

## Today's issue of TD

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

## Let's can influencers

IS IT time for the travel industry to "cancel" influencers?

That's the question posed by *Travel Daily* Associate Editor Myles Stedman in his latest opinion, available to read **HERE** on *travelBulletin*.

In the op-ed, Stedman ponders whether or not travel's tight embrace with influencers is the tone the industry wants to set heading forward.

There have already been a number of replies written by prominent industry voices - e-mail yours to [rants@travelbulletin.com.au](mailto:rants@travelbulletin.com.au).

## Serko seals Booking.com deal

**ASX-LISTED** corporate travel and expense provider Serko Limited has hailed a new agreement which will see the Booking.com for Business platform enhanced with 24/7 support from consultants at travel management giant CWT.

Serko's Zeno platform powers the Booking.com for Business platform (**TD** 25 Mar 2021), with the new pact promising SME users discounted rates, access to membership rewards from a variety of loyalty programs and 24/7 travel advisor support.

Going live before 30 Jun, the enhanced Booking.com for Business platform will combine global accommodation inventory from Booking.com with additional hotel, flight and car rental content provided by CWT.

Customer service will be provided in multiple languages to assist with trip management and disruption, the companies said.

Joshua Wood, Director of Booking.com for Business, said "we understand everyone has different travel preferences", with some seeking to maximise status and loyalty points, while others are more focused on deals - and disruption management is key.

"With this partnership, Booking.com for Business customers will have all of this in one place, along with the tools to manage cost and duty of care with travel expert

support wherever they are in the world 24/7," Wood said.

Serko CEO Darin Grafton welcomed the addition of CWT content and servicing to the Booking.com for Business offering.

"This is an exciting move, bringing two of our partners together through our Zeno technology platform to give business travellers a connected trip experience with all the business booking features, rates and service they want at no cost."

For more corporate news, see **page four**.

## BA Holidays sale

**BRITISH** Airways and British Airways Holidays are offering flights and holiday packages for the 2023-24 season.

The promotion, which runs until 31 May, includes options to book return flights to New York from £352 (approx \$660) or Cincinnati from £499 (\$930), as well as Dubai £449 (\$840).

World Traveller (long-haul Economy) customers can upgrade to World Traveller Plus (Premium Economy) from an extra £199 (\$370) on return flights.

Additionally, British Airways Holidays is offering a wide range of holiday packages, which bundle accommodation and flights, including a week-long holiday to St Kitts from £579pp (\$1,080) or St Lucia from £729pp (\$1,360), and Barbados from £679pp (\$1,270).

## Hurtigruten sale

**HURTIGRUTEN** Expeditions has guaranteed its best prices, with up to 30% off all destinations and departures for the 2024/25 season.

The Early Bird Sale includes savings across Alaska, Antarctica, Greenland and Iceland.

Agents also benefit with no non-commissionable fees (NCFs).

Sale ends 31 Aug 2023 - to make a booking, **CLICK HERE**.

## AWA for Pan Pacific

**PAN** Pacific Hotels & Resorts has appointed Anne Wild & Associates (AWA) to promote its Asian expansion plans in the Australian market.

AWA will promote Pan Pacific's flagship namesake brand, as well as its PARKROYAL and PARKROYAL COLLECTION brands.

The public relations consultancy will be focusing on curated media trips, events, and other brand experience programs as part of the campaign to build global awareness of Pan Pacific.

## Travel Daily on location in Uluru

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia, which yesterday celebrated the launch of Wintjiri Wiru.

**WE'RE** heading home from Uluru today after a whirlwind trip for the launch of Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia's spectacular new Wintjiri Wiru light and sound show.

Before taking off, guests will have the opportunity to see behind the scenes of Wintjiri Wiru, and how this incredible experience is set up for the harsh outback conditions.

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## Travel Daily on location in Ajaccio, France

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Oceania Cruises, which is hosting industry partners on the inaugural voyage of its new *Vista* in the Mediterranean.

THE end of our Oceania sojourn is sadly in sight, with high winds forcing a delightful day at sea aboard *Vista* followed by our final port of call, the pretty French island of Corsica.

Guests are looking forward to experiencing Napoleon Bonaparte's birthplace, along with other attractions such as museums and art galleries, not to mention the island's gastronomy.

We then set forth on the final leg of our cruise to Rome, where *Vista's* first ever passengers will disembark and head to their homes across the globe.

## Tourist tax a "kick in the face"

**SHADOW** Minister for Trade and Tourism, Kevin Hogan has condemned the Federal Government's 'tourism tax', joining the industry's widespread criticism of the budget decision to raise the Passenger Movement Charge (PMC) and increase visa costs (*TD* 10 May).

When asked about the PMC at Liberal's Budget in Reply Dinner last night at the National Museum in Canberra, Hogan described the PMC raise as a "kick in the face for our tourism industry.

"With the costs of airline tickets already sky high due to capacity constraints, these measures will only make international travellers look at alternative destinations for their travel experiences.

"We are competing against the rest of the world to attract international travellers in what is a fiercely competitive market," he added.

Australia's visitor visa and

working holiday visa application charges were among the highest in the world, he emphasised, citing our \$380 fee as triple that of a Canadian visa and double the cost of United Kingdom and United States visas.

"This 'tourist tax' comes on top of the government's Oct budget revenue-raising measure where they cut \$35 million in funding from Tourism Australia," Hogan said.

"The return of the international traveller to Australia has been slow, we are well below 2019 levels while other markets have seen international tourism return to pre-pandemic levels."

"Our tourism operators are mostly small and medium businesses who are contending with higher business costs driven by inflationary pressures.

"They need this governments support; not a 'tourist tax'," he concluded.



## Window Seat

"IF YOU would like her removed from the flight, please raise your hand!"

That was the vote posed to passengers on a Frontier Airlines flight in the United States shortly before the woman in question was kicked off the aircraft.

According to video footage that surfaced online, passengers on a Frontier flight from Trenton to Atlanta claimed that the woman became disruptive and rude.

"We have 40, 50 people who would like her removed from the flight," one passenger said in the video.

Before making sure their fellow passengers knew they weren't kidding, a vote was taken, and the woman was removed by security.

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## Field of Light for Manhattan

**ARTIST** Bruce Munro will debut the “Field of Light” public artwork made famous for its long-term deployment at Ayers Rock in a new installation in New York.

A large site on Manhattan’s First Avenue between 38th and 41st Street, near the United Nations, will feature the spectacle as part of the proposed mixed-use Freedom Plaza development.

The New York Field of Light is scheduled to open in the third quarter of this year and remain in place for 12 months, “honouring New York City as a beacon of freedom and hope around the world” while an anticipated museum at Freedom Plaza will also showcase human rights.

The project will also feature a new world-class hotel, two residential towers, waterfront access and a gaming facility which is subject to a license bid by developer the Soloviev Building Co.

## PR expands fleet

**PHILIPPINE** Airlines has agreed to purchase nine A350-1000s from Airbus, with an option for three additional aircraft.

The new planes, which will join the airline’s current fleet of two A350-900s, will be operated on non-stop flights from Manila to North America, including destinations on the East Coast of the US and Canada.

The Manila-based carrier expects to receive its first A350-1000 by the fourth quarter of 2025, with the rest of the deliveries continuing until 2027.

## AF axes DR flights

**AIR** France has removed the GDS listing for its services to the Dominican Republic, with reservations now closed for the seasonal service which had previously been scheduled to operate daily from Paris effective 29 Oct to Punta Cana and Santo Domingo using a 777-300ER.

## Voyages set for growth

**THE** new Wintjiri Wiru lighting and drone experience at Uluru (*TD* yesterday) is expected to become “a major drawcard for visitors to the spiritual heart of Australia,” according to Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia CEO Matt Cameron-Smith.

“It gives our guests a very meaningful cultural exchange... sharing a very ancient story, but telling it with cutting edge technology,” Cameron-Smith told *Travel Daily*.

“It’s yet another reason to come, but also a great reason to come back, and to stay longer.”

Cameron-Smith believes the region is poised for an exciting period of growth, with the international market beginning to return, and strong confidence evidenced by increased Qantas flights to the destination from Cairns (*TD* 14 Apr).

Voyages hopes Wintjiri Wiru will serve as a complementary component to the existing offering at Uluru Ayers Rock Resort, with the CEO explaining that “we don’t want guests to have to choose, we want them to stay longer, and do it all”.

Since Wintjiri Wiru’s conception five years ago, Voyages has consulted and collaborated closely with a group of 10 senior Anangu from Kalukutjara and Mutitjulu, to bring it to life and make sure that the story is told in the right way.

This working group plays into



Voyages’ longer term growth strategy, explained Cameron-Smith, adding “the power we have is that the Anangu are a part of it, and as we move forward and plan more experiences, we’ll consult with the group to ensure that they will be culturally appropriate”.

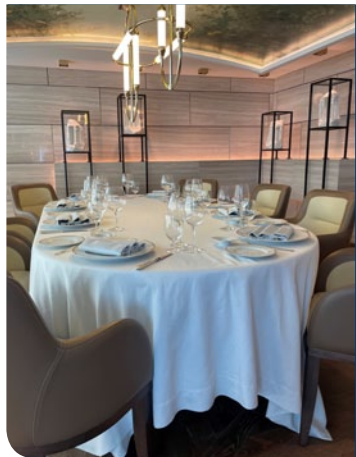
Close collaboration with Indigenous Australians is of critical importance to Voyages, with the company also firmly committed to local employment.

Currently Indigenous Australians represent 31% of the entire workforce of the company, and 24% of the leadership team.

“It’s not just about a job, it’s about a career,” explained Cameron-Smith.

Trade partners can now book Wintjiri Wiru and other Voyages tour and accommodation options online via the new Tjuta booking platform - **CLICK HERE**.

Cameron-Smith is pictured at Uluru on Wed with Tourism Australia MD Phillipa Harrison.



## Travel Daily

### On Board: Oceania Vista Private Dining venues

The additional space available aboard *Vista* has enabled the inclusion of new private dining rooms at some of the ship’s popular specialty restaurants including Toscana and the Polo Grill. Here family and friends or corporate groups cruising together can have a private celebration behind closed doors, while enjoying the ship’s unsurpassed culinary offerings.

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## CORPORATE UPDATE

### Biz travel budgets to bloom

**BIG** spenders are back this year in both corporate and 'bleisure' travel, including in the mainland China market, according to Trip.com Group's Trip.Biz.

*The Corporate Travel Management Market White Paper* reveals 84.5% of Chinese companies expect an increase in their domestic business travel budget for 2023, while three-quarters anticipate a bigger international budget, as border policies relax and flight capacity resumes.

Globally, more than 30% of companies allocated at least 10% of their budget to business travel, higher than in 2021.

The proportion of total budgets spent on business travel also increased, prompting companies to control costs through e-management.

Trip.Biz data shows nearly 60% have started digitalising their business travel processes.

Business travellers are also increasingly demanding fast-track security lanes, flexible change and cancellation policies, and quality hotel service.

More than 90% of surveyed employees are embracing bleisure travel, stating they may visit tourist attractions at their own expense, with 38.4% expecting to have more free time on business trips.

"This year's strong demand for business travel and the pursuit of efficient management will be a major focus for companies,

making the digital transformation of business travel management more urgent than before," said Trip.Biz CEO Steven Zhang.

The white paper also covers trends such as low-carbon business travel options, with approximately 85% of surveyed travellers preferring flights and hotels with eco certifications.

The findings echo other business travel market data, including research from the Global Business Travel Association late last year, which estimated global business travel would recover to 81% of its pre-COVID level in 2023, with the Chinese market tipped to reach 89%, and an 18.9% increase in business travel spending.

Download the Trip.Biz report [HERE](#).

### Delta new scheme

**DELTA** Air Lines' (DL) Delta Sync Exclusives platform will bring together exclusive content, access, and offers to customers, beginning with the carrier's domestic mainline fleets.

Fliers will be able to use the browser-based experience to choose 'My Exclusives' for entertainment, access, and offers from Delta's mainstay brands, as well as destination inspiration.

Delta Sync Exclusives will be on flights equipped with free wi-fi, after it was tested late last month.

DL will bring Delta Sync Exclusives to its entire global fleet by the end of next year.

### SUPPLIERS & DESTINATIONS

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### Rail Europe adds seat res



**RAIL** Europe has introduced SNCF seat reservations on its API and B2B website.

The company's exclusive offering will enable rail passes and seats to be booked more conveniently in one place.

Using this one platform, advisors can now seamlessly make seat reservations on SNCF and Trenitalia trains for clients holding Eurail Passes - a time-saving shift that is bound to be welcomed by agents across Australia.

The new feature will allow agents to quickly determine if additional seat reservations are required for specific routes on carriers including the TGV, Eurostar, Lyria, and Frecciarossa, among others, and will also show the associated costs.

"The possibility of selling seat reservations for passes greatly contributes to the expansion of Rail Europe's already vast offering, and our mission to make

train travel easy," President and CEO Björn Bender said.

"It's exciting that we are now able to provide information on different types of reservations for nearly every train in Europe."

GM of APAC Richard Leonard said this latest feature will further enhance Rail Europe's commitment to providing "the best possible booking and travel experience" for agents.

**Pictured:** Richard Leonard (third from left) and Björn Bender (far right) with European tourism board trade partners at a dinner last month.

### NCL Asia webinar

**JOIN** a dedicated Asia webinar with Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) next Wed 17 May.

The destination and product webinar will also highlight the newly revitalised *Norwegian Jewel* - [CLICK HERE](#) to join.

### Travel & Cruise Weekly

### Connect with your clients and ramp up your social media content

Looking for ready-made social media content? *Travel & Cruise Weekly* have ready made agent toolkits featuring email signatures, images, and social media tiles to inspire your clients.

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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](mailto:specials@traveldaily.com.au)

**Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts** is offering luxury packages with rates as low as \$331.05 per night available at selected properties. Most packages include daily breakfast for two adults, up to FJ\$500 spa credit per stay at Shangri-La Yanuca Island in Fiji, a selection of beverages from 12pm to 10:30pm at Shangri-La Singapore's Valley Wing Lounge for two adults, and more. Visit [Shangri-La.com](http://Shangri-La.com) for further information.

Set sail this summer with **Virgin Voyages'** latest packages, including The Irresistible Med sailing between Barcelona, Toulon, Ibiza, and more from US\$906pp, or depart on a seven-night journey on the Greek Island Glow travelling from Piraeus to Santorini from US\$1,261pp. Also get up to US\$1,200 airfare credit. Offers end 24 May - book [HERE](#).

Until 21 May, **Sydney Airport** is offering up to 15% off on its international and domestic parking. Use the promo code "GETAWAY23" when checking out. [CLICK HERE](#) to book now.

Stay at **The Cosmopolitan Las Vegas** for three nights or more to receive up to \$100 food & beverage credit at onsite buffet restaurant, Wicked Spoon. Available until 24 Aug with all room types bookable, the promotion is not combinable with other offers. [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

## EK Rugby livery

**IN CELEBRATION** of the upcoming Rugby World Cup France 2023, Emirates has debuted a special-edition livery on one of its flagship A380 aircraft (**pictured**), which now sports an in-house design inspired by the fast-running backlines.

The Dubai-based carrier has been a tournament sponsor of Rugby World Cup since 2007 and a Worldwide Partner since 2011, and is also the Official Airline of Rugby World Cup France 2023 and Australia 2027.



## Sixty6 Acres opens

**A NEW** country retreat, Sixty6 Acres, has opened on the Sunshine Coast five minutes from the Big Pineapple and 15 minutes from beaches and the airport.

The formerly rundown farm has been transformed to offer six individual luxury 'quarters'.

The self-contained, two-bedroom quarters each feature a large veranda overlooking a lake and lawns, as well as wood-burning fireplaces, freestanding baths, and full kitchens.

Guests staying on the property can pat and feed friendly farm animals, kayak on the lake, play golf on the greens, and toast marshmallows around a firepit.

Rates start from \$400 a night for up to four guests per villa.

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## FCTG agents off to the Med



**FLIGHT** Centre Travel Group (FCTG) Independent travel advisors have scored a spot on an exclusive fam with The Travel Corporation (TTC).

Three FCTG consultants have been awarded a spot through an incentive program, which ran in Mar and Apr, and was designed to encourage advisors to win sell a product from TTC's tour brands. A 13-day itinerary through

France and Spain in Aug was offered to the winners, who have been announced as HBA Travel's Bradley Rowland, Travel Partners Box Hill's Teresa Petrocco, and Tailored Travel & Cruise's Briony Thomas (**pictured**).

FCTG Independent General Manager Nick Queale said the company is thrilled to see advisors engage so well with the incentives provided.

## travelBulletin OPINION

### Why the travel industry should "cancel" influencers

[Click here to read](#)



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