic, can't-miss ship-wide events, in addition to aerobic theatric adaptations, and much more.

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## Window Seat

FANS of the sports comedy-drama *Ted Lasso* are being invited to spend the night at the title character's favourite pub, thanks to Airbnb.

To celebrate the highly anticipated third season of *Ted Lasso*, The Crown & Anchor pub (known in real life as The Prince's Head, Richmond) will host three one-night stays.

Up to four guests will have the opportunity to stay overnight on 23, 24, and 25 Oct, for only £11 (A\$20).

Guests can channel their inner Greyhound in the heart of Richmond, in south-west London, right around the corner from Ted's apartment, while enjoying pub fare and learning to "BELIEVE" at the beloved local haunt.

During the stay, guests will be able to take part in a competitive round of darts (using their left or right hand), challenge their fellow patrons to a game of chess, and show off their karaoke skills.



## Travel advisors hit the road



**TRAVELMANAGERS'** Victoria-based Business Partnership Manager (BPM), Despina Madden, recently set off on one of her regular roadtrips to catch up with personal travel managers (PTMs) across regional Victoria and New South Wales.

Throughout the three-day adventure, she held a series of one-on-one meetings, including with Wangaratta-based PTM Sarah Nunn, who she met up with at a local cafe to discuss the latest industry developments.

Madden also met up with PTM Jodie Quigley, whose home-based business in Lavington, Victoria also boasts great views.

The BPM arranged a cluster meeting at La Maison Cafe in Albury, which was attended by five regional PTMs and included a catch-up on the latest from Globus family of brands.

"One of the most enjoyable aspects of my role is connecting

with our PTMs in person on a regular basis and building on those relationships," Madden enthused.

"I love being able to catch up with them on home turf, where it's easier to understand the challenges and opportunities that are unique to their individual businesses - plus it's a great chance for them to get together and swap ideas.

"With PTMs so busy, meeting the needs of their clients whilst ensuring that they remain on top of destination and product updates, they also appreciate the opportunity to catchup face-to-face with our supplier partners," the BPM explained.

**Pictured:** Ian Greenwood, Melinda Wouda (Business Development Manager North, West & North East VIC - Globus family of Brands), Karen Whitehead, Jodie Quigley, Kristie Jenkins, Despina Madden and Michelle Aitken.

## Aman Java food

AMAN Resorts' Amanjiwo in Java, Indonesia has announced the fourth Culinary Expedition to Java will take place from 16-19 Mar, hosted by acclaimed chef and author, Petty Pandean-Elliott and Amanjiwo's Executive Chef, Reza Kurniawan.

The three-day experience gives guests the opportunity to "immerse themselves in the Javanese heritage and culture through an exceptional gastronomical journey".

Highlights include a five-course dinner at the Pool Club, a Cultural Lecture with Amanjiwo's Resident Anthropologist, a traditional Javanese breakfast by the Progo River, and more - [CLICK HERE](#).

## Four Seasons Red

FOUR Seasons Hotels & Resorts has announced plans to introduce a resort as part of the Red Seas master plan development, which is set to become one of Saudi Arabia's most luxurious beachside destinations.

The new Four Seasons Resort will be situated on Shura Island, close to a yacht marina, leisure and lifestyle facilities, retail offerings and a golf course, as well as coral reefs and volcanoes.

The newbuild will offer 149 rooms and suites, six restaurant and lounge outlets and a marine discovery centre.

Guests will also have access to two private beaches, a full-service spa, tennis courts, and three outdoor pools.



CANADA

# VIA RAIL

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# Ponant's Adventure in the Kimberley

PONANT marked the highly-anticipated launch of *Australia's Iconic Kimberley with Andrew Daddo* last week in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney.

Filmed in the Kimberley in Jul 2022 on board *Le Lapérouse*, Daddo travelled alongside Ponant's Mick Fogg to showcase Australia's greatest natural asset.

The unspoilt and wild Kimberley region spans 420,000km<sup>2</sup> across Western Australia's top corner, and is a destination where nature reigns supreme with thundering waterfalls, extreme tidal movements, and is seemingly uninhabitable yet inhabited for perhaps 40,000 years.

Trade partners were treated to an evening of exquisite food, free-flowing champagne, and an exclusive screening of the film, followed by a Q&A session with Daddo and Fogg.

To watch this engaging 50-minute chronicle of Andrew's latest Ponant adventure, [CLICK HERE](#).



**ANDREW** Daddo retelling stories from his Kimberley expedition.



**CHRIS** Hall, Ponant CEO for Asia Pacific; Julie Rogers, Ponant Director of Sales Asia Pacific; Ines Iniesta, Journey Beyond; Andrew Daddo, Australian media and television personality; Annabelle Brown, Ponant BDM Vic, Tas, SA; Rachel Javier, Travel The World.



**ATTENDEES** were treated to a Q&A session with Andrew Daddo, Mick Fogg, and Julie Rogers after the screening.



**JULIE** Rogers, MC for the evening.

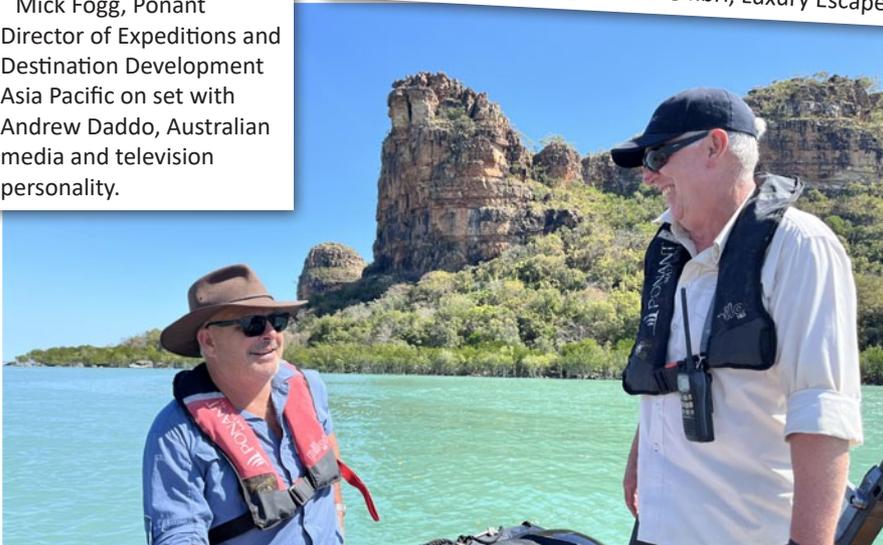


**SMILES** all round at the Art Gallery of NSW with Deb Corbett, Ponant GM Sales and Marketing Asia Pacific; Susie Myers, MTA Travel; Leighton Schembri, Luxury Escapes.

**THE** stars of the show! Mick Fogg, Ponant Director of Expeditions and Destination Development Asia Pacific on set with Andrew Daddo, Australian media and television personality.



**BEHIND** the scenes: Andrew Daddo and Mick Fogg on Montgomery Reef during filming in Jul 2022.



**GINO** Savio, Julie Rogers, Mick Fogg and Roslyn Savio from Atour Travel.



## MEA OPENS 2023 MENTOR PROGRAM

**MEETINGS & Events Australia** (MEA) has announced the return of its Mentor Program for 2023 to foster the skills and confidence of rising stars in the events industry.

The three-month-long program will be run in partnership with EventsAir from 03 Apr until 30 Jun, with 25 mentee positions open to MEA members.

Successful applicants will then be paired with an events industry expert, who will provide guidance and share their knowledge in a mentor capacity.

The program will be held via an online platform, ensuring a high level of interaction, objective tracking and access to valuable resources.

MEA's CEO Peter McDonald, hailed the Mentor Program as "a multi-faceted investment in the future" that helps members improve their "self-worth, career trajectory and employer value". "They end the program a better



version of themselves than the one who started it, more empowered to achieve both professionally and personally". "Concurrently, a more capacitated and skilled workforce is achieved, better insulating the greater industry against risk factors that could otherwise be its demise," he added.

Program Partner EventsAir's CEO Chris Ridd, commented: "we're delighted to play a part in setting up the next generation

of the dynamic Australian events industry for successful careers.

"We're looking forward to supporting both the mentees and mentors during the program."

MEA first launched the Mentor Program in 2008, with hundreds of event up-and-comers benefiting from the relationship and going on to hold senior positions in the industry.

Applications close Mon 20 Mar - more information on the program can be found [HERE](#).

## New ambassadors for MCEC Club

**MELBOURNE** Convention and Exhibition Centre's (MCEC) has welcomed two new ambassadors, Chef Alejandro Saravia and Emma Coath, to its Club Melbourne Ambassador Program.

Saravia is an acclaimed chef and restaurateur, and is the brains behind dining concept Farmer's Daughters, which features a restaurant, bar and deli in Melbourne.

Emma Coath is Managing Director of Rocket Seeder, a company that supports entrepreneurs to develop solutions within the food and agriculture sector.

The ambassadors will help "promote Victoria to the world, boost the economy and bring thought leadership to the city," Club Manager Melbourne Clare Kellett said.

## Cairns conference

**ALMOST** 300 delegates convened at the Cairns Convention Centre last week for the Strata Community Association Queensland annual conference.

The two-day event focused on North Queensland's strata accommodation insurance crisis, which is an important issue in the region's tourism accommodation sector.

## Hong Kong events now back in full swing

**THE** Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) has marked a full house for the first time since the pandemic, after wrapping up the Hong Kong International Jewellery Show and the Hong Kong International Diamond, Gem & Pearl Show last week.

The twin jewellery shows attracted over 2,500 exhibiting companies and over 60,000

buyers from across the world, filling all the centre's exhibition halls from 01-05 Mar.

Managing Director Monica Lee-Muller believes the event's success signals the strong rebound of Hong Kong's convention and exhibition sector, with HKCEC also seeing a surge in booking enquiries locally and overseas since the reopening of the borders.

## Waikato biz events

**HAMILTON &** Waikato Tourism has launched its Waikato Business Events Directory, showcasing venues, accommodation, support services, activities, as well as a range of local contacts.

The New Zealand DMC has also refreshed its online business events toolkit, which provides access to its regional image gallery, local maps, incentive itineraries, gift guides and more - [CLICK HERE](#) to view and find out more details.

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# CATO embraces equity for IWD

THE travel industry gathered in celebration yesterday at CATO's inaugural International Women's Day luncheon, hearing from female leaders from across the association's membership, followed by a powerful keynote address from **Travel Daily's** very own Hoda Alzubaidi.

Joining a panel to share their personal journeys in the travel industry included APT Travel Group's Lou Tandy, Sue Badyari of World Expeditions, Gai Tyrell from Globus, The Travel Corporation's Toni Ambler, and Evolution Travel Collective's Ingrid Berthelsen.

The event was emceed by Julia Zaetta, who also shared her own stories of travel throughout the day.

The day celebrated the theme of International Women's Day 2023, Embrace Equity.

PANEL discussion hosted by Lisa Pagotto.



TD'S Hoda Alzubaidi shared her personal story with the group.



EVOLUTION Travel Collective's Ingrid Berthelsen and Bench Africa's Lara Behrens embrace equity.





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## 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.

**Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport** has welcomed **Kellie Banditt** as its new General Manager. Banditt brings with her an extensive history within the travel industry and was previously the Manager in Airport Services at Swissport before becoming the Training Specialist at Bonza.

**Philippa Walker** has taken up a new role at **Silversea Cruises** as its Marketing Director, APAC, after a year-long stint with Royal Caribbean as its Partnerships Manager. Walker possesses 20 years of experience in marketing, partnership and commercial, and will manage Silversea's commercial partnerships in Asia.

**Outrigger Resorts & Hotels** has named **Geoff Pearson** as the Director of Sales & Marketing for the Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa on Hawai'i Island. Pearson will advance the internal and external sales marketing strategies to optimise the profitability for all source markets. Pearson was responsible for the same role at Halekulani for 14 years before joining Outrigger Resorts & Hotels.

**Jennifer St Clair** is now the Head of Account Management NSW at **FCM Travel Australia**. St Clair brings with her 20 years of experience within the travel industry, spanning previous roles with blue chip brands such as Qantas Airways.

## Outback Old Traveller's Guide



**THE** Outback Queensland Tourism Association has launched its all-new 2023 tourism season, with its new Traveller's Guide.

Showcasing 160 ways to experience Outback Queensland, the Guide illustrates unparalleled landscapes, indulgent retreats, world-class events, and exciting new experiences, from Outback Pioneers' Pride of the Murray cruise to Cunnamulla Hot Springs and Festival of Outback Skies.

The much-anticipated 2023 travel season officially kicks off at the annual Outback Muster Event on 08 Mar.

Outback Queensland Tourism Association Chair and Mayor of the Blackall-Tambo Regional Council, Andrew Martin, said the roads are open, the land is nourished and looking more beautiful than ever, the sunsets are phenomenal, the birdlife is sensational and country hospitality is available in spades.

"Following the pandemic, we have seen a spike in young Australians eager to get out."

## Indigenous Reef tour

**LOCAL** Bundaberg tourism operators Lady Musgrave Experience and Taribelang Bunda Cultural Tours have launched a three-day cultural experience for guests staying on board *Lady Musgrave HQ* pontoon on the Southern Great Barrier Reef.

The Djagun Bunda experience offers guests the opportunity to learn about the area's rich Aboriginal culture and history, encounter marine life and coral, and glamp under the stars.

Transfers are included on the new tour, which also offers a luxury catamaran from Bundaberg; two nights' accommodation on *Lady Musgrave HQ*; daily breakfast and lunch prepared by onboard chefs; immersive cultural tours; outer reef snorkel safari swimming; a glass-bottom boat tour and guided island walk, and more.

The first Djagun Bunda experience will take place on 26-28 May and is open for bookings.

## The iconic women

**TO CELEBRATE** International Women's Day, Royal Caribbean International has shared a video, *Introducing the Women Behind Icon of the Seas*, to showcase the team behind the scenes on the creation of the highly anticipated *Icon of the Seas*.

The vessel is set to debut in Jan 2024, with the video sharing what the word 'Icon' means to its innovative women, alongside the group's contributions toward designing the vessel.

"*Icon of the Seas* is the single most important class of ships that we've designed, one that we started on this journey five years ago," Senior Vice President Kelly Gonzalez said.

Watch the full video **HERE**.

## New MH370 search?

**YESTERDAY** marked the ninth year since the disappearance of MH370, with the victim's relatives this week initiating a push for a new search to take place by the southern hemisphere winter.

After failing to locate the aircraft in 2018, Ocean Infinity, a US marine robotic company, is now believed to be better fitted to resuming the search with greater understanding of the event.

The group Voice370 has also urged the Malaysian Government to do whatever it takes to find the lost plane.

The flight was en route to Beijing from Kuala Lumpur before disappearing (**TD** 10 Mar 2014) with theories of it being taken off course deliberately.

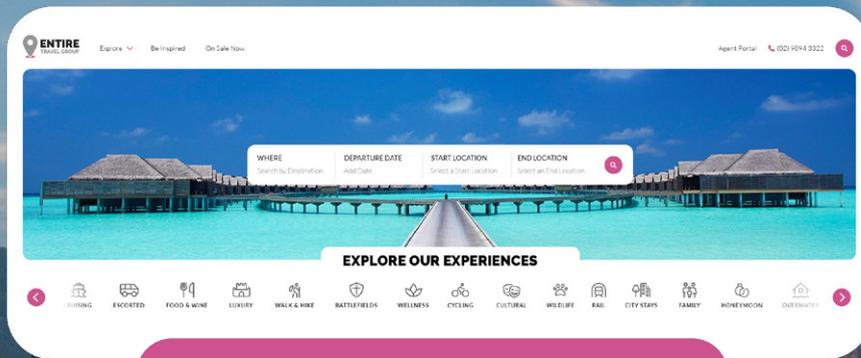


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