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NDC to add not subtract: AC

EXCLUSIVE

AIR Canada's approach to NDC, which is scheduled for a fourth quarter rollout, will be "additive, not subtractive", Executive Vice President Marketing & Digital Mark Nasr has reinforced.

On his first trip to Australia since the COVID-19 pandemic, Nasr told **TD** one of his key messages for the trade to understand is Air Canada's attitude to NDC.

"What we're looking to do is add additional content that will be available by NDC: promo codes, subscription flight passes, continuous and dynamic pricing in the future," he said.

"We're not interested in taking content away that we can send over the classic EDIFACT."

Nasr emphasised Air Canada's NDC program will offer agents choice on how they connect.

"They can connect directly to us, and there are some Australian agencies that are choosing to do

that, they can go to a technology service provider, and do it there, and over the GDS.

"We've already announced our collaboration with Amadeus NDC-X, which is going to be available natively within Amadeus' existing desktop flows, and existing agents' APIs."

Air Canada's agency relationships are extremely important to the business, Nasr said, adding six months of research resulted in "fundamental changes" to its outlook on the topic of distributions.

AC would also like to restore direct flights between Melbourne and Vancouver if they can secure additional aircraft.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest news, including our **Corporate Update** plus a cover page from **Tourism New Zealand**.

Dorchester Prez

DORCHESTER Collection's CEO Christopher Cowdray has been appointed President of the luxury hotel business, precipitating the promotions of Customer Experience Officer Helen Smith and Chief Operating Officer Eugenio Pirri to joint chief executive officer roles.

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Ruffles offloads

CORPORATE Travel Management Global Chief Operating Officer, Laura Ruffles, has taken advantage of the firm's strong trading price to dispose of 59,276 shares.

Announced to the Australian Securities Exchange earlier this week, the on-market sale was at an average selling price of \$21.1537 each netting the AFTA Director just over \$1.25 million.

More of the latest business travel news on **page six**.

CBA hops into travel

COMMONWEALTH Bank has launched a major expansion into the travel sector in partnership with Canadian travel technology "unicorn" Hopper, making it easier for bank customers to book flights, accommodation and car rental directly via the bank's app.

The deal will see the addition of several new features to the CommBank portal, including price predictions, data-driven recommendations and alert technology when booking flights, hotels and rental cars.

CommBank customers will also be able to earn and redeem rewards through the Hopper-powered platform, thanks to its integration into the CommBank Awards program, as well as take advantage of Fintech products and servicing capabilities, including self-serve options and concierge services.

"Through our new exclusive relationship in the Australian market with Hopper we can help customers dream, plan and book travel, and manage their travel finances, all in one place within the CommBank app," CBA Group Executive General Manager, Retail Sales and Service, Angus Sullivan explained.

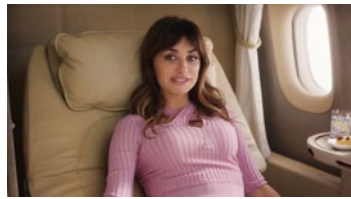
Hopper President and co-founder Dakota Smith said the new arrangement will allow the agency to "create an end-to-end travel offering for [CBA's] customers, complete with world-class flexibility and disruption products to improve the traveller experience".

The partnership with CBA is the latest of many for the Canada-based travel company, including one with Uber announced last

month, which sees Hopper power the transport giant's flight booking functionality.

The new Hopper travel features are expected to go live on the CommBank app by next year.

EK in Cruz control



EMIRATES has pulled in the help of Hollywood superstar actor and Tom Cruise's ex Penelope Cruz, to front its latest marketing campaign.

The new TV spots will start to air globally from Jun, where she will promote the value of the carrier's premium First and Business class amenities.

The ads show Cruz interacting with Emirates cabin crew and enjoying the carrier's inflight entertainment system, using the personal temperature controls in her private First Class Suite, using bespoke binoculars to enjoy the sky-high views, and wearing the Emirates hydra-active moisturising pyjamas.

MEANWHILE Emirates is taking its loyalty program to new heights with the relaunch of its Skywards Everyday app, offering travellers the ability to earn extra miles every time they pay with a linked payment card at over 200 Skywards Everyday partners in the UAE.

Partners include retailers like Dhamani 1969, Mont Blanc, and TAG Heuer.

CAPA to Brisbane

CAPA - Centre for Aviation (CAPA) will host its Pacific Aviation Summit 2023 in Brisbane over two days on 14-15 Sep.

To be run in conjunction with Brisbane Airport Corporation, the event will explore all major issues facing aviation, including the recovery of the Chinese market, changes in passenger behaviour, tourism trends, insight on government thinking, and sustainability - email **HERE** for further information.

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No Long wait for passports

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) CEO Dean Long was in Canberra again this week, among his list of key exchanges being with the Australian Passport Office to thank them for working so closely with the industry.

Long praised the efforts of the government division for continuing to work with industry to streamline the application and renewal process for travellers and Australia's travel businesses.

"Australia's travel businesses play such an integral part in reminding Australians to make sure that their passports are valid and that they have the necessary visas to travel, so it's important for us to work closely with the Passport Office," Long said.

"The immediate post-COVID travel stampede saw tremendous pressure on the team at the Passport Office and on our members so it was important that



we work closely together.

"We appreciate the opportunity to have input into the thinking and development of the Passport Office's approach to help shape the best possible experience for travellers and streamlined processing for our members."

A number of moves to speed up passport processing have been actioned recently, including a temporary ramp-up of human resources to deal with the large backlog of cases, as well as a proposed legislative change to allow electronic countersigning of statutory declarations to pave the way for online passport renewals.

Dunn cuts camels

FLIGHT Centre-owned luxury operator Scott Dunn has announced it will cease selling any tours and packages which involve camel riding.

The move follows recent action by PETA which highlighted the conditions faced by camels in the Egyptian tourism industry.

Scott Dunn's policies see the company also not promote elephant rides or marine parks with captive dolphins.

LATAM US\$1m fine

LATAM Airlines Group is the seventh carrier to be hit with a big fine in the USA for delays in refunding passengers.

The US Transportation Department has ordered LATAM to pay a US\$1 million penalty for taking over 100 days to process pandemic-related refunds.

LATAM said it had issued over \$62m in refunds to US customers since the start of the pandemic.



Window Seat

MOVE over Uber, a new ride share service has launched in the USA which promises that all of its drivers are armed.

Currently only available in New York and Atlanta, the new Black Wolf Service is aimed at "corporate executives, high-net-worth individuals, celebrities, women, school kids, and regular people who want peace of mind in this crazy world," according to founder Kerry King Brown.

Brown said drivers must pass a background check and are also trained to de-escalate situations in the event of any on-road confrontations.

Vehicles are GPS-tracked and offer live streaming technology, with Brown saying "what I'm creating is a necessary evil".

avis budget group

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Douglas leaves Globus

LONG-TIME Globus Family of Brands Head of Sales, Peter Douglas, has left the company after nine years, with his surprise departure effective yesterday.

A statement from the group's MD Asia Pacific, Gai Tyrrell, acknowledged Douglas' contribution to the company.

"Peter has been a highly valued and instrumental part of the Globus family of brands' leadership team and we have so much to thank him for," she said.

"He's worked hard to define our position in the marketplace, navigated the challenges we

faced throughout the pandemic and has led a strong sales team during the recovery of our business," Tyrrell added.

She said Douglas had been a high-profile champion of the Globus brands, and would be missed by the team and industry partners.

"We wish him the very best for the next challenge he takes on."

Net zero cruise

MSC Cruises' new *MSC Euribia* will operate "the world's first net-zero cruise" when she undertakes her maiden voyage next month.

The LNG-powered ship will sail from Saint-Nazaire in France to Copenhagen in Denmark for her 08 Jun naming ceremony, without any greenhouse gas emissions to demonstrate the possibility of net-zero cruising, powered by a special purchase of 400 tonnes of bio-LNG fuel.

140 days at Silversea

SILVERSEA Cruises has unveiled details on its upcoming 140-day World Cruise 2026, called The Curious and the Sea, boasting 26 new calls across 37 countries and 70 destinations.

Exclusive pre-sale opens to Venetian Society members on 14 Jun, followed by a general sales launch on 22 Jun - see the full promotional video [HERE](#).

LH buys 41% of ITA

LUFTHANSA Group will acquire a 41% stake in ITA Airways for €325m, after reaching an agreement with the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance, who also committed to a capital increase of €250m into ITA.

The move will see the Italian airline become the fifth network carrier in Lufthansa Group's multi-brand system, with the pair to start their commercial and operational cooperation as soon as the transaction is finalised.

The French ski team is in town



THIS erstwhile group of delegates from the ski fields of Meribel, Val Thorens and Val d'Isere in the French Alps are in Australia at the moment for the snow shows in Melbourne and Sydney as well as to meet with key trade partners.

Yesterday they hosted some of their stakeholders at Sydney's Bistro Papillon, regaling attendees with the latest on- and off-piste news over some fine French cuisine, naturellement.

As well as the tourist boards of each destination, the hosts also included representatives from Oxygene Ski School and ESF Ski

School Meribel, plus Antares Residences, Le Coucou and La Chaudanne residences in Meribel.

Pictured from left are Praveen Ramessur from Antares Residences; Oxygene Ski School's Emma Morison; Stephane Zabotti from La Chaudanne & Le Kaila Hotels; Nathalie Grosse, Tourist Board of Val Thorens; Astrid Mahfi Zatovic, Val d'Isere Tourist Board; Meribel Tourist Board's Elsa Lavanant; Stephanie Lancien from Le Coucou Hotel; and Valeria Isaeva of ESF Ski School Meribel.

QF, Qld SAF deal

QANTAS will work with the Queensland State Government to build up the state's local sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) industry, after signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) this week.

The new partnership will see the parties focus on developing a Queensland-based SAF supply chain, bringing the Sunshine State closer to its goal of becoming an Asia Pacific green jet fuel hub.

The MoU includes exploring how to fully leverage sugarcane and agricultural by-products for biofuels production and the potential for developing new feedstock sources and processes.

"Qantas will be the largest single customer for Australian-made SAF, so it's fantastic that the Qld Govt is seeking to partner with us so we can work together on establishing the industry from the ground up," Qantas Group Chief Sustainability Officer Andrew Park said.

Earlier this year, the Queensland Government, Qantas and Boeing announced investments into a new biofuel production facility in Qld (**TD** 31 Mar).

Outback Spirit tour

JOURNEY Beyond's Outback Spirit has announced the 2023 departures for its Lake Eyre & Wilpena Pound Adventure, a seven-day small group tour featuring scenic flights over the spectacular Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre, Goyder Lagoon and the Simpson desert.

Priced from \$5,495, the first tour departs on 01 Jul, with further tours departing weekly.

CLICK HERE to book.

Inside Travel B Corp

FOLLOWING a rigorous two-year process, Inside Travel Group has become the 31st tour operator in the world to achieve B Corp certification, reflecting its efforts as a socially and environmentally responsible company.

"We believe that travel can be a force for good, and our B Corp certification will set us on a path of continual improvement which ultimately will be better for our destinations and all whom we work with," Inside Travel Group co-founder Simon King said.

Australasia's first Geopark



THE spectacular Waitaki Whitestone Geopark on NZ's South Island (pictured) has been named as Australasia's only UNESCO Geopark, joining just 195 other such designations in the world, of which only 19 are in the Southern Hemisphere.

The United Nations defines a Global Geopark as "a single, unified geographical area where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development".

The accolade is set to further boost the region's tourism, with UNESCO designation typically raising the profile of destinations and seeing visitors stay longer.

This week's announcement is the culmination of many years of work by the Waitaki Whitestone Geopark and Vanished World, which saw the UNESCO Executive Board endorse the nomination during a session this month.

The Waitaki Whitestone Geopark Trust initially submitted its application to UNESCO in Nov

GF returns to Qatar

GULF Air yesterday resumed non-stop flights from Bahrain to Doha for the first time since 2017.

Initial daily A320 frequencies will increase to 21 weekly in Jun.

2019, with the pandemic delaying an evaluation mission which finally took place last year.

The move recognises the park's outstanding geological and cultural heritage and its commitment to sustainable development, education and community engagement.

Trust Chair Helen Jansen said "we have always believed that this is a very special area, telling the story of the 8th continent".

"Despite interruptions we kept the dream alive and kept working at it...it is the collective wisdom of many contributors over the years that has brought the Waitaki and NZ to this exciting and historic moment," she said.

"We are making a significant contribution to the global understanding of the land and its cultures," Jansen added.

The park covers about 7,200 square km near Te Waipounamu, with features including limestone cliffs, glacial valleys and fossils.

Yotel to Thailand

BRITISH hotel group Yotel has announced its first property in Thailand, with the 250-room Yotel Bangkok set to open in 2025 as part of Cloud 11, a newbuild mixed-used development "set to be a playground for Southeast Asia's artists, makers and tech entrepreneurs".

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Agents must start preparing

OPINION

Scott Darlow is General Manager of Link Travel Group.

Got an opinion to share? Let us know in up to 400 words via email to feedback@traveldaily.com.au.



NEW Distribution Capability, or NDC: we first heard about it over a decade ago, and like rain in a drought, we've constantly heard "it's coming".

It's not "coming" any more, it's here and here for real!

I do sense around some parts of the agency community that there is almost a sense of denial or disbelief that it's finally here after so many years of it being talked about - almost like Sydney's second airport!

I'm constantly amazed on my travels around the country when I ask agents what their NDC

strategy is, to get a reply along the lines of "we won't need it will we?", or "we will be fine doing things as we do now".

Even more shocking than that are some of the replies I receive when I ask agents what their buying group is doing for them in relation to NDC, the most common being "I don't know" or "they are not investing in NDC".

I ask agency owners, "are you willing to leave that to chance"? Yes, I get that NDC is new and represents change from what we've done in the past, but so did mobile phones, Uber and even the internet.

We adapted to those and now it's time to adapt to NDC.

No doubt about it, early adopters of NDC technology will have a tremendous advantage in the industry and those that are proactive as opposed to reactive will forge ahead.

So it's time for agency owners to ask themselves, "is my head in the right space to move with

the times & technology, or is my head buried in the sand?".

And while you're asking questions, go back to your buying group and ask them "what are you doing about NDC that will support my business and future, and how much have you invested in it?"

You'll learn a lot about where their heads are at by their reply!

I take great delight when my members ask me that question - actually they

don't ask me that question any more these days as they are all involved, they're prepared and they are ready to embrace this new world.

NDC is here to stay and it's the future, it's revolutionary and it's even one of the reasons that new "future focused" buying groups have emerged...something I know all too well!

“No doubt about it, early adopters of NDC technology will have a tremendous advantage in the industry and those that are proactive as opposed to reactive will forge ahead”

CORPORATE UPDATE

1000MTG plots growth

EXCLUSIVE

1000 Mile Travel Group, the global corporate and premium leisure network of independent contractors now owned by Corporate Travel Management (**TD** 01 Jul 2022), is set for rapid expansion, with growth plans including doubling its size in Australia over the next year.

Speaking to **TD** last week, co-founders Nicola Veltman and Ben Ross (**pictured**) said the CTM acquisition had been a game-changer, seeing 1000MTG take on responsibility for hundreds of US-based consultants and effectively become CTM's SME and premium leisure fulfilment arm.

The pair have relocated from Melbourne to Denver, Colorado to run the burgeoning global business which now has leaders in North America (Christy Shafer), the UK (Alex Locke) and Australia (Lauren Gray), while Craig Constable is 1000MTG's Global Chief Operating Officer.

In the USA there are currently over 750 advisors associated with the business, and Veltman said 1000MTG was planning to launch the corporate side there shortly.

And in Australia, where 1000MTG has seen advisors on average double their TTV and commissions post-COVID, the host agency is looking to grow its network with the same quality of advisor they currently have.

"Our focus for the next 12 months and beyond is enhancing productivity for our existing



network through technology, new platforms and increased supplier relationships," Veltman said.

"This means our TTV per advisor will increase and the time they get back in their day will too."

Locally 1000MTG increased their independent contractors base by a third last year, without any sort of active recruitment program, and "the plan is to bring in another 50 in the next 12 months," she said.

"But the number isn't as important as the experience... for us it's still about having that 15 to 20 years in the industry, that leadership, that nous, and the change of mindset where our advisors need to take off the employee hat and put on the business owner hat."

With a background in corporate travel, Veltman and Ross have been undergoing a rapid initiation into the premium leisure sector, and are actively engaging with 1000MTG's participation in Virtuoso as well as familiarising themselves with key product segments such as cruising.

AI in travel: threat or superpower?



travelBulletin

Airwallex+Expedia

MELBOURNE-BASED fintech Airwallex has announced a partnership with Expedia, offering clients discounts of 10% on hotel stays when travelling overseas.

Airwallex Head of North America Strategic Partnerships, Jessica Chiu, said the pact was part of the company's mission to enable modern businesses to grow and operate outside of borders and restrictions via its straightforward foreign currency exchange platform.

She added Airwallex recognised the power of face-to-face engagements and wanted to help its clients travel cost-effectively.

GBT ESG report

AMERICAN Express Global Business Travel (GBT) has published its 2022 *Environmental, Social and Governance* (ESG) report, which it says "highlights significant accomplishments and advancements" made by the TMC.

CEO Paul Abbott said 2022 was a seminal year for the business.

"We became a public company, defined our purpose, and set out bold commitments to drive change in our industry and leave a legacy of positive societal impact."

Key achievements in advancing carbon reduction complemented support for refugees and more - to view the report **CLICK HERE**.

Cvent's top meeting spots

BUSINESS events technology provider Cvent has named Singapore as the top meeting destination in the Asia-Pacific region, with Sydney coming in second spot followed by Bangkok, Seoul and then Melbourne.

The company's newly released data - the first such lists since the onset of COVID-19 - also include regional rankings for North America, Europe and the Middle East and Africa, collectively compiled based on activity via the Cvent Supplier Network venue-sourcing platform.

"Our Cvent Top Lists highlight the hotels, venues and destinations that are enabling a dramatic comeback by capitalising on the swift return to in-person events,"

said Cvent VP of International Sales, Graham Pope, with other APAC destinations in the top 10 including Tokyo, Bali, Kuala Lumpur, the Gold Coast & Phuket.

Nine of the top 10 meeting hotels in the Asia Pacific region are in Singapore, with the notable exception of the Hyatt Regency Sydney which came in second spot on the list, just behind the Fairmont Singapore and ahead of the Singapore Shangri-La.

Hyatt Regency Sydney Director of Sales, Rachel Virgara, said it is an honour to receive such recognition, adding "we owe a great deal of this success to the Cvent Supplier Network platform".

The full list of Cvent Top Meeting Destinations and Top Meeting Hotels is online **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

Reflections Holiday Parks is now offering savings of up to 25% off for Rewards Members when booking across cabins or sites for stays before 30 Jun. Reflections has various sites at Moonee Beach, Jimmys Beach, Seal Rocks and Lake Keepit. Become a Rewards Member **HERE**.

Set to end by 30 Jun, **Cruise Traveller** has released a new fly, cruise and stay package that features a month-long voyage covering the Mediterranean from Spain to Turkey, priced from \$15,795pp. Return flights to London from various cities with one night's stay pre-cruise is included. **CLICK HERE** or call 1800 507 777 for more.

Club Med is reminding agents that its Early Bird Sale for 2024 holidays is ending soon on 31 May. Limited time is left to save up to 30% on a wide range of getaways, including stays at Club Med Kani, Maldives from only \$2,937 per adult, as well as bookings at Club Med Phuket, Thailand from only \$1,813pp. **CLICK HERE** for more details.

Score up to 20% off return flights and up to 35% on select holiday packages with **Fiji Airways**. Travellers can pay from just \$579 to Fiji for a return fare from Australia for travel dates between 01 Jun and 15 Mar 2024. More deals are available and sale ends 07 Jun, book **HERE** now.

Intrepid explores Queenstown



TO CONCLUDE the Antarctic cruising season, the Intrepid Travel team recently spent a week in Queenstown, New Zealand.

Intrepid Polar Managing Director Chad Carey (**pictured** with the Intrepid team), who is also MD of Chimu Adventures, posted on his

social media to mark the special occasion with his team, stating "next year will be even better with this brains trust!"

Chimu runs various tours in the region on board *Heritage Adventurer*, including the 17-day Birding Down Under voyage.

Webjet's green progress

WEBJET has released its annual sustainability report, which shows the online travel agency's (OTA) strides towards improving its environmental and social impact.

The *2023 Sustainability Report* outlines Webjet's recent eco-focused achievements, including becoming a Toitu 'net carbon zero' certified organisation after offsetting its emissions through the purchase of carbon credits.

The report identifies the OTA's Sustainable Traveller carbon offset program as a big driver in its progress towards net zero carbon emissions (**TD** 04 Sep 2020).

In FY23, the program offset 40,400 tonnes of carbon emissions, up 127% from the previous year, as well achieving a 64% increase in the number of transactions offsetting emissions, and a 107% rise in the number of flight kms that were offset.

Also highlighted within the report are various measures

in place across Webjet's global offices aimed at minimising the company's environmental footprint, including the installation of energy efficient lighting and reducing paper usage.

Additionally, the report revealed Webjet's plans to establish a Sustainability Committee made up of representatives from key areas across the company.

The report goes on to highlight the company's diversity and inclusion initiatives, such as the 40:40 Vision, which is a commitment to having women comprise at least 40% of senior management by 2030.

Webjet has already undertaken several efforts in support of this goal, including 'Women in Webjet', a company-wide mentoring program for women employees, and a paygap analysis conducted for Webjet OTA and GoSee, with any inconsistencies to be addressed in FY24.

Mat adds Vietnam

MAT McLachlan Battlefield Tours has launched a new 13-day Vietnam Past & Present tour, in response to renewed demand among Aussie travellers to visit the Asian country.

Priced from \$4,999pp twin share, the itinerary departs on 18 Nov from Ho Chi Minh City, and will follow in the footsteps of the Australians who served during the Vietnam War.

The tour will also showcase modern Vietnamese culture and delicious cuisine - to see the full itinerary and book, **CLICK HERE**.

France ban in force

FRANCE'S short-haul flight ban has come into force this week, resulting in the scrapping of all domestic air services that can be replaced by a train journey of under 2.5 hours.

The controversial ban, initially flagged as part of France's 2021 Climate Act, is intended to help combat climate change by reducing carbon emissions.

The move has elicited plenty of criticism from the travel industry, including from the International Air Transport Association (**TD** 14 Dec 2022).

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