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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of the latest news including our **Sustainability** page plus a cover page from **Tourism New Zealand**.

Jetstar MCT at SIN extended to 90 min

JETSTAR (JQ) and Jetstar Asia (3K) will tomorrow shift their Singapore Changi Airport operations from Terminal 4 to Terminal 1.

The change will increase the minimum connecting time from 60 to 90 minutes, with Qantas issuing a commercial policy for impacted connections.

Customers holding a QF (081) issued ticket can rebook, retain tickets in credit or receive a refund, with waiver code 523909.

Cola takes on new role

TRAVEL and media industry veteran Nic Cola has accepted the new role of Chief Executive Officer of university organisation RMIT Online, where he will start full-time on 03 Apr.

Cola is understood to still be working at Helloworld in his current position of Group General Manager - Retail & Commercial, with the travel agency group declining to provide further details on his employment, and when his last day with the company will be.

Speaking with *Tech Business News*, Vice-Chancellor and President of RMIT University Alec Cameron said Cola will use his extensive experience in the travel sector to lead the expansion of RMIT Online's solution for lifelong

learning, and help businesses upskill in high-demand areas.

Cola is also the Co-Chair of consumer group Choice, and he took up a role as head of cruise wholesale with Helloworld when it purchased the Cruisecco business from majority owner Australian Pacific Holdings in Nov 2020 (*TD* 23 Nov 2020).

He was subsequently appointed Head of Retail and Commercial Australia in 2021 (*TD* 25 Jun 2021).

Travel PR workshop

TRAVEL writer Rob McFarland is hosting an online PR writing workshop for tourism marketers, operators and PR executives.

Limited to 12 participants and costing \$450pp, the session will take place via Zoom on 31 Mar, covering pitching and press release writing.

The workshop also includes a toolkit of planning, writing and editing techniques as well as a detailed post-course review of a press release or story pitch.

To register, sign up **HERE** or email rob@robmcfarland.org.

Extraordinary NZ

TOURISM New Zealand is today inviting travel advisors to discover how to give their clients a deeper, more meaningful experience of Aotearoa New Zealand.

For more details see the **cover** page of today's *Travel Daily*.

Del Rio to retire

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line Holdings CEO Frank Del Rio has announced his retirement effective 30 Jun, with his role overseeing Norwegian, Oceania and Regent Seven Seas Cruises to be taken on by Harry Sommer.

Sommer is currently President of Norwegian Cruise Line, and will also join the NCLH Board.

David Herrera, currently Norwegian's Chief Consumer Sales and Marketing Officer, will become NCL President while Adam Malone will become Chief Marketing Officer.

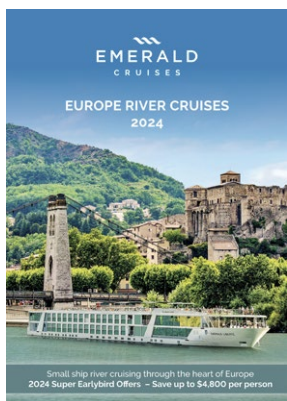
Del Rio said "with the company solidly positioned for 2023 and beyond, I am confident that now is the right time to pass the baton to Harry".

More of the latest cruise news in today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

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HLO pushes ResWorld

HELLOWORLD has announced a 34% purchase of Oslo-based B2C business Australiareiser (**TD** breaking news), which the travel agency group said would be used as a staging point for its ResWorld system in Europe.

Founded by Rolf Kjeseth in 2005, Australiareiser is the largest travel wholesaler from Scandinavia to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, with brands including Fijireiser, Private Travel Lab, Gruppe Rundreiser, and Workations.

"We are delighted to announce that Australiareiser will become the launch customer for our mid-office system ResWorld in Europe," Helloworld CEO Andrew Burnes enthused.

"We have spent the last five years developing this system for our agency networks in Australia and New Zealand and it is now at the point where we can take it to other countries and deploy it."

Helloworld has been working with the Norwegian business since 2014, when AOT bought its ATS Pacific arm, with AOT subsequently merging with Helloworld in 2016.

Reflecting on the partial purchase, Kjeseth said he was delighted by the new equity partnership with Helloworld.

"We have been working with ATS and Helloworld for a long time now...and during this period we have had the opportunity to explore the new ResWorld system and in our view, it is a first-class product," he said.

"We will be implementing it in the next few months and are delighted to be the launch customer for this new mid-office partnership," Kjeseth added.

The ResWorld product is now deployed in more than 160 agencies across Australia and New Zealand, with more rollouts planned later this year.

Eden Corporate head to Manly



EDEN Corporate Travel, a member of the Link Travel Group, recently had held its biannual team building weekend at the Q Station Manly, where they enjoyed great weather and a ghostly tour after dinner.

"The weekend was huge success and its never been more

important to have our team all in the one room face to face," Managing Director Andrew Want commented.

"It makes me very proud how the team and the business weathered the COVID storm and came out the other side stronger and tighter than ever before."

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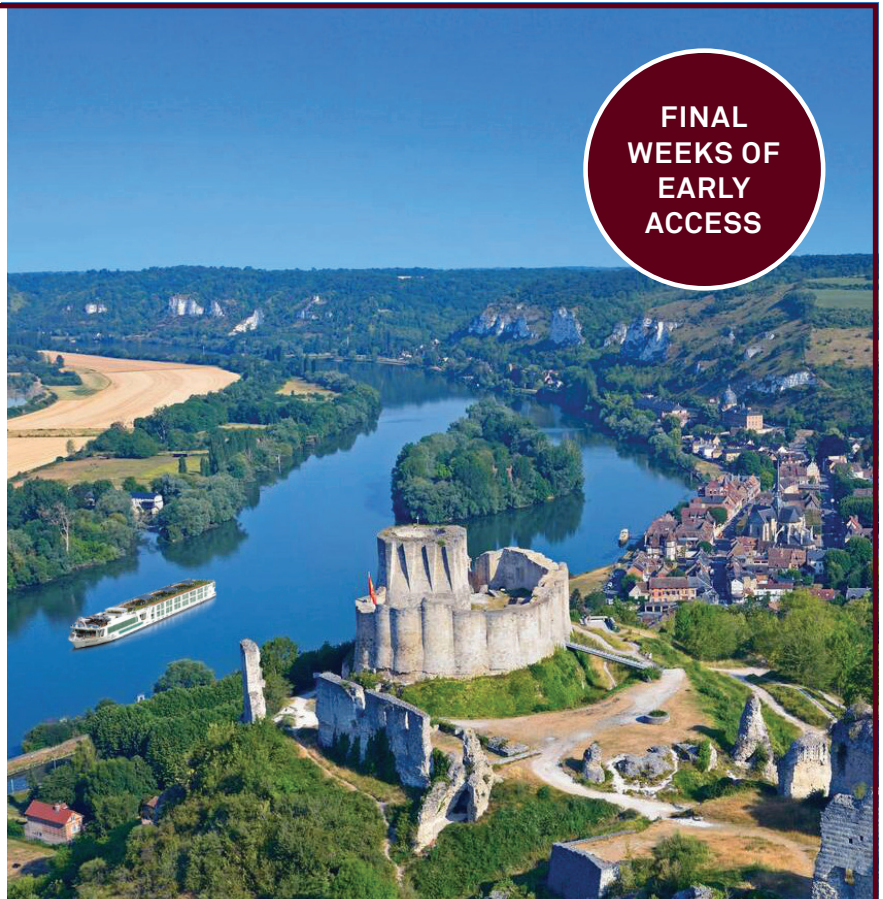
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AFTA Custodians named

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) has revealed the seven industry representatives tasked with ensuring the ongoing success of the National Travel Industry Awards (NTIAs).

The inaugural Custodians Council comprises of seven advisors, each representing different segments of the travel industry, who will draw on their skills and expertise to shape and guide the industry's night of nights.

The Custodians were selected by the AFTA team after the Expressions of Interest opened last year (**TD** 11 Nov 2022), with applicants required to state why they believe they are an exceptional candidate and what, if any, experience they have with

managing an award program.

General Manager of Frontier Travel, Ann-Catherine Jones, has been named as the Retail Agency representative, while Barbara Whitten of Anywhere Travel will look after the Corporate segment.

Luxury Escapes CEO Tony Gothard was chosen to represent the Online Travel Agency division; GlobeNet Travel and Clean Cruising's Jean Summers has taken on the Custodian role for the Retail Agency segment; and Norwegian Cruise Line's Damian Borg will oversee the Supplier - Cruise/Air division's interests.

Rounding out the council is Chris Fundell, Head of Marketing - Australasia for the Globus Family of Brands, as the Wholesale representative, and Dick Webster, Co-Founder of Journey Earth, representing Tour Operators.

"Our NTIA Custodian Council will work with AFTA to preserve the integrity of the NTIAs while continuing to evolve the process of recognising and rewarding excellence in Australia's Travel Sector," AFTA CEO Dean Long enthused.

"I and the team are very excited to be working together with the Council as we get cracking with the planning for the 2023 NTIAs in Melbourne on 18 Nov."

STB, Chef Nelly

THE Singapore Tourism Board (STB) has teamed up with Chef Nelly Robinson, owner and Chef Patron of NEL Restaurant, to offer a bespoke culinary-focused consumer package as part of a multi-channel campaign.

Available in May and Jun, the itinerary allows Aussie travellers to experience Singapore's food and beverage scene, and includes a full day of experiences plus a cooking course with Chef Nelly, dinner at Michelin-starred Restaurant Labyrinth, and more.

CLICK HERE for further details about the campaign.

Agents salute Magic Mickey trip



AS PART of the Disney100 Mega Famil to the Disneyland Resort held last week in Anaheim, California, 15 travel agents were chosen as the coveted Disney Magical Moments winners.

These agents submitted entries, which were selected by the Disney Destinations Australia team that featured across five weeks in **Travel Daily**, showcasing moments where they went above and beyond to assist their clients.

The Magical Moments winners were celebrated at the Platinum Party held Fri 17 Mar at Disney's Grand Californian Hotel.

Amy Mortlock, Travel Business Development Manager Disney Destinations International, acknowledged these agents on stage, highlighting how valuable the travel trade is with assisting their clients' needs, both with Disney touches, as well as across other challenges throughout the past few years.

The five-day Mega Famil provided these agents, along with the other 85 who attended, the opportunity to experience all the magic of the Disneyland Resort, along with the surrounding Anaheim area.

There was also a 'shop-until-you-drop-off' shopping experience at the Citadel Outlets, providing plenty of retail therapy - with extra bags needed for some enthusiastic agent shoppers - before the United Airlines flights home Sat evening.

Pictured: Disney100 Mega Famil Magical Moments winners along with Disney Destinations team members at the Platinum Party.

VA Samoa relaunch

VIRGIN Australia is celebrating its return to Apia today with up to two flights per week from both Sydney and Brisbane.

To mark the occasion, a Samoan crew is flying the first flight from Sydney this evening, before Brisbane flights take off on Thu.

The First Officer and cabin crew will warmly greet guests, which will include a traditional song. Virgin has also dropped a 72-hour sale to Samoa, with return airfares available from \$549 in Economy Lite.

The sale also comes on the last day of Velocity Frequent Flyer's 4,000 Bonus Points offer for eligible flights booked on the Virgin international network.

COMO package

WESTERN Australia's COMO The Treasury has partnered with the new Ampersand Estates to offer a luxury five-night package.

Priced from \$5,455 per couple, the package includes two nights at COMO The Treasury in Perth and a three-night stay in the Settlers Cottage at Ampersand Estates in the wine region of Pemberton, along with a number of inclusions - call 08 6168 7899.

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Outback Hotel is reborn



VOYAGES Indigenous Tourism Australia has announced the reopening of Outback Hotel and Lodge at Ayers Rock Resort, which now sports a new look following a multi-million dollar renovation.

Formerly known as the Outback Pioneer Hotel, the property now features enhanced guest rooms, new ensuite bathrooms, and an upgraded swimming pool and surrounding areas.

All 125 guest rooms include free wi-fi, air-conditioning, walk-in rain showers and new bedding configurations, as well as a range of new electronics, with large prints from Indigenous artist Delma Forbes adorning the walls.

Guests will enjoy new furniture and soft furnishings, including bed and bathroom linen, carpets and curtains, with an earthy colour scheme of warm reds, ochres and pinks, inspired by the Uluru landscape.

In the 46-room Outback Lodge, the former Budget Rooms have been transformed into Family Lodge Rooms with one queen bed and one bunk bed.

Guests can choose from a range of dining options, including the Bough House, Outback Kiosk and Outback BBQ and Bar, where guests can cook their own Australian BBQ with their preferred meat or fish.

Guests who stay at the Outback Hotel and Lodge can take advantage of a free Indigenous Activities Program, return Ayers Rock Airport transfers and use of the complimentary Ayers Rock Resort shuttle bus service.

A Standard Guest Room starts from \$300 per night - [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

Palm Beach ticked

STEER Developments has gained approval to proceed with a \$120 million Gold Coast luxury hotel (render [pictured](#)).

Labelled a “first of its kind”, the Palm Beach property will deliver 126 rooms across six storeys on the Gold Coast Highway.

Construction on the project is expected to begin in the fourth quarter of this year, with completion scheduled for the first quarter of 2025.

Steer has not yet revealed a hotel operator for the project, which will likely be named soon.

The hotel will feature state-of-the-art amenities, including a rooftop pool, a gym, a spa, and in-house dining options.

“It’s about the entire experience; a perfect blend of beauty, luxury, and premium quality with a calm, lush, and peaceful serenity,” Steer’s chief Rob Steer said.



AFTA UPDATE

from Nina Hedges, Compliance Manager



THE AFTA office is still buzzing after our incredible Women In Travel Summit last week.

We delivered an unprecedented event for travel where both men and women from varying walks of our industry came together, not simply to pay lip service to the achievements of women but to dig deep into how we attract and retain them - both now and into the future.

The outcome of these candid and raw conversations and panel discussions is, as we speak, being reviewed and compiled into a first of its kind report that will be available for all to view.

We have all been to Women’s Day Events that are “nice” and “inspiring” but this was just so much more than this.

At a time where our industry is under-resourced and stretched to the limit, we were acutely aware that if we were going to ask people to take time out of their businesses then we needed to make it worth their while.

Going by the overwhelming

number of emails AFTA has received thanking us and praising the proceedings, coupled with the enormous social media presence and tags by industry members expressing their gratitude and saying that they felt “heard”, there is no doubt that this event had substance and was well worth the time out of the office.

This is the future of AFTA, a future where we invite conversation and engagement, the doors of communication are wide open, and our members feel heard, understood and considered.

AFTA wishes to thank all involved, both men and women, for their vulnerability, bravery and involvement.

We recognise that the event could never have been what it was without your engagement and honesty.

For those of you asking if the event will run again next year, the answer is that, yes, we will be having another event in 2024, by which time the buzz at the office will have just about subsided!

But for now, we will continue to reflect on the day and focus on the report that is the invaluable by-product of such a prodigious event.

VietJet keen for OZ growth

EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING a flurry of local activity from Vietnam-based carrier VietJet, the airline explained to *Travel Daily* this week that its push on the Australian market has been driven by a “significant demand” for affordable air travel between Australia and Vietnam.

The carrier recently announced the launch of direct flights between Ho Chi Minh City and Brisbane Airport (**TD 17 Mar**), as well as a range of promotions targeting Aussies (**TD 14 Mar**), (**TD 07 Mar**), all following on from new routes being introduced between Vietnam and Sydney and Melbourne.

“We are seeing strong demand for our flights from Sydney and Melbourne, and are confident that these new routes will continue to be popular,” the carrier confirmed.

“We are continually monitoring

the demand and adjusting our services accordingly to meet the needs of our customers.”

VietJet also revealed that its SkyBoss Business and Deluxe ticket classes have proven to be particularly popular with passengers, offering “additional comfort and luxury for those who are willing to pay a little extra”.

When asked if the airline is currently exploring more Aussie cities for expansion, VietJet declined to be specific, but did add that it was “always exploring opportunities” to expand its network, and that it remains committed to eventually operating out of all Australian capital cities.

For agents wanting to learn more about the brand, they are being encouraged to visit VietJet’s social media channels.

VietJet has placed an emphasis on affordable air travel with a strong customer service focus.



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Kimberley closures

THE closure of two of the most popular national parks in the Kimberley due to flood damage has left local tourism operators in trouble, with ABC reports suggesting the parks will not open until next year.

Bandilngan National Park was extensively damaged by a record-breaking Lennard River flood in Jan, while Danggu Gorge National Park remains closed after the flooding Fitzroy River tore through it.

Both gorges are popular day-trip destinations from Derby, Broome, and Fitzroy Crossing.

However, other attractions like Dimalurru National Park, Purnululu National Park, Dalmanyi, and Mitchell Falls are expected to reopen when road conditions allow.

The latest blow to Kimberley tourism operators comes as the region prepares for a bust season after three years of pandemic-related cancellations.

Flight credit partnership

EXCLUSIVE

MAGNATECH Travel Management Solutions and Kudos Travel Technology have teamed up to simplify the corporate travel sector's uptake of unused flight credits.

The partnership will see Kudos integrate Magnatech's ONTRACKplus unused ticket management services into its management platform.

The move will provide an interactive dashboard for travel advisors, their corporate clients, and travellers to view any available unused credits.

Kudos can also facilitate credit uptake when booking flights, all within the one interface.

ONTRACKplus allows for bulk credit expiry updates, eliminating the need for manual expiry updating by travel management companies.

"We're thrilled to partner with

Kudos Travel Technology to bring the ONTRACKplus unused ticket management services to their travel platform," Magnatech Chief Executive Paul Gioia enthused.

"Our goal is to ensure that no credits are left on the table by our clients, and this integration allows us to do just that."

Kudos Managing Director, Phil Rasmussen, added his praise for the Magnatech deal, stating his company is excited about the ability to offer clients a streamlined solution for managing travel credits.

"By integrating Magnatech's services into the Kudos Travel Platform, we can ensure our clients have access to all the information they need to reduce costs and make informed travel decisions," he said.

The partnership comes as CHOICE continues its blowtorch on the airline industry over its credit restrictions (TD 17 Mar).

New Day for Big4

BIG4 Holiday Parks has appointed Louisa Day (pictured) as its new General Manager Park Success.

In her role, Day will be responsible for rolling out the digital sales strategy focusing on the growth of the BIG4 network, through both the Fully Cooperative Member and Web Partner Parks models.

She brings to the business more than two decades of tourism and sales experience with high-profile companies, such as 50 Degrees North, Exodus Travels, and Peregrine Adventures.



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Ooh, a new study!

AN OOH!MEDIA study has found two in three Australians have plans to travel for leisure in the next six months.

Almost half of the respondents in the report said they will travel within their own state in the next six months, and a third will travel interstate, showing Australians have a strong desire to travel locally, even with borders open.

SYD Express plans

SYDNEY Airport has confirmed to *Travel Daily* that it is consulting with airlines about bringing back its Express Path service, but at this stage the priority lane is still reserved for passengers travelling in First and Business-class only.

Formerly, top-tier frequent flyers could use Express Path at Sydney Airport's Terminal 1 international terminal, which cut down on time spent in immigration and security.

Link Travel maps out future



THE Link Travel Group Advisory Board held a meeting this week in Melbourne to discuss plans and initiatives for 2023 and beyond, followed by a dinner hosted at Langham Melbourne.

Those at the meeting included Reho Travel CEO Karsten Horne; Spencer Group of Companies Managing Director Penny Spencer; Goldman Group

Managing Directors David and Anthony Goldman; Flight Centre Travel Group Global Managing Director - Luxury and Independent brands, Danielle Galloway; Link Travel Group General Manager Scott Darlow; Platinum Travel Group CEO Andy Buerckner; Travel Beyond Group CEO Tim Lane; and The Langham Sydney's Amanda Frack.



Window Seat

WHEN we first reported on Jeff Reitzback in 2017 (*TD* 26 Jun 2017), we thought the concept of customer loyalty was being taken to extremes back then, but now the self-confessed Disney-ophile has pushed his love for Mickey Mouse & friends even further.

Reitzback has now visited Disneyland 2,995 times in a row, yes, for those doing the maths that means this fan has walked through the turnstiles every opening day since 2012!

"It started as a joke between friends when Disneyland announced they were giving an 'Extra Disney Day' when they announced the Leap Day 24-hour event in 2012," he said, since that day earning himself a Guinness World Record in the process.

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Spotlight on Reef

TOURISM operators are shining a light this week on conservation efforts in the Great Barrier Reef, with companies demonstrating the importance of looking after major visitor attraction.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland's CEO, Mark Olsen, believes travellers are more eager than ever to learn about what is being done to care for the Reef in the face of climate change.

"New tours are helping visitors to understand the innovative and dedicated actions of the tourism industry on the Great Barrier Reef," he explained.

There are several conservation activities travellers can get involved with, including helping to collect data, remove the coral-eating *Drupella* snail and caring for injured turtles.

The Cairns Aquarium, for example, will offer living coral biobank tours from Apr, where guests can see the world's first living coral ark - a collection of the hundreds of species of hard coral found throughout the reef, which can be used for research and restoration efforts.

Visitors can also gain a deeper understanding of the reef's ecosystem by joining Quicksilver's guided marine biologist snorkel tour.

SIA TO SHOWCASE ECO GOALS

SINGAPORE Airlines (SIA) Group will reaffirm its commitment to sustainability during its signature biennial learning festival this week.

The Learning and Innovation for Everyone (LIFE) festival will shine a spotlight on the organisation's long-term sustainability goals, with SIA Group employees and partners around the world taking part in more than 50 activities over three days starting today.

"With sustainability as the key theme for this year's learning festival, we seek to inspire our people to think about how they can play a role in supporting our sustainability goals and actions," SIA Senior Vice President Human Resources, Vanessa Ng, said.

Participants can listen to panel



discussions and talks by external experts addressing the drivers and challenges on the company's path to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Topics under the microscope include steward leadership, the future of flight, biodiversity protection, and how technology can mitigate sustainability issues.

The festival will also include showcases and workshops run by SIA Group employees providing insight into sustainability initiatives across the organisation.

MEANWHILE, SIA Group has concurrently appointed Senior Vice President Corporate Planning, Lee Wen Fen, as its first Chief Sustainability Officer.

Eco businesses fare well at Awards

LIVE Ningaloo has taken home Gold for the ecotourism sector at the 2022 Qantas Australian Tourism Awards last Fri for the second year in a row.

Live Ningaloo is a travel operator specialising in boat tours of Ningaloo Reef in WA, and has several sustainability initiatives in place.

The awards ceremony also recognised 13 other Ecotourism Australia certified businesses, including the Tasmanian Walking Company, which was awarded Silver in the

Ecotourism category, while Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort in Queensland won Bronze.

"Tourism operators in Australia certified at the global best practice sustainability standard are delivering high-quality tourism experiences and it is commendable to see their impact recognised at the national level," Ecotourism Australia CEO Elissa Keenan explained.

"We look forward to watching their impact continue to inspire tourism sustainability."

UA algae plunge

UNITED Airlines has revealed the first investment of its recently launched UAV Sustainable Flight Fund, which will see it pour US\$5 million into the production of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) made from algae.

The funding will go to Viridos, a California-based biofuel company, that specialises in the bioengineering of microalgae to create an oil that can then be used to scale the future production of SAF.

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MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.672

THE latest news in the financial market saw the Swiss banking giant, UBS, taking ownership of Credit Suisse in an attempt to avert the banking crisis on Mon, with the AUD/USD jumping 0.5% to two-week highs following the deal.

Despite the recent volatility, the local financial markets will still function per normal as the Australian banks have remained incredibly strong.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.672
UK	£0.547
NZ	\$1.075
Euro	€0.627
Japan	¥88.22
Thailand	฿22.90
China	¥4.621
South Africa	12.44
Canada	\$0.918
Crude oil	US\$72.97

Passenger tasered

POLICE were forced to taser a an unruly flight passenger upon landing at Perth Airport on Sun, resulting in the officers sustaining minor injuries during the arrest.

The Melbourne man has since appeared in Perth Magistrates Court, accused of acting aggressively toward airline staff and refusing to follow directions.

“Choosing to behave poorly on a flight not only effects your travel plans, but also those of potentially hundreds of other people, this is why the AFP has no tolerance for poor behaviour,” Acting Supt Davis said.

TA back in its shell

TOURISM Australia has received backlash on a now-removed Instagram post showing a woman in the same frame swimming with endangered marine life.

The image depicted a bird's-eye-view to a woman floating on her back along with around 30 sea turtles in the mating season on the Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia, which has since been removed by the tourism organisation after negative feedback from the community.

Over 700 comments were received from outraged wildlife advocates, condemning the post as commercialising vulnerable animals and encouraging travellers to swim next to turtles during their mating season.

It is strongly suggested by *WA Department of Biodiversity and Conservation turtle watcher's code of conduct* to not disturb the sea turtles in their mating seasons and “to move away from a practical distance”.

Miami shooting

FLORIDA'S Miami Beach experienced multiple deadly shootings during spring break festivities over the weekend, prompting the city to impose curfew limits from 23-27 Mar.

Two people died after shots were fired towards a crowd of tourists and civilians at around 3:30am local time on Sat morning, with videos showing frightened people covering their heads while fleeing the scene.

The ‘execution-style’ shooting was enacted by the now-apprehended Dontavious Leonard Polk, who is is being charged with first-degree murder.

A South African adventure



VIRTUOSO teamed up with South African Tourism to host 27 top-performing luxury travel advisors from across Australia on a thrilling trip to South Africa.

The lucky agents were split into three groups of nine, dubbed ‘Hippos’, ‘Meerkats’ and ‘Wine Lovers’, with each group travelling on a different itinerary covering five of South Africa’s provinces: Western Cape, Kwa Zulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, and Northern Cape.

The ‘Hippos’ headed to St Lucia, home to the largest hippo population on the continent, and managed to spot the elusive leopard at the luxurious Phinda safari lodge, as well as enjoying a visit to Khula Village for an authentic Zulu experience.

The Meerkats stayed at the Tswalu safari lodge in the Kalahari Desert, and encountered a pride of lions in the wild including eight adorable cubs, as well as a herd of giraffes silhouetted against a gorgeous sunset.

The Wine Lovers explored the scenic Cape Winelands, where they sampled wines aboard the world’s only hop-on, hop-off

wine tram, complete with awe-inspiring views.

“The opportunity to experience some of the incredible luxury assets in South Africa was an invaluable way for Virtuoso travel advisors to elevate the client experience,” Virtuoso General Manager, Australia and New Zealand, Fiona Dalton, said.

“We were honoured to partner with South African Tourism, and early feedback from attendees suggests they were so taken by the joy and spirit of South Africa.”

Pictured: The Meerkats at the Silo Hotel rooftop with the Table Mountain as the stunning backdrop.

A-ROSA in deep end

A-ROSA River Cruises has introduced swimming lessons for children on *A-ROSA SENA*.

Beginner and intermediate courses are available for children aged four-and-a-half to seven years old on two summer holiday departures - 05 and 12 Aug.

The course will be six-sessions long and cost €100 per child.