

Today's issue of TD

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

Perth CLIA LIVE

ONLY limited tickets are left for Cruise Lines International Association's (CLIA) LIVE series events in Perth.

The sessions in Perth will take place 16-17 May, and cost \$55 for CLIA members, with the option to attend one or both days.

Other upcoming locations for the CLIA LIVE showcase include Sydney (04-05 Apr), Adelaide (09-10 May), Brisbane (23-24 May), and Auckland (30-31 May).

Attendees to the events will receive 30 CLIA points per day.

For more info about the agenda of each session, see **HERE**.

FCTG signs Singapore deal

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding with the Singapore Tourism Board, aiming to drive increased visitation to the city via the company's global network.

The pact was sealed this week between Singapore Tourism Board (STB) chief Keith Tan and FCTG CEO Graham Turner, who said the agreement "underscores just how much FCTG values Singapore as a major player in the Asia Pacific travel market".

"Now that more of the region's carriers have resumed routes through Singapore, FCTG is excited to work with STB to cast the limelight back on the city and remind the world just what a spectacular travel destination Singapore is," Skroo said.

As well as joint marketing campaigns, the partnership will support FCTG consultants

to develop their knowledge of Singapore through training and familiarisation experiences.

"This will equip agents with the latest destination information and allow them to become advocates of Singapore, sharing their experience and knowledge with prospective travellers around the globe," Turner added.

It's FCTG's first global agreement with a destination partner since the pandemic, and the first ever time STB has entered into an MoU with a travel company.

As well as standalone holiday packages, a series of dedicated "stayover" offers will be developed to entice transit visitors to stay and experience Singapore before continuing their long-haul journeys.

Tan said "as we look towards 2024, Singapore's international visitation numbers are on track to meet pre-pandemic levels, and this partnership with FCTG will play a key role in supporting those tourism recovery efforts".

AFTA adds nine more

NINE newly accredited members joined the Australian Federation of Travel Agents' (AFTA) fold in Jan and Feb, according to an update from the Federation this week.

The membership additions bring the total number of ATAS accredited entities to 1,138, including 575 "additional locations", along with a further 13 under assessment.

There were also eight cancelled ATAS accreditations during the period, five of which were due to business sales, two down to closures, and one because of a failure to renew.

The AFTA bulletin also noted recent engagement in Canberra with MPs such as Tourism Minister Don Farrell, Nationals Leader David Littleproud, and many members of the backbench.

"Many have expressed a willingness to speak to ATAS businesses in their electorate and we will be arranging these later in the year," said CEO Dean Long.

Noah joins Fed

SWITZERLAND Tourism's global brand ambassador Roger Federer is joined by comedian Trevor Noah for the latest iteration of the Grand Train Tour of Switzerland videos.

Previous collaborations have included Robert de Niro and Anne Hathaway, with the new video continuing to position Switzerland as an attractive destination with a focus on rail travel - see it online at traveldaily.com.au/videos.

TIME to grow!

THE Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) is on the lookout for dynamic mentees who are seeking to develop their management, leadership, and career planning potential.

The TIME program is open to anyone working in travel, including cruise, accommodation & aviation - for info **CLICK HERE**.

New WA int'l route

AIRASIA will introduce a new non-stop flight between Jakarta and Perth on 02 Jun, operating four times weekly using A320s.

The announcement marks the first time AirAsia will operate the route, with Indonesia representing a key international market for WA, currently its seventh largest by number of visitors and ninth largest by visitor spend pre-pandemic.

"We want to make it as easy as possible to get to WA for international tourists, business people and students...we have now announced 13 direct flights to Perth since the international border reopened and many are on the same or similar time zone to Perth such as Manila and Singapore," WA Tourism Minister Roger Cook said.

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WATCH TRAILER

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Tourism NT, which is hosting agents & media on its NT Round UP event.

TODAY *Travel Daily* arrives in Alice Springs for Tourism NT's famill of the Red Centre, starting with a welcome event at the Crown Plaza Lasseters, providing agents with a first-hand meeting with a myriad of tourism operators to discuss experiences.

The five-day extravaganza includes a sunrise ballooning trip over the desert, a helicopter ride over Kings Canyon, and a Karrke Aboriginal Experience.

Guests will also enjoy an Under a Desert Moon Dining Experience, a delicious bbq lunch at Kings Creek Station, a Spirit of the Outback Dinner and Astro show, as well as a visits to Standley Chasm and Ormiston Gorge.



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Queensland SAF plan

QANTAS' Sustainable Air Fuel (SAF) Coalition (*TD* 11 Nov 2022), formed last year in partnership with Airbus and several major brands, is spearheading a cash injection for a new biofuel production facility in Qld.

The site, which has been developed by Jet Zero Australia in partnership with fuel technology company LanzaJet, has received \$6 million from the group to conduct a feasibility study and early-stage project development for SAFs, with Qantas Group and Airbus jointly investing \$2 million, while the Queensland Government is contributing \$760,000 and other institutional funds are stumping up the rest.

The proposed facility will utilise LanzaJet's alcohol-to-jet technology to produce up to 100 million litres of SAF per year, with construction kicking off at the start in 2024.

Using agricultural products such as sugarcane, the facility is a major step towards Australia producing its own SAFs, which

should in turn over time lower the price of fuelling jets departing Australia and ultimately bring down the price of air tickets, as well as carbon emissions.

Currently, Qantas is forced to purchase SAFs overseas in the UK and the United States at a premium, one of the major drivers as to why the airline is investing so heavily in fast-tracking local businesses to fill the biofuel void.

"Qantas will be the largest single customer for Australian-made SAF to meet our emissions reduction targets, which is why we're investing in the ideas and technology that will build a local SAF industry," Qantas Group Chief Sustainability Officer Andrew Parker said.

"This is one of several projects that we are looking to fund this year, all of which will help accelerate the decarbonisation of the aviation industry."

True North II back!

TRUE North Adventure Cruises has returned its second vessel to the fleet after undergoing a refurbishment in Fremantle.

The company's *True North II* ship now features dedicated adventure boats and a helicopter.

She will embark on her return sailing on 05 Apr, with new sailings including four- and 10-night voyages in the Kimberley, as well as a 13-night cruise on the Great Barrier Reef.

The yacht can accommodate 20 guests, just like her sister ship *True North*, albeit with a slightly more compact layout design - for more, see today's *Cruise Weekly*.

Hall joins DriveAway

CAR rental agency DriveAway has appointed Mike Hall as its new Business Development Manager for NSW and ACT, where he will act as the main point of contact for travel agent partners.



Window Seat

TO CELEBRATE the upcoming release of Lewis Capaldi's second album in May, the Glaswegian singer decided to stage a daring mid-air concert aboard a British Airways flight this week, serenading passengers at 35,000ft en route to Los Angeles with his latest tune, *Wish You the Best*.

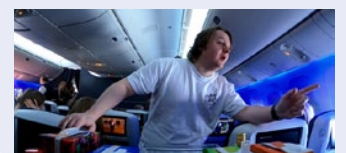
Thankfully, the carrier had organised some superfans to be on the flight so as to avoid any silent awkwardness, with sisters Rowan and Georgie Gupwell promptly erupting into a frenzied fit of hysteria upon sighting the musician.

"We've been huge fans of Lewis since his first song *Bruises* in 2017 and we have tickets to see him live later this year, so to meet him up close yesterday was a moment we'll cherish forever," one of breathless sisters gushed.

Not content with merely bashing out his greatest hits to a cabin full of unsuspecting travellers, Capaldi also took it upon himself to start serving snacks and drinks from a near-by trolley, offering one of his fans a gin and tonic, presumably to help numb some of the shock from seeing the star in the flesh.

British Airways said it was proud to continue to be part of each customer's unique journey and connecting customers across continents, but made no mention of what the experience was like for those aboard who may not dig Capaldi's unique brand of catchy blue-eyed soul.

Watch the full shameless Scottish stunt [HERE](#).





Tourism industry growing

THERE were 5.7% more tourism businesses in the country than the previous year as at Jun 2022, Tourism Research Australia's *Tourism Businesses in Australia* report has revealed.

This was the strongest increase since 2017-18, however, the growth is below the national rate of 7% for all businesses in 2021-22.

Most of the growth in tourism business numbers in 2021-22 occurred in two industry sectors: cultural, sports, and recreation services (up by 10% or 3,390), and retail trade services (up by 7% or 10,422).

Small businesses form most of Australia's tourism sector, with 48% classified 'micro' or 'small', with 1 to 19 employees, and 47% having no employees other than the owner.

The latter category grew by 11%, or 16,416, in 2021-22.

This accounted for 85% of the

total increase over the previous year.

As of Jun, 82% of tourism businesses were in New South Wales (117,781), Victoria (111,400), and Queensland (64,038).

Although rates of growth varied, all states and territories saw an increase in tourism businesses in 2021-22.

As of Jun, 29% or 103,039 tourism businesses had turnover of less than \$50,000, 24% or 84,263 tourism businesses had turnover between \$50,000 and \$200,000, and 37% or 133,499 tourism businesses had turnover between \$200,000 and \$2 million.

One in 10, or 37,191 of Australia's tourism businesses, had turnover of \$2m or more.

Over the reporting period, the number of tourism businesses with turnover under \$50,000 grew by 9%.

Garuda fast track

A **NEW** partnership between Garuda Indonesia and the Indonesian Directorate General of Immigration will see the creation of special immigration lanes for the carrier's premium customers.

To be implemented at the international terminals of Jakarta and Bali airports, the service will be offered to First and Business class passengers as well as GarudaMiles Platinum members.

Aussie cruise focus

THE Australian cruise sector was out in full force at this week's Seatrade Cruise Global conference in Florida, with CLIA Australasia and the Australian Cruise Association taking to the stage to demonstrate the strength and resilience of the industry Down Under.

A near-record local delegation took part incl representatives from most states and territories - more in today's **Cruise Weekly**.

South Korea update

AUSTRALIAN travellers no longer need to apply for a Korea Electronic Travel Authorization (K-ETA), under a temporary exemption being put in place from tomorrow until 31 Dec 2024.

The change is part of Visit Korea Year 2023-24, a Korean Government initiative aiming to attract more visitation.

The change also applies to visitors from 21 other countries including New Zealand, the UK, USA, Singapore, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Hong Kong, Germany, Italy, Japan, Macao, the Netherlands, Poland, Norway, Spain, Sweden & Taiwan.

New Cal easing

THE Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade yesterday lowered its Smartraveller advice level for New Caledonia, and is now advising Australian visitors there to simply "exercise normal safety precautions".

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CORPORATE UPDATE

AI trusted with T&E: GBT

AN INCREASING number of big businesses are turning to artificial intelligence (AI) to help support travel expense management, according to new research from American Express Global Business Travel (Amex GBT).

A significant 89% of finance decision makers said they trust AI to support travel and expense (T&E) management, with more than a third (34%) trusting it to detect issues without any human intervention and 65% expecting T&E to become intervention free in the future.

The survey gathered responses from more than 1,200 finance managers across the UK, US, France and Germany, looked at how new hybrid working models and the current economic landscape are impacting the way

large businesses approach T&E.

More than 90% of respondents said the way they manage T&E has changed, with more scrutiny on expenses and more rapidly made claims (both at 41%) identified as the top impacts of hybrid work.

While cost control was a top priority among finance decision makers for 2023, the amount of carbon emitted during a business trip and using travel to strengthen relationships was considered more important than cost by 64%.

Dubai & Cairns top the charts

DUBAI and Cairns are among the fastest growing destinations for Australian business travellers, according to new data from FCM.

Dubai was up 55% on pre-COVID levels over the Jul-Jan period, while strong performances were also recorded for Port Moresby (up 46%), and Bangkok (up 31%).

While Cairns topped the domestic list in terms of corporate traveller growth in demand with a 76% uplift on the corresponding pre-pandemic period, there was also a significant uplift in business travel to other regional ports, with Broken Hill up 69%, Ballina rising 56% and Rockhampton up 39%.

Flight Centre ANZ MD Corporate, Melissa Elf, attributed the shift to low availability in state capitals and better value for money in regional areas as face-to-face meetings resume.

CWT exec changes

CWT has announced the 01 Jul retirement of CFO Judy Hendrick.

Her departure in the coming months will see Jim Shepherd, currently SVP Corporate Finance, become the group's Executive Vice President (EVP) & CFO.

Other CWT changes will see John Pelant appointed as the EVP & Chief Experience & Technology Officer effective tomorrow, while Derek Sharp, EVP & Chief Traveller Experience Officer and Belinda Hindmarsh, EVP & Chief Growth Officer will both leave the company to "pursue new opportunities".

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TTJ celebrates new NZ collection



THE Travel Junction (TTJ) and Christchurch Airport yesterday hosted key trade partners at a VIP lunch to celebrate the launch of their South Island New Zealand Highways Collection.

Taking place in Barangaroo at NOLA Smokehouse and Bar, attendees were able to sample some great food and South Island wines, whilst hearing from regional representatives.

TTJ has developed four 'Highways' to experience the best of the South Island, New Zealand.

These 'Highway Collections' focus on both traditional highlights, as well as those that might not be on the wish list, via curated driving experiences.

The four itineraries are exclusive to TTJ and focus on Glacier, Scenic, Wine Highways being eight days and the Ultimate Highway a 15-night entire Island adventure, with agents also able to win a Christchurch city break for two, including airfares, by

becoming a top seller via the TTJ HELiO platform.

Pictured: Patrick Dault, Destination West Coast; Jade Harvey, Destination Marlborough NZ; Kevin Looney, TTJ; Briar Nash, Christchurch Airport & Emma McDonald, ChristchurchNZ.

FinMont launches

THE founders of German airline Hahn Air have launched a new payment platform, which promises to offer a fully automated and seamless B2C and B2B payment solution for travel merchants.

The FinMont platform uses "cloud-native technologies" to integrate acquiring banks, payment, fraud, forex, and chargeback providers.

Among the purported benefits are reduced shopping cart abandonment, increased sales conversion, and clear visibility across the payment flow for all types of transactions.



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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

A new school holiday focused deal from **Novotel Sydney Darling Square** offers the perks of dropping your child off to the Kid's Club at anytime between noon and 8pm, whilst being treated to a free drink at Pumphouse Sydney. The deal is for stays from 08-23 Apr with rates starting from \$269 per night, **CLICK HERE** for more information.

Hurtigruten Expeditions has announced a limited time offer with savings of up to 25% off on departures in 2023/2024 across 11 popular destinations. Voyages range from 13 to 23 days, with the offer available for bookings made by 31 May - learn more on 1300 322 062 or **HERE**.

AAT Kings is offering savings of up to \$3,000 off per couple on selected Kimberley tours such as the 21-day Wonders of the West Coast & Kimberley and the 21-day Untamed Kimberley & West Coast itinerary. Deals are available for bookings made by 19 May for travel between now and 31 Mar 2024. For more details **CLICK HERE**.

Stay 3 Pay 2 is **SKIMAX's** latest promotion for Vancouver, offering three nights at selected hotels including Sandman Hotel Vancouver City Centre, Coast Coal Harbour Vancouver Hotel, and more across the city for only the price of two. Book now on (02) 9267 1655.

Code blue down under for Memphis

THE city of blues, soul, and rock-n-roll is sending two of its most popular artists to Australia ahead of the 2023 Blues on Broadbeach festival, thanks to Memphis Tourism and United Airlines.

Attendees at the festival, which takes place in May, will be able to listen to performances from Marcus Scott and multi-instrumental band The Bo-Keys.

Memphis Tourism will also host events in Melbourne and Sydney, with local director Chris Ingram saying the initiative is an opportunity for Australians to "get a taste of true Memphis" as the organisation continues to deliver for one its largest markets.

Sircle expansion

SIRCLE Collection has flagged the introduction of a new lifestyle hotel brand called Sircle Hotels, with the new offering to commence with the debut of Sircle London around Sep this year.

The property will feature 81 rooms, a yoga studio and gym, outdoor botanical courtyard, as well as the Seven North restaurant by internationally renowned Israeli chef Eyal Shani.

Sircle Hotels aims to provide a full-service hospitality experience for travellers seeking "substance as well as style".

The pipeline following the London entry will see Sircle Milan open its doors in Mar next year, followed by Rotterdam and Prague later in 2024.

Keep up to date with **Travel Daily** on the go



Travel Daily



TravelManagers' Highlands Hoot!



TRAVELMANAGERS and Hoot Holidays recently enjoyed a team weekend at Sutton Forest Retreat in the NSW Southern Highlands.

The company said it was a great opportunity to bring everyone together and thank them for their continued hard work and dedication over the last three difficult years.

The group is **pictured** enjoying the hospitality of Eling Winery.

Take it easy Pilgrim

TAUCK has appointed Jerry Pilgrim to the role of National Account Manager for Queensland and Victoria, joining the brand from Hurtigruten, where he held the position of Qld Sales Manager.

Country Manager David Clark said the addition would "support our ambitious plans for growth".

SIA Bali boost

SINGAPORE Airlines will add a sixth daily Singapore-Denpasar service from 01 Jul, with the 737 MAX 8 operation seeing SQ capacity on the route up 33% on pre-pandemic levels.

Outback art appeal

TO BETTER showcase the Far West region of NSW, Outback Arts has launched a new interactive website called Creative Country.

The site is said to be "the perfect tool to navigate the creative places and learn stories behind the public art as well as connecting to Aboriginal experiences" - view it **HERE**.

BA visual guide

BRITISH Airways has become the first UK airline to launch a Visual Guide to Flying, with the aim of helping to make travel easier for customers with autism.

Endorsed by Britain's National Autistic Society, the guide can be downloaded **HERE**.

Cover-More CFO

COVER-MORE Group has named Justin Sebire as its new global Chief Financial Officer.

Sebire is based in Cover-More's Sydney HQ and has over 25 years of worldwide experience in financial services and insurance.

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