Travel Daily First with the news

Wednesday 17th May 2023



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of news including our Luxury feature page, a photo page from Express Travel Group, plus a full page from Norwegian Cruise Line.

QF woos NZ trade

QANTAS has released new "Explorer Fares" for travellers from New Zealand, and is running a national roadshow across NZ to educate agents about the product.

QF Explorer Fares allow travel advisors booking Tasman flights ex NZ to add on Australian domestic sectors at a discounted rate, with an accompanying online tool (CLICK HERE) dividing the country into three flight length-based zones and fares available in Q, S, M and H classes.

Shorter Zone 1 flight prices start at just NZ\$130, while Zone 3 H class fares lead in at NZ\$540.

Qantas Explorer fares will auto quote in GDS for Kiwi agents if selected with an international flight from NZ to Australia.

EY Japan route

ETIHAD Airways yesterday announced a new route to Japan, with five weekly Abu Dhabi-Osaka services set to debut effective 01 Oct this year.

It's the second Japanese gateway for EY alongside Tokyo, with the carrier planning to operate Boeing 787-9 aircraft on the new route which will "support the growing trade and tourism ties between the countries".

ABS confirms travel rebound

THERE'S no wonder the travel industry seems busy at the moment - figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics vesterday indicate that for the full year of 2022 there were 5.2 million resident returns from overseas - more than 17 times the previous pandemic-hit year.

The annual summary was part of the regular monthly release of ABS numbers for inbound and outbound travel, which also showed that in Mar 2023 the 635,730 outbound trips taken was still 15.6% lower than the pre-COVID level in Mar 2019.

NZ was once again the most popular country visited in Mar, accounting for 17% of all resident returns with 107,970 trips, followed by Indonesia with 90.780 and then India at 45.380.

Other destinations in the top 10 included Thailand, the USA, Japan, Singapore, Vietnam, Fiji

BKB on the road

BKB Holidays is inviting travel advisors to attend sessions at an east coast roadshow starting later this month, in partnership with key suppliers Journey Beyond, G'Day Group, True North, Ponant, Wild Bush Luxury, G'day Group, Double Six Luxury Hotel Bali & Heritage Expeditions.

Events are scheduled for Newcastle on 30 May, Gold Coast on 31 May and Maroochydore on 01 Jun - for more details email fionaa@bkbholidays.com.

and the Philippines.

Visitor arrivals also continue to climb, but the Mar figures indicate the 613,340 total was still 26.7% down on Mar 2019.

NZ was the largest source country, followed by the UK and then the USA, confirming the shift to traditional western markets which may change in the coming months due to the recent relaxation of China's COVID policy. See more about the stats HERE.

Kim now in at STB



THE Singapore Tourism Board (STB) has appointed Kimberly Spykerman (pictured) to the role of Area Director Oceania, replacing Stephanie Yong who has been redeployed to Singapore.

She will be based in the Sydney office from 01 Jun, and arrives boasting plenty of media experience, including stints with mastheads like The Straits Times and Channel NewsAsia.

"We know Aussies and Kiwis love visiting Singapore, and I'm excited to work with the team to showcase all of the new and reimagined experiences the city has to offer, which we hope will inspire return visits," she said.

WIN with NCL!

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) is offering Partners First Rewards Points as well as an opportunity to win a free cruise in Asia. as part of its "Class of 2023" education program - for more details see the last page.

JQ rejigs check-in

JETSTAR passengers will need to ensure they arrive at the airport earlier from 23 May, when check-in and bag drops will close 40 minutes before departure for Australian and NZ domestic flights, and 60 minutes prior to take-off for international flights.

The change is part of a range of initiatives aiming to improve the carrier's woeful on-time performance which has continued to attract negative attention over recent months.

JQ says it's also confident its new Airbus A321neo aircraft will help bring its OTP back in line.

"We know our performance hasn't been up to scratch, and we are working hard to boost punctuality and reliability," admitted Chief Operating Officer, Matt Franzi.

"Our A321neo LRs are some of the newest aircraft in the world, and our current fleet of six has delivered world-beating mechanical reliability for its aircraft type," he said.

Jetstar's seventh A321neo arrived in Melbourne this week, and will operate between Australia and Bali and, from 29 Jun, the Cook Islands.





Strong revenue for Serko

ASX-LISTED corporate travel and expense provider Serko Limited has posted strong growth figures for the year to 31 Mar 2023, with total income up 154%.

The NZ-based company brought in revenue of NZ\$48 million, exceeding its revised FY23 guidance range (TD 27 Jan).

The results revealed a net loss after tax of NZ\$30.5 million, which represented a 15% improvement, with average monthly cash burn reducing from NZ\$3.3m to \$2.7m.

Serko Chief Executive and co-founder Darrin Grafton said the result "demonstrates strong growth driven by earlier investment decisions and disciplined execution".

The strong revenue growth was largely driven by a massive boom in Booking.com for Business completed room nights, which shot up by 381%, with the number of active customers increasing by 144% on the previous year.

The platform is poised to continue its robust growth path following its new deal with CWT, which will see the latter provide 24/7 consultant support for Booking.com for Business customers (TD 12 May).

Grafton also highlighted the strong recovery in business travel, with average online booking volumes for the year at 136% of pre-pandemic levels in New Zealand, and 82% in Australia.

Serko forecasts a full-year total income of between NZ\$63m and \$70m for FY24, along with an aspiration for NZ\$100 million in total income in 2025.

QR fares going up

QATAR Airways has advised the Australian trade of seasonal fare increases effective tomorrow to all destinations for travel from 23 Jun until mid-Jul, applicable to F, J, C, Y, B and H booking classes.

Japan & South Korea Dreams

14 days Seoul to Osaka from only \$5,999*







SIA whopper profit

SINGAPORE Airlines yesterday posted its highest net profit in its 76-year history, with the result driven by record revenue and load factors.

Total sales surged more than 130% year-on-year to S\$17.8 billion, while the overall net profit was S\$2.16 billion for the 12 months to 31 Mar.

The carrier said it had acted swiftly and decisively at the onset of the pandemic, with its strong liquidity position enabling it to take a long-term view, including retaining most of its staff, which allowed it to ramp up operations at SIA and Scoot to capture demand as borders reopened.

The carriers collectively carried 26.5 million passengers during the year, sixfold the 2021 figure.

SIA noted its fleet has an average age of less than seven years, with 100 planes on order.

Hailing the result, the carrier thanked its staff for their "hard work, dedication and sacrifices".

Window

A NEW world record has been set by Jamie McDonald aka 'Adventureman' (pictured) this week, with the intrepid traveller visiting seven Wonders of the World in seven days courtesy of Travelport.

The stunt trip was booked by UK travel agency Travelbag, seeing the travel hero move across four continents via 13 flights. 16 taxis, nine buses. four trains, and perhaps most impressively, one toboggan ride - watch the feat HERE.









Travel still a priority

DESPITE many feeling the pressure of the rising cost of living, Australians are prioritising experiences over everyday expenditure, according to the new *Cost of Living Insights Report* from CommBank iQ which was released this week.

Travel and accommodation spend was up 39% year-on-year in Jan-Mar 2023, with Aussies forking out \$234 per month on average, making it the fastest growing discretionary spending category by far.

"What we're seeing is a continued COVID rebound effect, with consumers catching up on the experiences that they missed out on during the pandemic," the report's author and CommBank iQ Head of Innovation and Analytics Wade Tubman said.

Older Australians are spending more, with over-35s annual expenditure increasing by 7.7% - nearly double the 3.4% rise in spending by those under 35.

QF fund hits new height

QANTAS has seen a record number of applications for its Regional Grants program, up nearly 40% compared to when the program first launched four years ago (TD 14 Jun 2019).

The initiative provides \$10 million in grants over five years (\$2 million each year) to support not-for-profit community groups and projects that directly benefit regional Australia.

More than 1,600 Australian community groups submitted applications for the latest round of the program, which opened in Feb (*TD* 22 Feb) after a three-year pause due to the pandemic.

NSW-based regional organisations submitted the most applications of any state and territory, with 506 entries, followed by Queensland (416) and Western Australia (242).

Alice Springs, Armidale, Broome, Cairns, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, Geraldton, Hobart, Launceston, Mackay and Townsville were among the towns where 10 or more organisations submitted an application.

The top application categories included health and wellbeing, sports and recreation, children and family, and education.

QantasLink Chief Executive
Officer John Gissing said the rise
in applications "goes to show how
many people and organisations
around Australia are working to
make their communities that little
bit better.

"Being able to invest in regional organisations, especially those who have done it tough during the pandemic, is very rewarding for everyone across Qantas."

The successful applications will be selected over the next month by a panel made up of Qantas and community group representatives, with applicants to be notified of the panel's decision in Jun, Gissing revealed.

Big Emirates bonus

A RECORD 12-monthly financial result for Emirates has seen the carrier give some staff a bonus equivalent to 24 weeks' pay.

The carrier last week posted a record US\$3 billion profit for the year to 31 Mar, with documents revealed by UAE newspaper *The National* stating 50,000 employees have been told that "for our outstanding performance in 2022-23, you deserve every bit of the 24-week profit share".

EK's group revenue surged 81% to US\$32.6 billion with strong customer demand worldwide, and the carrier repaid US\$817 million of debt raised during the COVID-19 crisis.

The Emirates Group ended the year with US\$11.6 billion in cash, increased its total workforce by 20% to 102,379 employees, and invested US\$2 billion in new aircraft, facilities and equipment.

EK's A380 network grew to 43 destinations and the carrier flew 43.6 million passengers, up 123%.

Positions Vacant

We're expanding our National Partnership Office (NPO) in Sydney, with new roles in Marketing and Finance. Join our team of dedicated travel industry professionals who are passionate about helping our personal travel managers (PTMs) to grow their business.



MARKETING EXECUTIVE

A dynamic marketing professional to grow our brand and support our PTMs through email marketing, tactical campaigns, brand compliance, and general marketing initiatives.

ACCOUNTS SUPPORT EXECUTIVE

An enthusiastic and motivated professional to work as part of the Finance team to support and service our network of PTMs around the country.

It's our people that make the difference.

Click here for more information and how to apply.





Dom spending frenzy in Feb

AUSTRALIA'S visitor economy enjoyed robust growth in Feb 2023, with overnight trips, nights away and spend all surpassing Feb 2020 levels, according to the latest domestic tourism data from Tourism Research Australia (TRA).

The country's overnight spend was up by 46% compared to a year ago, despite the number of overnight trips and nights away rising by just 4% and 9% respectively, with accommodation seeing the largest spend increase.

Tasmania saw the highest increase in spend in Feb 2023 out of all the states and territories, up 94% compared to Feb 2020, followed by Queensland (+69%), NSW (+46%) and ACT (+45%).

Australia's capital cities all experienced an increase in visitor spend for Feb 2023 compared to the same period in 2020, except for Adelaide, which saw a 23% drop, with the South Australian capital also seeing a whopping

82% fall in visitor numbers.

The state's regional areas, however, enjoyed the highest spend growth, up an impressive 77% in Feb 2023, followed by regional Queensland (up 63%), regional NSW (+61%) and regional Victoria (+60%), with regional Western Australia trailing behind with just a 26% increase.

Overall, regional Australia enjoyed growth in both overnight trip and spend levels, with visitors spending 57% more in Feb 2023 than they did in Feb 2020, and taking 10% more overnight trips.

The TRA monthly snapshot also revealed that Aussie travellers spent 16% more during domestic day trips throughout Feb 2023, despite the overall number of day trips decreasing by 16%.

Interestingly, Australians took 33% less interstate trips in Feb 2023 than they did in Feb 2020, while intrastate trips were up slightly by 6%.

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Mapping out danger

RESEARCHERS at UNSW have created a new database of deaths and injuries caused by crowd accidents overseas, providing travellers with a heat map about which destinations to exercise the most caution when visiting.

The directory documents 281 major global incidents occurring between 1900 and 2019, with India and West Africa the most likely place for crowd accidents.

Religious festivals were also shown to have overtaken sporting events in the past 30 years as the most likely situation to result in a dangerous crush, with South East Asia and the Middle East also ranking high on the list.

View more information on the map and its findings **HERE**.



Uber trials airline tix

WHILE not yet available in Australia, Uber's new flight booking app trial in the United Kingdom has plenty of people in the local travel sector talking.

The company has made no secret of its ambition to become a travel app that handles every aspect of a journey, with the latest flight booking trial adding to a raft of bookable transport options in England, including Uber Boat by Thames Clippers, train journeys across the National Rail network, Eurostar & coaches with National Express.

"We're incredibly pleased to introduce flight bookings as the latest addition to Uber's suite of travel booking options, the service is perfect for business travellers and tourists alike, and our new functionality will make the booking and managing of air travel simple and stress-free, with the booking process taking as little as one minute in the Uber app," UK GM Andrew Brem said.





Airbus green deal

AIRBUS has signed an agreement with the Abu Dhabi-based clean energy company Masdar to support the development and growth of the global Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) market.

The Memorandum of Understanding will see the two companies work together to explore the adoption of low carbon solutions, such as Direct Air Capture technologies, in an effort to reach net zero by 2050.

QF lounge update

QANTAS has confirmed a simplification of its lounge access policy, allowing eligible passengers to bring in guests who are travelling on Qantas-operated and eligible partner carrier flights that depart on the same day.

The update is effective from 15 Jun. and replaces the existing more complex arrangements for guests which vary depending on QF membership tier and whether entrants are flying on Qantas or partner carrier flight numbers.



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Swishine Coast

Why the travel industry should "cancel" influencers



HA unveils swanky Leihoku Suites



HAWAIIAN Airlines has unveiled the interior design of its 300-seat Boeing 787 Dreamliner, including the new class of premium service Leihoku Suites (pictured), which will be on offer for select services early next year.

The anticipated new premium class consists of 34 suites with fully lie-flat seating, an 18-inch entertainment screen, personal power outlets, wireless charging and direct aisle access.

The suites can also be adjusted to offer both a privacy or shared experience, set in a 1-2-1 configuration with doors.

"The combination of our evocative cabin design and unparalleled service will make our 787 the most relaxing and enjoyable choice for travel to and from Hawai'i," Avi Mannis, Chief Marketing and Communication Officer enthused.

The new interior reinvention marks the first airline partnership with Adient Aerospace, a joint venture between manufacturer Boeing and Adient.

HA's 787 Dreamliner main cabin

consists of 266 Collins Aerospace Aspire seats with ergonomically contoured back and arm rests, allowing guests to enjoy a lightweight, modern design that maximises seat space, offers more shoulder and hip room, and features a 12-inch seatback monitor.

London in two hours

NEW research from UK's Civil Aviation Authority suggests that Aussies will be able to fly from Sydney to London in less than two hours within the next decade.

The hugely expedited flight times would be reached through suborbital space flights, where travellers would briefly move in space before landing at their final destination.

The UK body funded the study, which was published in a peer-reviewed monthly journal, Aerospace Medicine and Human Performance, which interestingly found older passengers could be better at handling the space flights than younger travellers.





Wed 17th May 2023

Alatus' adventurous day at Express Travel

HIGH-END leisure group, Alatus, held a one-day strategy meeting at Express Travel Group's (ETG) head office last week.

The progressive 'for the members, by the members' group spent the day participating in facilitated workshop sessions, hosted by Teresa Hetherington from Corporate Wisdom and Alatus' own member, Kylie

Luttrell from The Travel Notebook.

Focus groups were held around key areas of the travel industry, such as air, product, cruise, investment, and innovation, to further enhance business success.

The members ended their day with canapes and drinks sponsored by Abercrombie & Kent.

"Alatus has grown beyond our expectations and we are enormously proud to be associated with such a dynamic group of experienced and ambitious professionals," said Jason Aghan, ETG General Manager - Sales and Marketing.



Destination HQ; Svemir Fazlic, Adria International Travel; Chris McIlroy, Travel Inspirations; Lauren Ashworth, The Departure Lounge Travel & Cruise; Helen Paulus, Geelong Travel & Cruise; Monique Monsees, Cherrybrook Travel; Michael Krywyn, ETG; Kylie Luttrell, The Travel Notebook; Jane Robinson, JBR Travel; Francesca Labbozzetta, Marconi Travel; Courteney Pfennig, Arivo Australia; Andrew Geils, Inflight Travel of Toorak; Karina Hill, ETG; Jason Aghan, ETG; & Michelle Geagea, Deja Vu Travel.



MONIQUE Monsees, Cherrybrook Travel; Stuart Coffield, Geelong Travel & Cruise; Lauren Ashworth, The Departure Lounge Travel & Cruise; Karina Hill, ETG.



from Abercrombie & Kent.

HANNAH Taylor, Abercrombie & Kent; Hugh Tilley, Black Rock Travel; Lauren Ashworth, The Departure Lounge Travel & Cruise.



CHRIS McIlroy, Travel Inspirations; Jane Robinson, JBR Travel; and









TOM Manwaring, ETG; Robyn Davis, WOW! Travel; and Jason Aghan, ETG.

luxury@traveldaily.com.au Wednesday 17th May 2023

A luxurious sweep of Broome

JOURNEY Beyond's
Horizontal Falls Seaplane
Adventures has launched a
new Broome departure for
the Ultimate Horizontal Falls
Luxury Stay experience, with
departures running from 01
Jun until 24 Aug.

The experience includes a scenic seaplane flight to Horizontal Falls, an overnight stay on luxury houseboat *Jetwave Pearl*, a sunrise cruise, access to a private marine life viewing platform, a gourmet breakfast prior to departure, and much more.

Prices start from \$1,700 per adult, with 10% savings available for bookings made by 30 Jun for travel before 05 Nov - CLICK HERE.

Hilton Sydney gins it up

HILTON Sydney has transformed its Zeta Bar into a secret garden concept showcasing a series of gins through a three-season partnership, starting with Monkey 47 Gin followed by Malfy Gin.

Guests can savour a selection of specially curated Monkey 47 Gin cocktails on Wed, Thu, Fri and Sat evenings, while surrounded by lush greenery and florals and listening to a live DJ.

A high tea menu will also be available at the pop-up concept on Sat from 12.30pm, offering sweet and savoury options.

EXCLUSIVE DRIVES CLUB MED SALES

EXCLUSIVE

CLUB Med's Exclusive Collection has done "exceptionally well" for the company this year, General Manager Pacific Michelle Davies told *Travel Daily*.

One of Club Med's strategic pillars for this year is anchoring the Collection within the travel industry - a strategy which has thus far succeeded, seeing 68% growth versus 2019.

"Even I have been a little bit surprised at just the huge uptake we've seen in this category," Davies admitted.

She said coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been shifts in consumer trends.

Luxury longtails

THAILAND'S five-star beachfront resort Banyan Tree Krabi has unveiled a luxurious new longtail boat to cater to day trips and island hopping.

The White Pearl will offer a half-day trip to nearby Koh Kong or a full-day '4 Islands Tour' among the islets of Hat Noppharat Thara-Mu Ko Phi Phi National Park.

All day trips on the new vessel, which can fit between two and eight guests, include fresh coconut, fruit and soft drinks, snorkelling equipment, life vests, toilets and an English-speaking Boat Host.

with affluent customers looking for genuine, unique experiences which offer the feeling of "making up for lost time".

Davies said this trend is apparent when considering the overall demand for the Exclusive Collection, with affluent travellers willing to spend 23% more than pre-COVID-19.

Luxury travellers are also looking for intimate experiences, Davies said, which made this year the ideal time to relaunch the Exclusive Collection's 182-stateroom *Club Med 2* yacht.

Another trend is seeing luxury travellers wanting to stay longer, fuelled by the multigenerational market, which has been a

breadbasket for the Collection.

The average length of stay for this portfolio is longer than the core range, Davies revealed.

Over the next five years, Club Med's luxury portfolio will be one for high-end travel advisors to watch closely, Davies believes.

"Exclusive Collection as an overall business for us in Club Med has been a long-term strategy," she said.

"Prior to the pandemic, we had ambitions to grow our Exclusive Collection portfolio to 25 properties by 2025...by adding three to five new resorts or renovated resorts each year.

"It has really slotted in nicely into our strategy for this year."

Enjoy a private jet ride on wheels in Memphis

AUSTRALIANS visiting Memphis will soon be able to arrive at the Home of the Blues in style, via a new luxury coach service operated by premium transport company, Vonlane.

From 26 May, the new "private jet on wheels" experience allows travellers to skip airport wait times and transfers, and relax on a luxurious road trip.

"Currently there aren't any non-stop flights between Memphis and Nashville, which are both destinations of choice for an increasing number of Australians," Memphis Tourism Australian & NZ Director Chris



Ingram pointed out.

Guests on board the premium service will enjoy Vonlane's signature 22 First class leather seats, along with plenty of personal space, free wi-fi, and an attendant offering premium cabin service with snacks, meals and beverages included.

Introductory one-way fares are priced at US\$109 and roundtrip service at \$218 with no taxes, baggage or change fees.

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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 Beach Hotel situated in Newcastle's sunny seaside haven, Merewether, is introducing a new retro takeaway shop inspired by Aussie milk bars, the new Larrie's. The name pays homage to the locals who crafted the local community

dating back to the 70s and 80s featuring old-school classics offering local produce including the prawn and mango bowl, a popular 70s salad with the combination of rice noodles and spiced herb dressing.



The latest refurbishment at **Hyatt Regency** Danang Resort & Spa is set to introduce a new era of excitement through rebranded hospitality and refreshed accommodation. Guest can enjoy the dinning experience at the reinvented Italian restaurant, Osteria al

Mare, or the new Terrasse and Vive Oceane opening in Jun. Also new at the resort are the three-bedroom Pool Villas, refurbished with new interior furnishings and enhanced facilities.



To celebrate the upcoming summer season, Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, London is introducing an exclusive dining setting with views over the Royal parkland at its Hyde Park Garden. The meticulously chosen menu features British botanicals, with

signature dishes including a pea and ham hock salad and lobster and pickled lemon, complemented by a selection of wines and spritz.



The first Grand Hyatt in the Mediterranean, Grand Hyatt La Manga Club Golf & Spa, property includes seven signature suites overlooking the hills of Calblanque Regional Park and the Mediterranean Sea, with each

room furnished with spa-inspired marble bathrooms. The resort also boasts a 1,700m2 world-class wellness centre, an 18-hole golf course, 11 distinctive dining options and an event space spanning over 1,288m



The 107-key Chateau Mont Royal is the latest Chateau property in its expanding portfolio in France. The hotel is situated just 40km from the French capital and 20 minutes from Charles de Gaulle Airport, and features two restaurants, a bar and a

summer terrace. The hotel also offers quests 11 meeting rooms, a gym, sauna, jacuzzi and treatment rooms alongside an indoor swimming pool and tennis court.

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Visit USA cracks the ton!



VISIT USA has marked a milestone, surpassing a membership of 100 for 2023.

The organisation's President, Caroline Davidson, said the strong interest in participation was evidence of the significant importance of the Australian travel trade for the US market.

Starlink on Seabourn and Holland America

CARNIVAL Corporation continues to roll out Elon Musk's Starlink internet connectivity on its fleet, with Seabourn's purpose-built expedition ships, Seabourn Venture and Seabourn Pursuit both in the process of implementing the nextgeneration SpaceX platform.

Holland America Line's Koningsdam also now features Starlink, with the platform to be expanded to additional HAL ships later in the year.

Treat for QF's Treak

COURTNEY Treak has been promoted to a new role as Senior Manager Marketing & Comms at Qantas Loyalty.

"We're delighted at the investment in the Australian travel industry by members both here and in the US, especially over the past 12 months...it's a fantastic vote of confidence in agents in Australia," she said.

Recent additions to the ranks include Visit Salt Lake, Visit Big Sky, Visit San Antonio and Holland America Line.

Some of the Visit USA Committee are pictured at a meeting this morning, from left: Chris Watson, James Hewlett, Belinda Harvy, David McMahon, Aida Osta, Tony Soden, Toni Murphy and David Clark, with other attendees joining virtually due to next week's IPW US trade show in San Antonio.

Komodo's fee hike

THE Komodo National Park in Indonesia has increased the ranger fee required for visitors to access the popular site.

The new levy has increased from IDR\$120,000 (AU\$12.14) per group of five tourists to IDR\$400,000 (AU\$40.45) for short tracks and IDR\$450.000 (AU\$45.50) for longer tracks.

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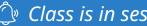
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