

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of news, including our **Corporate Update**.

Record ACA flotilla

THE upcoming Seatrade Cruise Global conference in Fort Lauderdale, Florida will see a near record delegation of members of the Australian Cruise Association (ACA) taking part.

The massive event kicks off next week, with representatives of state tourism organisations, ports, ground handlers and local shipping agents making up the 14-strong delegation led by ACA Chair Philip Holliday and the Association's CEO Jill Abel.

It's the 17th time Abel has attended the event, and ACA is also partnering with the NZ Cruise Association whose delegation will be led by CEO Kevin O'Sullivan.

Tourism Australia will also be represented, following the recent Memorandum of Understanding inked at the ACA conference last year by Tourism Australia MD Phillipa Harrison.

More in today's **Cruise Weekly**.

BA 787s to SYD

BRITISH Airways will deploy its Boeing 787-9 aircraft on the London-Singapore-Sydney route from 26 Mar, replacing the existing 777-300ER operation.

GDS screens indicate the 787s will be in place for the full Northern summer season as well as onward from 28 Oct.

QF/EK granted interim OK

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission yesterday granted interim authorisation for the ongoing coordination of passenger and cargo operations between Qantas and Emirates.

QF and EK's existing 2018 authorisation expires next week, with the ACCC saying the pact can continue while it "considers and evaluates the merits of the substantive application for authorisation".

There's been some controversy around the renewal of the agreement, with the Australian Federation of Travel Agents raising a series of issues in a last minute submission to the ACCC's public consultation (**TD** 30 Jan).

Yesterday's interim authorisation decision was granted subject to reporting conditions requiring QF and EK to provide a breakdown of carriage on the Sydney-Christchurch route.

The overall application seeks to extend the longstanding alliance for at least five years to allow them to continue coordinating activities including planning, scheduling, operating, sales, marketing, pricing, joint airport facilities, connectivity and distribution strategies.

HLO appointment

FORMER Express Travel Group Vic/Tas Sales Manager, Janeene Lewis, has taken a new role as Melbourne-based Account Manager at Helloworld Travel.

The ACCC noted that the carriers said that "while the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are still being felt, the Applicants' services have resumed on the relevant routes as a result of the alliance, and continuation of the Conduct is expected to further facilitate capacity restoration and future expansion".

The ACCC noted that because of the deal already in place, its interim authorisation "preserves the status quo and will not alter the existing market dynamics", and allows it more time to consider the overall extension application.

Walker off Board

DAVID Walker from Sno'N'Ski and ITC Pacific has resigned as a Director of the Council of Australian Tour Operators.

Walker has been on the CATO Board for almost seven years, and was re-elected at the organisation's Annual General Meeting last year (**TD** 16 Jun 22).

His resignation took effect from 02 Mar, with Walker telling **TD** he was devoting his time to CATO offshoot the Student Educational Travel Organisation (SETO) which was formed in Nov 2021 and has now grown to comprise around 40 members committed to a strong educational travel sector.



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Travel Daily en route to Singapore

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Flight Centre Independent, which this weekend will hold its annual conference in Singapore.

SPONSORSHIPS for the Flight Centre Travel Group Independent conference sold out within 24 hours, reflecting the increasing importance of the division among the suppliers in attendance for the event.

Taking place at the Parkroyal on Beach Road, the conference includes a welcome event tonight at the Asian Civilisations Museum, while the gala dinner on Sat evening is at the heritage boutique Hotel Fort Canning.

Delegates will also hear from a host of industry experts, including a keynote presentation from G Adventure's Bruce Poon Tip.

FCTG Independent set to soar

THE Flight Centre Travel Group Independent network will host its annual conference in Singapore this weekend, with about 100 travel consultants from FCTG Independent brands joining with key suppliers and senior Flight Centre executives for the event.

The 'Soar' conference theme reflects the "incredible potential and limitless possibilities that lie ahead" for the group, with key topics during the sessions focusing on consultant empowerment through access to resources and support.

The independent business is now Flight Centre Travel Group's fastest-growing area, with ongoing investment in the operations including the recent appointments of Fiona Batten as FCTG Independent National Sales Director.

The business is part of the Independent and Luxury division headed up by Danielle Galloway,

who will be in attendance at the event alongside Flight Centre Leisure chief James Kavanagh.

The conference will also showcase FCTG's 'Home' single sign-on platform which recently reached 1,000 users (*TD* 15 Mar).

Organisers said delegates would be brought up to speed with the TP Connects NDC-ready ticketing platform which will be launching shortly.

FCTG Independent will be the first business within the overall Flight Centre Travel Group to access the platform.

HAL \$25 deposits

HOLLAND America Line is offering \$25 per person deposits and 25% off cruise fares for bookings confirmed by 31 Mar.

The sale also includes \$300 onboard credit and a beverage package - for more details see hollandamerica.com.



Window Seat

AUSSIE comedian Mick Molloy has come under fire after telling a not-so ripe joke about South Australia's infamous fresh produce border protection laws.

The host of Channel 7's *Front Bar* made a wisecrack about smuggling fruit into the state ahead of his show's special AFL event broadcast in Adelaide on 13 Apr, jesting that he would bring "fruit over in my boot anyway".

South Australia MP Frank Pangallo slammed the joke as "reckless" and said "it'll be no laughing matter if there's a fruit fly outbreak as a result of carelessness by interstate visitors".

"I think it was a quiet news day in Adelaide," Molloy retorted to the criticism.

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Virgin really wants Samoa!



VIRGIN Australia (VA) celebrated the return of its Samoa service this week (**TD 05** Jan) with an all-Samoan crew flying the first flight from Sydney to Apia on Tue.

Guests received a warm greeting by the crew and First Officer (**pictured**) as they boarded VA's first flight to Samoa in three years, plus enjoyed a traditional song during the flight and a

cultural welcome upon landing. VA will operate two flights a week between Sydney-Apia and Brisbane-Apia on Boeing 737-800 aircraft, with the Brisbane service taking off yesterday.

Guests travelling on Samoa services will be able to access strong connectivity to the rest of the airline's domestic and short-haul international network through Brisbane and Sydney.

Chief Strategy & Transformation Officer Alistair Hartley said the Samoa flights are "an exciting step in the rebuilding of our short-haul international network and comes ahead of our return to Vanuatu later this month".

Melia in paradise

MELIA Hotels International has announced the debut of its luxury Paradisus by Melia brand in Spain, with the opening of Paradisus Gran Canaria.

The 297-key hotel offers nine dining areas, cooking workshops, and excursions to secluded and iconic destinations on the island.

Cebu's chilled launch

CEBU Pacific has partnered with Australian dessert shop Manila St to give away free ice cream to celebrate the relaunch of its Melbourne-Manila route next week (**TD 24** Jan).

The Filipino ice cream shop created a new flavour to commemorate the event, with passersby in Melbourne's Central Shopping Centre to receive free Calamansi Cheesecake ice-cream this coming weekend - yum!

Journey to debut

CELESTYAL Cruises is preparing to debut its newest ship *Celestyal Journey* in Sep, when she will take over *Celestyal Crystal's* program starting with the seven-night Idyllic Aegean itinerary.

The 1,260-guest vessel will then operate the Steps of Paul itinerary in Oct, followed by the seven-night Three Continents sailing, visiting Greece, Egypt, Israel, Cyprus, and Turkey, and concluding the year with two holiday voyages.

Celestyal Journey, which has undergone a \$21 million refurb and technical maintenance overhaul, offers 630 staterooms - see today's **Cruise Weekly**.

New Lufthansa LCC launch

GERMAN flag carrier Lufthansa has confirmed the upcoming debut of a new low-cost regional offshoot called City Airlines.

Based in Munich, it's linked to another wholly owned LH offshoot called Lufthansa CityLine with a preliminary City Airlines website detailing it "as a new airline in the Lufthansa Group, we combined the quality of Lufthansa and the experience of Lufthansa CityLine with the dynamism of a new young company".

The carrier will operate short- and medium-haul routes, flying daily from its MUC home base to "major European cities and

remote regions" while offering convenient connections to the LH route network via Munich.

No launch date has been announced at this stage, with the carrier expected to utilise a fleet of Airbus A319s transferred from its parent airline.

Recruitment for new staff is under way and it's hoped the first flights will be operating by the middle of the year.

The creation of a new carrier with a separate pay structure was flagged last year by LH CEO Carsten Spohr, who said the move could offer opportunities to hundreds of staff impacted by the 2020 closure of Germanwings.



Destination NSW

Senior Coordinator, Regional Conferencing

- 12 month opportunity based in Sydney
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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@dNSW.com.au

Closing date: March 2023

CORPORATE UPDATE

Smartpoint Cloud launch

TRAVELPORT has overnight unveiled Smartpoint Cloud, with the new version of its travel agent interface drawing content from multiple sources including NDC and traditional platforms.

In particular Travelport is claiming to be “the first GDS to offer a complete solution for American Airlines’ NDC content” which will be the key distribution method for AA from Apr this year.

“Travel agents are the true retailers of our industry, and launching Smartpoint Cloud on Travelport+ will help our partners to deliver more value to both their clients and suppliers,” said the company’s Chief Product & Technology Officer, Tom Kershaw.

As well as offering agents the ability to work in a traditional cryptic interface, Travelport+ also offers a graphical user interface which simplifies training and speeds up workflow.

Globalstar branches

GLOBALSTAR Travel Management has teamed up with with Trees4Travel to implement its carbon management technology to calculate and help reduce emissions impact.

Globalstar will also contribute to the ‘tech for good’ company’s reforestation programs, and has already added 396 trees to a program in Haiti while also removing 64,984kg of CO2e through United Nations CER renewable energy projects.

Comparisons can be made from any source including both NDC and traditional air content side by side, while newly expanded Trip Quote capabilities integrate both GDS and NDC offers.

Travelport said Smartpoint Cloud would deliver a more intuitive way for agents to sell and service travel “while increasing sales of higher-value services for suppliers”.

More at travelport.com.

The Ritz-Carlton Melbourne opens

MARRIOTT Bonvoy has announced the official opening of The Ritz-Carlton, Melbourne, which marks the brand’s Melbourne debut and its second hotel in Australia.

Set on the western side of Melbourne’s CBD, the 80-storey hotel offers 257 elegant rooms with city views, a signature Ritz-Carlton Club, three culinary venues, a spa with six treatment rooms, an infinity pool, and over 2,500m² of customisable meeting and event spaces.

Spark on display

AUSTRALIA’S first commercially produced electric aircraft is set to be unveiled to the public at the Adelaide Motorsport Festival this weekend in Victoria Park, with Adelaide-based Bader Aero already taking orders for the “revolutionary” E22 Spark aircraft.



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Among the cherry blossoms



MW TOURS has announced the first of its popular Japan Cherry Blossom Tours are back up and running for the first time since the pandemic.

The tour operator’s Managing Director Nany Wang is currently on the ground in Japan to ensure the first tour group (**pictured**)

runs smoothly with high standards maintained, as well as to source new product for clients.

The tour starts in Tokyo and visits popular cities along the famous Golden Route, as well as lesser-known traditional areas.

Highlights include a trip to the vibrant Heian Shrine Garden in Kyoto, which is filled with gardens, ponds and blooming cherry blossoms, and a walk along the blossom tree-lined Path of Philosophy.

AmEx travel trends

AMERICAN Express has revealed its top travel trends for the year, with Gen Zs and Millennials planning to spend more on travel in 2023 than 2022.

Travellers are increasingly inspired by their favourite shows and movies, choosing their next dream destination based on what they’ll eat, and driven by a desire for greater wellness and support for local communities, AmEx said, as part of a trend knowing as “set-jetting”.

QF HKG sale

QANTAS Airways has launched its Hong Kong ‘Red Tail Sale’.

Economy travellers flying in the month of May can access the \$979 return sale fare.

Tickets must be purchased from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Adelaide for ‘OLSHK’ fares - for more info, **CLICK HERE**.



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TRAVEL SPECIALS

WELCOME to Travel Specials, *Travel Daily's* Friday feature. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of, send the details to specials@traveldaily.com.au

Enjoy the upcoming Easter holiday at **Pan Pacific Melbourne** with an exclusive Easter accommodation package as well as 10% savings for stays from \$240. Pan Pacific loyalty members can even score up to 25% off. Guests can enjoy a daily breakfast for two and Easter-themed amenities on arrival. Become a member **HERE**, and learn more **HERE**.

Viking is offering deals on itineraries with savings of up to \$2,000 per couple on the 32-day Grand Australia Circumnavigation voyage, or a 29-day Mediterranean's Iconic Shores journey from \$16,395pp, or a 23-day trip to the North Pacific Passage with up to \$1,800 off per couple. Phone Viking on 138 747 or visit vikingcruises.com.au to reserve.

WA's **COMO The Treasury** and **Ampersand Estates** are offering an indulgent five-night Best of the West package on stays until 14 Dec, available from now to 01 Dec. The package includes breakfast at Post restaurant, \$100 hotel credit, a one-way airport transfer, and more. Book now on +61 8 6168 7899 or email res.thetreasury@comohotels.com.

Book the Grand Spring Voyage flash sale from both **Grand Hyatt HK** and **Grand Hyatt Shenzhen** for up to five nights accommodation through the brand's WeChat Mall or e-shop from 22 to 27 Mar. Learn more **HERE**.

Fly fishing package

NEW Zealand's Huka Lodge and local operator Chris Jolly Outdoors are encouraging guests to make the most of the fly fishing season with specially curated itineraries running throughout Jul.

Guests who purchase the high-end fly fishing package can enjoy the experience of fly fishing in the trout-filled Waikato River at Taupo, plus accommodation in a Junior Lodge Suite.

Stays between 01 to 31 Jul start from A\$3,025 per night, with selected dining and inclusions for two guests, a three-course lunch for two, a half-day fly fishing adventure, private fly-casting tuition, and more.

CLICK HERE to make a booking.

Air taxis within 10

THE Council of Mayors, South East Queensland (CoMSEQ) has partnered with Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) company Wisk to make safe, reliable flights via autonomous, fully battery-electric air taxi a possibility within the next decade, ahead of the Brisbane 2032 Olympics.

According to a new report published by CoMSEQ, AAM has the potential to support the state's tourism sectors by providing greater access to the many tourism locations across the South East Queensland region, such as services to Moreton and Stradbroke Islands direct from Brisbane CBD or Brisbane Airport - all with zero direct emissions.



IRISH tourism suppliers recently had the opportunity to sell directly to top international buyers and tour operators at Meitheal 2023, Failte Ireland's annual flagship trade event.

Hosted in partnership with Tourism Ireland, the two-day workshop returned after a three-year pause, taking place from 21-23 Mar at the Gleneagle INEC Arena in Killarney.

More than 450 Irish businesses were at the event along with over 230 international buyers from 17 countries, including Australia and New Zealand.

The best experiences and attractions on offer across Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Ireland's Ancient East, the Wild Atlantic Way and Dublin, were showcased to operators, including The Travel Junction (TTJ), which

was invited to participate as a buyer by Tourism Ireland, to ensure they can continue to develop the depth and breadth of quality accommodation, touring and experience products.

The Irish trade event has been running since 1975, with key themes for this year including sustainable travel options, immersive outdoor experiences and festivals.

Pictured: Kevin Looney, Director of Sales at The Travel Junction and Aoife Costello, Trade and Marketing Operations Executive for Tourism Ireland Australia.

Rooster roasted

A BUNCH of disgruntled tourists have sent a petition to the South Kuta Administration in Bali to complain about the loud noises that roosters are making near where many travellers hunker down in accommodation.

According to local media sources, the petition has caught the ire of Bali's Governor Wayan Koster, who scolded the concerns and instructed his local officials to ignore the tourists' request.

SIA links with Centara

THE new partnership between Centara Hotels & Resorts and Singapore Airlines gives loyalty members opportunities to convert CentaraThe1 points to KrisFlyer miles.

The collaboration will allow new or existing members to transfer 5,000 CentaraThe1 points to 300 KrisFlyer miles, as well as score double the miles on transactions between 01-30 Apr, which means members will receive 600 KrisFlyer miles for every 5,000 CentaraThe1 points transferred.

Members must provide a valid KrisFlyer membership number and can only exchange the merits via the CentaraThe1 reward platform - **CLICK HERE** for more.

Got a confidential tip? Contact *Travel Daily* via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click **HERE**