

Crown Princess in Oz

PRINCESS Cruises has announced that its *Crown Princess* vessel will be based year-round in Australia from Oct 2024.

Homeporting in Sydney alongside *Diamond Princess*, the 3,080-passenger ship's sailings will include round-Australia voyages departing from major cities such as Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Fremantle.

Crown will also claim the title of the largest cruise ship to be based year-round in Oz - more in **CW**.

Lufthansa slashes BSP comm

EXCLUSIVE

THE Lufthansa group of airlines have become the latest carriers to reduce travel agent remuneration in the Australian market.

Agencies were this week advised of the move, which will see a 40% reduction in agent pay for all tickets issued effective from 01 Apr this year.

IATA BSP commission will decline from the current 5% to 3%, with the change applicable to all Lufthansa, SWISS and Austrian tickets sold in Australia.

The commission structure and applicability remains the same, with LH, LX and OS paying up-front BSP commission on published market fares and YQ/YR surcharges for all bookings for travel ex Australia to Europe, Middle East and Africa.

There is no change to all other fare types, with 0% applying to mileage, Star Alliance RTW and Europe Airpass fares as well as intra-Europe published fares on all three carriers.

Combinations between commissionable and non-commissionable fares on the same ticket will default to 0% commission on the whole ticket, the carriers confirmed.

Smartraveller push

SMARTTRAVELLER has released a new marketing campaign to educate Aussie travellers heading overseas to make more informed decisions and arrive back safely.

The new videos created by the Federal Government agency call on Aussies preparing for trips to ensure that visiting the Smartraveller site is the "first destination" - watch **HERE**.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including our **Luxury** feature and a photo page from **Disney**, plus a full page from **The Travel Junction**.

Earn 15% with TTJ

THE Travel Junction (TTJ) is allowing travel agents to earn up to 15% commission on selected accommodation bookings, like the New Zealand's Scenic Highway package - see the **back page** for more details.

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Magellan TRAVEL

Air Tahiti GM exits

AIR Tahiti Nui's General Manager Pacific Daniel Eggenberger has departed the position to head home to Europe and pursue a career outside of the travel sector.

The carrier is now conducting a search for a replacement, with Direct Sales & Service Centres Vaitea Kohler taking charge of the finance functions for the interim, while Marketing & Sales Manager for NZ Grant Sinclair will handle marketing/sales for Australia.

Wendy Wu Tours

— DISCOVER THE —

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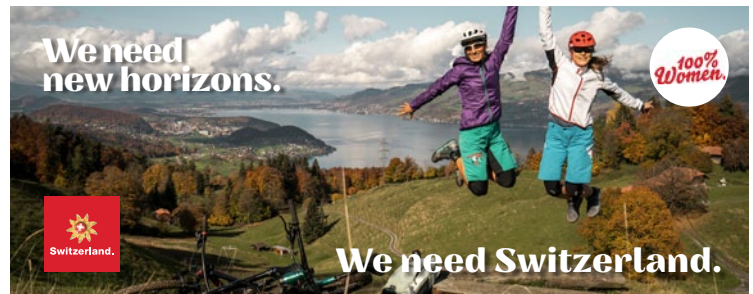
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Window Seat

WHAT better way to celebrate World Tattoo Day than to ink one's skin in front of one of the best views in Australia!

The Sydney Tower Eye and Bondi Ink have collaborated to host the The World's Highest Tattoo Studio, operating more than 250 metres above the ground in Sydney, with artists Chris and Cristina to ply their permanent trade to brave punters on 05 Apr.

"I've tattooed for some interesting events in my time but being invited to create a design for The World's Highest Tattoo Studio on top of the Sydney Tower Eye is pretty unique - I'm really looking forward to it," Chris said.

But not just anybody will be able to experience a tattoo from a great height, with Aussies needing to enter a competition and state why they should earn "the world's highest tattoo".

Entries must be in by 27 Mar - submit responses [HERE](#).



AFTA extends training pact

EXCLUSIVE

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents has extended its management and marketing agreement with Rick Myatt's Australian Travel Education (ATE) through until 30 Jun 2027.

Under the arrangement, ATE will continue to hold the exclusive rights to manage AFTA's education and training portfolio, which comprises the development and marketing of VET-accredited training resources.

Qualifications covered under the deal range from Certificate III through to Advanced Diploma and undergraduate degree courses in tourism on offer.

ATE is also responsible for developing and managing the AFTA Training Provider Accreditation Scheme (ATPS) for approved Training Providers, including Registered Training Organisations, schools,

universities and in-house industry based providers.

Myatt, whose tenure overseeing the operations as the Director of AFTA Education and Training now spans two decades, noted that currently 70% of all training providers nationally are now part of the ATPS, including TAFE NSW, Qld TAFE, SA TAFE, William Angliss Vic, Victoria University TAFE and online provider Travel Training Australia.

Myatt, who is also CEO of the Australian Travel Careers Council, led the 2012 development of the Certificate III in Travel qualification (SIT30212) which remains the benchmark of training qualifications for companies applying to participate in the Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS).

Institutions wishing to become an AFTA Accredited Training Provider can contact Myatt via email at rhnmyatt@afta.com.au.

EY adds six carriers

ETIHAD Airways has launched new interline partnerships and codeshares with six airlines, including new partners Philippine Airlines, Austrian Airlines, and Airlink South Africa, and existing partners Biman Bangladesh, Air Seychelles and ITA Airways.



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Request for Proposal – PR Agency Services for Singapore Tourism Board Oceania



Singapore Tourism Board (STB) Oceania invites submissions from PR agencies in their RFP (Request for Proposal) for public relations (PR) agency services for Australia and New Zealand.

The appointed agency will provide PR consultancy services for STB Oceania for a period of two (2) years from 1 August 2023, with an option to renew for a further two (2) years, and be responsible for the successful implementation of the Board's overall PR strategy in Australia and New Zealand in close consultation with STB.

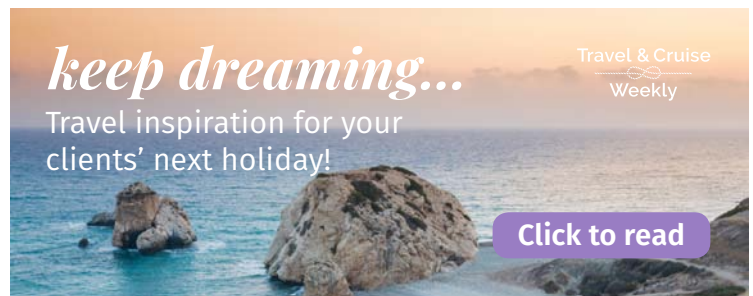
Interested agencies are to email Michelle_Alice_Thoo@STB.gov.sg to obtain the full set of RFP documents. Closing date for submissions is **21 April 2023 6:00PM (AEST)**.



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Rebounding with purpose

DESPITE a 10-fold surge in client revenue last year, a new report published by Intrepid this morning shows the tour operator still operated at a loss for the 12 months to 31 Dec 2022.

The \$25.9 million loss represented a vast improvement however on the previous yearly deficit, which stood at a \$60.6m.

As the company moves to scale up operations following the travel shutdown, expenses have also increased to accommodate growth, with sales costs rising from \$17.53 million in 2021 to \$173.88 million last year, while administrative and marketing expenses also increased by \$33.4 million and \$17.86 million respectively.

Encouragingly however, Intrepid has also returned to a positive cash flow position, with the business also surpassing \$370 million in bookings for 2022, noting a particularly strong

performance in the final quarter of last year.

Looking forward, Intrepid is forecasting record departure revenue and profits by the end of this year, in addition to further investment from shareholders, and plans to sink more capital into its vertically integrated platform and Northern Hemisphere operations.

The report also cited a number of key achievements in 2022, including the reopening of tours in 86 countries, expanding its First Nations experiences to more than 100 by the start of 2023, growing the new Premium range by 14 across Asia, the Americas and Europe, and the revamping of over 750 multi-day trips.

A central tenet of the Intrepid business is to 'grow with purpose', with designs on becoming the first 'purpose-led' adventure travel company to be valued at more than \$1 billion.

Cost of living no barrier: study

AUSTRALIANS are more eager than ever to travel, according to Luxury Escape's latest annual report, which found that cost-of-living pressures haven't dampened travel plans for over half (58%) of all Aussies.

In fact, close to two-thirds (60%) of the 4,000 Australians surveyed for the *Travel 2023* report intend to spend more on travel this year than they did pre-pandemic, while 56.5% said the travel shutdown had made them more motivated to travel than before.

Aussies are especially keen to engage in food and wellness tourism, which were identified as driving motivators for travel in 2023 for 64% and 46% of respondents respectively.

Indonesia ranked as the best-loved travel destination for 2023 among Aussie travellers, while Italy topped the all-time favourite destinations list.

Our strongest Feb on record: TM

IT'S been a strong start to the year for TravelManagers, with the network hailing another record month of sales in Feb 2023, up on Jan's record figures by 29%.

The total sales volume for Feb saw a 77% increase compared to the same period pre-COVID, while the average commissions for personal travel managers (PTMs) also went up by 81%.

Executive General Manager Michael Gazal said much of the growth comes from long-haul travel, particularly in Europe, along with the 51% increase in domestic bookings.

Additionally, TravelManagers' clients are spending more on hotels and tours, which are up 40% and 27% respectively.

"These are sales results that we would not have dreamed about pre-COVID, and they reflect a strong growth trend across the entire industry," Gazal beamed.

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Travel Daily



Merlin conjures Ang

MERLIN Entertainment has appointed Susan Ang as its new Divisional Director for APAC.

Effective next month, her appointment follows former local head Rob Smith's move to the United Kingdom, where he will step into the new role of Managing Director Midway.

Ang was most recently Regional Director Asia Midway.

APT Canada 2024

APT has launched an early release of Canada and Alaska holidays for 2024, with earlybird savings offered of up to \$3,000 per couple.

A 22-day Rockies Odyssey and Alaska Cruise, a seven-night round-trip Alaskan cruise, and a 15-day Rockies Icons and Alaska Cruise holiday are among the itineraries - see more **HERE**.



Destination NSW

Senior Coordinator, Regional Conferencing

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About Destination NSW

Destination NSW is the lead agency, champion, and voice for the visitor economy within the NSW Government. Spearheading a whole-of-government approach to visitor economy growth, Destination NSW is responsible for leading the delivery of the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 in partnership with government and industry.

About The Role

The Senior Coordinator, Regional Conferencing is responsible for developing and executing a business development plan to drive the growth of business events in Regional NSW. The Senior Coordinator will develop and manage relationships with conference and event organisers to ensure that they choose regional NSW for their next business event.

In this role you will also work with venues and destinations across Regional NSW to support industry growth and develop destination capability.

How to Apply

To apply and view the full job description for each position please go to the iworkfornsw website

Should you require any additional information please contact: recruitment@dns.gov.au

Closing date: March 2023

QF menu in great taste

QANTAS customers will soon enjoy an improved in-flight and lounge dining experience, with a "bigger and better" menu rolling out across all cabins on the airline's regional, domestic and international network.

The multi-million dollar upgrade represents the biggest investment in the airline's menu in a decade, and comes as the airline returns to profit (**TD** 23 Feb).

Well-known Aussie chef and Qantas Creative Director of Food, Beverage and Service, Neil Perry (**pictured**), played a key role in shaping the new menu, which uses high quality ingredients from premium Australian producers.

"We are spoilt for choice in Australia when it comes to being able to source top quality food from fantastic Australian producers, and together with generous servings and great



service, these are the key ingredients to creating an enjoyable meal," he said.

"Over time, it's been fantastic to see a broader curiosity around international cuisines and plant-based dining, which has allowed us to become more adventurous with our menus."

The new menus have begun rolling out on domestic flights and will launch on international services from 29 Mar, as well as across the airline's lounges.

Case goes to CDPP

THE Australian Maritime Safety Authority has handed its investigation into a boat crash which injured dozens of tourists at Horizontal Falls in the Kimberley last year to the Office of Commonwealth Public Prosecutions (CDPP).

The Kimberley-based company which operated the boat, Journey Beyond-owned Horizontal Falls Seaplane Adventures, now faces the prospect of prosecution over the incident.

"As the matter is still ongoing, it would be inappropriate for AMSA to make further comments about the findings until the CDPP have reviewed the findings," an AMSA spokesperson told the ABC.

nib Travel appoints

NIB Travel Insurance has welcomed two new executives to its dedicated travel industry partnerships team, with Tim Hannah appointed as Queensland Partnerships Manager and Nicholas Taylor as Strategic Partnerships Manager.

Joining from CT Connections Corporate, Hannah will work from nib's Brisbane hub to manage its retail travel agency partnerships in Queensland & Northern NSW.

Meanwhile Taylor, who has recently relocated to Australia from Singapore where he worked for the HRS Group, will oversee key strategic partnerships across nib's white label portfolio.

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VIRTUOSO HONOURS MICHAEL NOLAN

BAYVIEW Travel's Michael Nolan was given the Southern Cross Award for his service to Virtuoso and the leisure travel sector, with the accolade confirmed earlier this week in Fiji during the 2023 Virtuoso Owner Managers Forum gala dinner.

Nolan is the fourth ever recipient of the award, which was inaugurated in 2019 with Bev Cohen from Wentworth Travel, and then in 2021 with Claudia Rossi Hudson, and the late Greg Ashmore, who was posthumously recognised last year.

Nolan, **pictured** with Virtuoso Australia/NZ GM Fiona Dalton, has spent his whole adult life working as a travel advisor, according to Dalton.

"There was no other career he wanted to build, and he is now the owner of a highly successful Virtuoso agency, having been



a member since 2005, and still consults today," she said.

"His staff speak so highly of him, and they know that he always has their back...although he is focused on his business survival, his compassion for people's welfare is the filter through which he makes most of his decisions."

Nolan is a valued member of the Virtuoso Advisory Board, Dalton

added, saying "he believes we are better together, and we believe we are better because of him".

Nolan was thrilled to accept the award, saying "this is the most extraordinary thing I think has ever happened to me".

"I didn't think for a minute that I would be worthy of such an award...so I am totally blown away by it," he said.

Fiji investment push



THE exceptional performance of Fiji's luxury travel market over the last year or so is likely to stimulate the development of additional properties and upmarket experiences in the destination, according to Tourism Fiji CEO Brent Hill.

Speaking to **TD** during this week's Virtuoso Forum at the Sofitel Denarau, Hill (**pictured**) noted strong interest in an upcoming Investment in Tourism Summit next week.

"The really exciting thing for me is that the real, probably unexpected, level of growth we have had over the last year and into this year is starting to fuel, and they're getting really interested in building," he said.

Hill noted the recent sale of Six Senses Fiji, which garnered 150 registered buyers and 10 serious bidders.

"A lot of people are saying, I want to build a five-star property - and the beautiful thing is that you know they are building it really sustainably," he added.

The demand has led to an uplift in the Average Daily Rate (ADR) for Fijian properties, which Hill noted meant that customers are prepared to pay for luxury experiences, but also that "we're living up to that" in terms of service delivery.

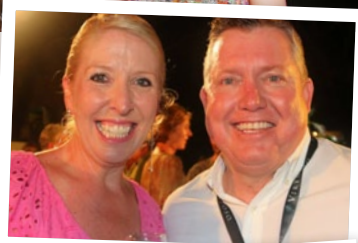
The Tourism Fiji CEO said there had also been a shift in seasonality, with little downtime in year-round demand.

Fab Fiji Forum wraps up with gala celebration



THE Virtuoso team (**pictured**) at last weekend's Owner Managers Forum in Fiji celebrated the event at pre-gala dinner drinks sponsored by Oceania Cruises.

The gathering included flowing Veuve Clicquot bubbly, enjoyed by Susan Haberle from Abercrombie & Kent and Hunter Travel Group's Brett Dann (upper right), as well as Emma Whiting from Emma Whiting Travel and Kokomo Island's Katey Matthews.



Kokomo is keen

KOKOMO Private Island Resort in Fiji is currently seeing a pickup in demand from the USA, but Australia remains the mainstay market for the luxury property.

With about 65% of Aussie clientele, 25% from the US and about 5% from NZ, GM Sean Flakelar told **TD** "the Aussie market really is our bread and butter".

Kokomo's return guest percentage is about 23%, with post-pandemic demand strong for multi-generational groups and weddings - kokomoislandfiji.com.

Dorchester debut

LONDON'S The Dorchester will this week open an exclusive new boutique called Cake & Flowers.

The new offering showcases patisserie and floristry, and is the brainchild of in-house designer florist Philip Hammond & executive pastry chef Michael Kwan.

Disney's love and magic all in 100th

DISNEY Destinations International recently hosted 100 travel agents as part of its Disney100 Mega Famil at the Disneyland Resort, Anaheim California.

Agents attended from all over Australia, flying into LAX with United Airlines for five days at the parks as well as surrounding Anaheim locations.

Advisors had the opportunity to experience first-hand four Anaheim hotel properties - Sheraton Park Hotel Anaheim, Cambria Hotel & Suites, Best Western Stovall's Inn and the Westin Resort Anaheim.

The Disney100 famil took in new shows, attractions and entertainment on offer throughout the resort.

Highlights included a new parade, Magic Happens, which featured floats with classic and modern day character favourites, as well as two new night-time spectaculars.

Disneyland Park's Wonderful Journeys showcases the Disneyland Castle with amazing imagery projections and fireworks, and across at Disney's California Adventure Park there is the World of Color - ONE, an all-new show featuring Disney and Pixar animation, as well as Marvel and Star Wars characters.



DISNEY100 Mega Famil participants in front of Disneyland Castle.



PLAZA Inn Character Breakfast: Karen Coates, Dance Travel Dance Tours; Fiona Docherty & Linda McMullen, Hunter Travel Group; Dale; Lani Symons Vaughan, MTA; Richard Carrick, United Airlines; and David Hackett, Flight Centre Picton.



AWAITING Millennium Falcon Smugglers Run, Star Wars Galaxy's Edge.



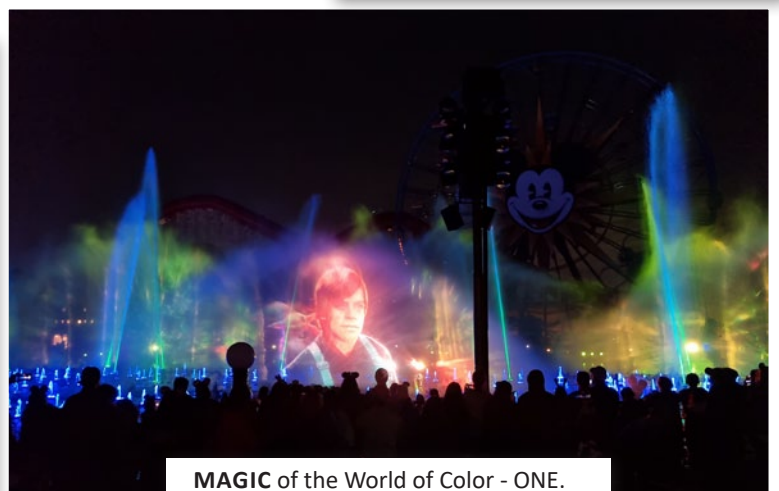
THIS was the droid we were looking for...



AGENTS awaiting Magic Happens Parade: Vikki Southern, TravelManagers; Ellie Amerikow, italktravel The Junction; Cherie Hallihan, Helloworld Koo Wee Rup; and Stacey Daley, Helloworld Hobart.



PLATINUM Party - Mickey & Minnie with TravelManagers' friends.



MAGIC of the World of Color - ONE.



Travel Daily
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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 new 186-key **ibis Thane** in India is the 22nd ibis hotel to be established, and features eight-floors. The property is located 50 minutes from Mumbai International Airport, with guests able to enjoy Spice It, an on-site restaurant that serves multiple cuisines, including a breakfast time serving up meals from 4am until noon. Each room in the hotel also offers guests stunning views of the Thane skyline and a smart pod bathroom.



Four new four-bedroom Pool Villas have been added to the **InterContinental Danang Sun Peninsula Resort**, which features 705m² of indoor and outdoor living space across two levels. The new villas are complimented by three swimming pools, as well as tactile monkey carpets and leafy lampshades. The property has also added a new Club InterContinental Lounge for daily breakfast, afternoon tea, evening wine, and more.



To celebrate **Amanwana's** 30th anniversary, the Indonesian resort is reopening with new, year-round whale shark excursions. The 15-tent camp is located on the island of Moyo Satonda with each tent offering guests jungle and sea views, light-filled interiors, and floor-to-ceiling windows. The camp also hosts a variety of programs such as underwater explorations, culinary masterclasses, and restorative sound healing sessions.

NT visitor funding

TOURISM operators in the Northern Territory can now apply for one-off funding of between \$30,000-\$100,000 as part of the Visitor Experience Enhancement Program (VEEP).

Now in its sixth round, the program assists the tourism industry to undertake projects that will improve the on-ground visitor experience.

The application period will close on 14 Apr - **CLICK HERE** for more details and to apply.

Busy Feb for GC

THE Gold Coast Airport has experienced its busiest Feb since pre-pandemic, with more than 429,000 passengers travelling through its terminal last month - up 45% compared to the same period in 2021.

The Sydney and Melbourne routes were the most popular in Feb, while New Zealand also saw strong demand, with int'l pax numbers expected to soon pick up further with the start of the Bali and Kuala Lumpur services.

The artful hotelier



THE lounge of the Ibis Sydney Hotel has been transformed into a gallery for the Bald Archy Prize portraiture exhibition - Australia's premier satirical art competition.

Dr Jerry Schwartz, who is the chief sponsor of the Bald Archy Prize and the owner of Schwartz Family Company, selected the most colourful hotel in his portfolio to host the exhibition.

Famous personalities like former PM Scott Morrison were featured subjects for the 22 finalists, with the winner's crown and a cheque for \$10,000 going to Brisbane artist, Marty Steel, for his portrait of Bald Archy Prize founder, Peter Batey.

"We want to bring people and life back into hotels, make them energetic public spaces, and part of the community," Schwartz said, adding that hotels, like art, should keep up with the times.

"This exhibition has already attracted lots of Sydneysiders to the hotel, and our corporate and leisure guests also love the buzz it has created," he enthused.

The exhibition can be viewed at Ibis Sydney between 10am-4pm until 14 Apr before going

on to tour major regional centres around NSW, including Newcastle, where the exhibition will be hosted at Rydge hotel.

Pictured: Bald Archy convenor Luke Grealy with 2023 winner Marty Steel and Dr Jerry Schwartz.

Brisbane mindful

BRISBANE has ranked as the number one city in Australia in KAYAK's new *City Index for Mindful Travellers*.

The index analyses 28 factors that sustainably-minded travellers are likely to consider, such as airport carbon accreditation, local traffic and air quality, across 167 cities in 63 countries.

Brisbane was named the best choice for mindful travellers in Australia, noted for its affordable accommodation, good air quality and train connections, followed by Sydney and Melbourne.

The top three spots in KAYAK's ranking were claimed by European cities, with Rotterdam in the Netherlands coming in as number one - **CLICK HERE** to see the full interactive guide.



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