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Signature showcase

TOURISM Australia is inviting travel advisors to join its Aussie Specialist team next month for a series of events in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne highlighting the Signature Experiences of Australia. For more details see **page nine**.

AFTA Board backs Constitution

EXCLUSIVE

THE Board of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) has unanimously backed a new Constitution for the organisation, which will now be circulated for member approval at the organisation's upcoming Annual General Meeting next month.

The document was a key agenda item at yesterday's AFTA Board meeting, which also included the tabling of annual reports from Chairman Tom Manwaring and CEO Dean Long.

Manwaring highlighted the extensive discussions undertaken over the last 12 months to help drive the development of AFTA, including seeking sector-wide input on the Constitution to reflect the Federation's diverse membership base including corporate agents, tour operators, advisors, wholesalers, consolidators, retail travel agents and online travel agents.

"There have been multiple workshops and consultations to ensure a more inclusive association for the future."

Long's report noted 2022/23 had seen a robust return to growth for the industry, while navigating the challenges around the reopening of travel.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages including our **Luxury** feature, plus full pages:

- Abercrombie & Kent
- Tourism Australia

He highlighted key activities during the year including the triumphant return of the National Travel Industry Awards, the ATAS review which acknowledged the nuances between different participants such as travel agents, tour operators & wholesalers, and ongoing skills reforms to support the industry workforce.

There was also plenty of advocacy, including recognition of ATAS as a core requirement for the Whole of Australian Government travel management tender, and ACCC submissions relating to several airlines which "sought clarification on the stated benefits to the travelling public and our members".

The AFTA AGM will take place on 21 Jun - more on **page five**.

Myrmell to leave Carnival Corp

A RESTRUCTURE within Carnival Corporation's UK operation has seen longstanding executive Sture Myrmell leave the business after three decades.

Myrmell spent much of his Carnival career in Australia in various roles culminating as President of Carnival Australia and P&O Cruises Australia (*TD* 01 Dec 2017), and relocated to lead the UK business about 18 months ago (*TD* 29 Sep 2021).

He's being replaced by Paul Ludlow who will now head up both Cunard and P&O - more details in today's **Cruise Weekly**.

A&K on India

ABERCROMBIE & Kent Sales Manager Jacqui Tulafa will provide a first hand account of a recent trip to India during an upcoming webinar on 21 Jun.

Participants also have the chance to win a \$200 voucher - rego details on **page eight**.



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NZ to weigh pax

AIR New Zealand will ask more than 10,000 travellers on its international network to participate in a pax weight survey next month.

The survey, which is a Civil Aviation Authority requirement, is voluntary and anonymous.

“We weigh everything that goes on the aircraft...for customers, crew and cabin bags, which we use average weights, which we get from doing this survey,” Air NZ Load Control Improvement Specialist Alastair James said.

“By weighing in, you’ll be helping us to fly you safely and efficiently, every time,” he added.

The survey will take place at the entrance to the gate lounge of certain Air NZ flights departing from Auckland Int’l Airport between 29 May and 02 Jul.

‘23 to be “volatile” year

NEW data from travel insurance and assistance giant Allianz Partners has revealed high demand, more volatility, and raised expectations will define 2023’s turbulent travel landscape.

Allianz Partners’ Customer Lab has revealed the latest Australian travel trends for this year, with travel volume remaining strong.

Purchase intentions for international and domestic travel have more than doubled, to 65%, and 35% respectively.

Heightened demand contributed to significant growth in Allianz Partners’ travel business last year, which achieved revenues of €3.05 billion - an 80% year-on-year increase, and the company’s best-ever performance.

Customer numbers have also remained strong through the first months of this year, marking significant year-over-year growth. However high demand is

accompanied by a significant increase in customer expectations as travellers face a highly complex economic backdrop, including inflationary pressures and volatile economic conditions.

As major cost-of-living pressures continue, travellers are adjusting their discretionary spending while on vacation.

There is also a significant increase in customer expectations from their insurer, including more timely handling of their claim, and greater responsiveness.

Allianz Partners Chief Marketing Officer noted the surge in leisure travel, high inflation, labour shortages, climate change and geopolitical instability which combined mean “2023 is shaping up to be a very complex year”.

Virgin fee increases

VIRGIN Australia has announced increases to some of its fees, including name changes which will now cost \$99 for domestic, trans-Tasman and short haul international flights.

Change fees for group bookings are also increasing to \$99, while baggage rates have seen a \$10 increase across all booking channels effective 25 May.

MSC \$25 deposits

TRAVELLERS can book an MSC Cruises sailing with just AU/ NZ\$25pp deposit, like the 19-night Grand Voyage from Miami to Rome aboard *MSC Divina*.

The reduced deposit offer is valid on all cruises from Nov 2023 to Apr 2024, for bookings made between 01 Jun-31 Jul 2023.

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Special QF JFK PJs

BUSINESS class passengers on the first Qantas flights to New York in more than three years will be offered a limited edition navy sleeper suit, incorporating the numbers QF3/4 in a bespoke New York heart design, along with custom-created Rebecca Vallance amenity kit and matching eyeshade.

From 14 Jun QF will operate thrice weekly SYD-JFK Boeing 787 Dreamliner services, increasing to four in Oct, with the flights for the first time ever transiting in Auckland rather than Los Angeles.

NSW fishing grants

APPLICATIONS are now open for a new round of the \$500,000 Aboriginal Fishing Trust Fund (AFTF), which supports Aboriginal commercial fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic tourism-related businesses across NSW.

Applications close 25 Aug - **CLICK HERE** for further details.

Opera House tour

TO CELEBRATE the Sydney Opera House’s 50th anniversary, the iconic landmark has unveiled an intimate “Hidden House” tour.

Operating from Jun-Oct, the back-of-house experience will see intimate groups of 10 hosted by two Opera House guides, while staging and lighting technicians will share “lively anecdotes of what it’s like to work in the world-famous landmark”.

The tour will conclude with a high-tea brunch at the Portside restaurant - more details at sydneyoperahouse.com.

NCL class extension

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has extended the deadline for travel advisors wanting to lodge assignments under the first semester of its “Class of 2023” incentive and training program.

To avoid detention, the “Destination Asia” modules can now be submitted by 30 Jun to receive up to 500 Partners First Rewards points, as well as progress to the draw to win a free cruise in 2024 - more details at nclclassof2023.com.au.

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Window Seat

ELMO, Australia's first internationally-accredited Facility Dog, celebrated his fourth birthday yesterday at Adelaide Airport's onsite venue, This Little Piggy.

In the company of his best fur-iends from Guide Dogs SA/NT, the loveable Labrador got to woof down a specially-made, dog-friendly birthday cake and pup-cakes, along with some puppachinos, from local dog bakery The Woofery.

"Elmo has been a valuable addition to our team at Adelaide Airport," Adelaide Airport MD Brenton Cox said.

"Research has shown that the presence of a Facility Dog can help people control anxiety, regulate emotions, and improve mood."

Business travel rebound

MANUFACTURING is on track to be the fastest-growing industry for business travel bookings over the next year, according to new data from Corporate Traveller.

The Flight Centre Travel Group business saw a 51% increase in bookings out of the manufacturing sector during Jan-Apr this year compared to the same period last year, followed closely by the healthcare and social assistance industry, up 50%.

Also in the top-five ranking are the mining, oil and gas industry (up 49%), professional services (up 47%) and construction (up 43%), which the latter expected to remain the leading industry for travel spend, having increased its spend by 98% this year.

Healthcare was the second highest-spending industry, with a growth of 106%, followed by professional services, which overtook mining, oil and gas as the

third-highest spending industry.

"More people in these industries are travelling for work or travelling more often," Corporate Traveller's Australian-based Global MD Tom Walley said.

"In fact, we expect these rate of bookings to increase more in FY24, with govts committing to large infrastructure spends."

Among those projects are Sydney's WestConnex and the Vic and Qld Inland Rail project, which will continue their cross-state and intercity developments throughout 2023 and into 2024.

Walley forecasts a strong financial year ahead for business travel, saying, "a combination of Australians' confidence in air travel, international conferences taking place locally and overseas, and generational projects nearing completion will help to keep travel at the top of business agendas at least for the near future."

RVC Canada kickoff

RENDEZ-VOUS Canada (RVC) 2023, dubbed the "Olympic Games of the tourism industry", has officially kicked off today in Quebec City, with more than 1,500 participants from 29 countries.

Hosted by Destination Canada & the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, the four-day event will showcase local tourism businesses and artisan producers, as well as highlight the strength of the Bonjour Quebec tourism brand.

RVC 2023 is expected to generate 8,000 overnight stays in Quebec City-area hotels, 10 famil tours, and nine guided and self-guided tours of the city and its surrounds, resulting in a direct injection of CAD\$3.6m into the local economy, and CAD\$90m in long-term economic spin-offs.

Quebec's Tourism Minister Caroline Proulx said the event is "an outstanding opportunity to showcase the best that Québec has to offer".

avis budget group

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If you are a charismatic, customer-centric sales leader with a proven track record in the travel, aviation or mobility sectors you might be the right fit to lead the Avis Budget sales organisation across the Pacific.

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ATEC accessible training

THE Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) has introduced a new accessible and inclusive tourism training platform to support businesses in working with travellers with access needs and enhancing their travel and holiday experiences.

Led by inclusive travel advocate Martin Heng, 'Accessible & Inclusive Host' is an online, self-directed training program designed to help industry members understand the needs of travellers from all life stages, backgrounds and abilities.

The new program consists of three 45-minute modules: 'Culture Ready', which covers key aspects of accessible and inclusive culture; 'Product Ready', to help businesses understand traveller needs and customise experiences; and 'Service Ready', which addresses service expectations and how to adjust service delivery for the client.

"Accessible travel is a necessity, and every tourism business should embrace the opportunity that our Host program offers to get new ideas on how to improve services," ATEC Managing Director Peter Shelley said.

"Inclusive and accessible travel is about providing the most accessible tourism experience for as wide an audience as possible including visitors with functional and cognitive impairments, senior travellers and even travellers with small children."

Priced at \$300 (with a 50% discount for ATEC members), the course includes an Accessible & Inclusive Host Handbook and access to support via the community page, with graduates to receive ATEC's Accessible & Inclusive Host digital badge.

For more info or to register for the new Tourism Training Hub program, [CLICK HERE](#) or email training@atec.net.au.

Plaza Premium Japanese debut

PLAZA Premium Group has made its debut in Japan with the launch of Plaza Premium Lounge Nagoya at Chubu Centrair International Airport.

Located in the international departure hall and spanning over 440m², the new lounge is open daily to provide a space for all travellers to relax before their flight, with visitors able to enjoy international and Asian cuisine, and a selection of Japanese Sake, shochu, and draught beer.

Starlux expansion

TAIWAN-BASED luxury carrier Starlux Airlines is set to launch daily flights between Taipei and Clark, Philippines from 15 Aug, marking the airline's third Philippines destination.

The route will connect North American travellers from Los Angeles to the Philippines gateway via Taipei.

Ready to go Global

A FLEDGLING UK-based carrier has flagged its intentions of entering the hotly contested transatlantic flight market, and has already acquired the first of four Airbus A380 superjumbos to further the plan.

Scheduled for its first flights in 2024, Global Airlines has been founded by British travel entrepreneur James Asquith, who also founded a home-swap business called Holiday Swap and incidentally holds a world record for being the youngest person to ever travel to every sovereign nation on the planet.

"The next step is to overhaul and refit the aircraft," he said, with a 471-seat layout planned.

"Acquiring our aircraft rather than leasing shows our commitment to financial security and resilience from day one."

The current plan is to operate non-stop Global Airlines services from London Gatwick to New York and Los Angeles.



JUNE 2023 ROADSHOW SERIES - COMING TO YOUR NEAREST CAPITAL CITY!

<p>SYDNEY Mon 5 June 11am or 6pm session Four Seasons Sydney</p>	<p>MELBOURNE Wed 7 June 11am or 6pm session Metropolis Events</p>	<p>ADELAIDE Thurs 8 June 6pm session Eos by SkyCity</p>	<p>BRISBANE Tue 13 June 2pm or 6pm session Water's Edge Portside</p>	<p>PERTH Thurs 15 June 11am or 6pm session The Ritz-Carlton</p>
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Please arrive at the session start time.

To secure your space, please register through the link, call 1300 737 178 (Australia) or email reservations.us@ponant.com. Registration essential.



TIME to assemble in Vic!

THE Victorian Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) community gathered at the Amadeus office in Melbourne last week to discuss and share ideas to explore opportunities for career growth and success.

The travel mentoring organisation took to social media to show gratitude to both Piers Charters-Wood from Amadeus and Ingrid Berthelsen of Evolution Travel Collective for sharing their inspiring stories through the transformative power of the TIME program, as well as thanking Amadeus as a welcoming host, making it “an unforgettable experience for everyone involved”.



KRISTY Moore, Travel Moore; Cameron Edwards and Liz Eastaugh, Amadeus.



INGRID Berthelsen from Evolution Travel Collective and Amadeus' Piers Charters-Wood.



DAVID Hughes, UNIGLOBE with Kylie Wapp, ANZCRO.



SARAH Hoskin from Globus and Cover-More Group's Shane Varne.



ELAINE Peik and Salla Ekman from 50 Degrees North Group with Emma Goodall and Isabella Price from Intrepid Travel.

AFTA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



TODAY, on behalf of the AFTA Board of Directors, we will release a new AFTA Constitution for approval by the members.

Critically, this Constitution is being put forward with the unanimous support of the AFTA Board.

Members are being asked to vote YES on this new Constitution at our AGM on 21 Jun 2023.

As I mentioned in this column when we commenced the consultation on the draft constitution, the Board undertook a detailed review of what the sector needs in its peak body.

The focus was ensuring we had heeded the lessons of COVID, and had a Constitution that embraced all elements of the sector.

The feedback from the consultation process was extremely positive, with universal agreement that it was a significantly positive step forward, and struck the right balance for all members.

We will now be briefing AFTA members on this next critical

phase in our 65-year history.

We also released our 2023 Annual Report which provides insights into the activities of AFTA over the last 12 months.

It has been an incredibly successful year as we worked to ensure ATAS was fit for purpose for agents, tour operators and wholesalers.

We kept our advocacy program focused on delivering meaningful outcomes for our members and their clients.

For the first time in over 10 years, 'travel consultants' was added back onto the Federal skills list, a critical first step to increasing the number of people who can work in our sector.

We also held two high-impact events - NTIA and the inaugural Women in Travel Summit, which allowed AFTA to engage deeply with our members across all industry segments.

As the CEO of AFTA, I am proud of our accomplishments and the role AFTA plays in supporting our members and the sector.

This year, we have undertaken reform projects to renew our focus to foster our sectors' growth through working together, and to continue positioning AFTA as the leading force for the travel sector.

Explore, MTA deal

MORE than 350 of Explore Worldwide's small group adventures will be distributed via the national MTA Mobile Travel Agents Travel network through a new preferred partnership announced yesterday.

MTA said the pact reflected rapid growth in demand for small group adventure product, with Head of Product Neil Robertson saying adding Explore to the portfolio was an "important part of our product strategy".

Explore Regional Director Ben Ittensohn said "agents are the cornerstone of our success as we grow our brand here in Australia", with strong growth particularly seen in Europe and the brand's walking and cycling trips.

Explore has guaranteed all departures as part of its commitment to travel agents, and continues to offer a 'Sell 3, Get 1 Free' incentive - for brochures and more info call 1300 439 756.

\$450m Crown fine

CROWN Resorts will pay a whopping \$450 million fine, after reaching an agreement with AUSTRAC to settle proceedings relating to historical non-compliance with anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing laws.

The pact relates to alleged illicit activity at Crown Melbourne and Crown Perth, with the settlement pending Federal Court approval at an upcoming hearing in Jul.

Dandenong debut

IHG Hotels & Resorts has today opened the new 124-room Holiday Inn Dandenong.

The property's owner, Pelligra Group, invested \$12m in a transformation featuring the brand's new signature Open Lobby concept and Dandelion Lounge & Eatery.

All rooms have also been fully transformed and there's also a large 120-person meeting room.

AIR CANADA REVAMPING LUX PRODUCT

EXCLUSIVE

AIR Canada is deep into the design phase of the next generation of its business class pod seating, Executive VP Marketing & Digital Mark Nasr revealed to **Travel Daily**, which will form part of a number of revamps of its luxury product.

The new pods will be the third generation of the product, with Air Canada planning two new designs - one for its Airbus A321XLRs, and one for its future wide-body product.

All of Air Canada's 30 A321XLRs will come with 14 pod suites which will be optimised to fit a narrow-body single-aisle aircraft.

There will also be a version of the pod designed for its wide-body aircraft, which in Air Canada's current fleet includes Boeing 777s, Boeing 787 Dreamliners, and a number of



Airbus A330-300s.

Air Canada is also working on a new design standard for its lounges, which is set to be unveiled to the marketplace in just a few months, Nasr added.

The airline's overhaul of its high-end product is a project the team is "deeply passionate" about, Nasr said, focused on bringing a distinctive cultural quality to AC.

"One of the things I admire from the airlines down here is that they are unmistakably Australian," he enthused.

"There's some things that we can learn from that playbook...coming up with just a really consistent and elevated expression of our brand and one that's unmistakably Canadian.

"We offer a great experience, but there's an opportunity to make it more Canadian and extol the values and virtues of Canadiana."

Pictured, Senior Director of Sales APAC Kiyo Weiss and VP Brand Andy Shibata with Nasr on their recent visit to Sydney.

LV Doha lounge

QATAR Airways has opened the world's first Louis Vuitton lounge at Hamad International, available for First and Business class passengers.

The lounge is accessible via a special elevator, and also features a partnership with French chef Yannick Alleno.

"I don't think any airport in the world will ever be able to match what we have done here," Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al Baker proudly asserted.

Hyatt's new Secret

HYATT has further elevated its luxury all-inclusive offerings with its new Impression by Secrets brand.

The launch opening, Impression by Secrets Isla Mujeres, introduces the 10th brand within the World of Hyatt Inclusive Collection.

Butlers will welcome guests on the mainland, before they board a private yacht from Marina Hacienda del Mar to reach the Mexican resort's private pier.

Replete with butler service and complimentary laundry services, the resort's 125 well-appointed suites are adorned with luxury in-room amenities to enhance guest comfort, such as exclusive bath amenities by Le Labo.

NZ luxury property offers new membership

PROPERTY developer The B Group has launched an exclusive accommodation membership program with soon-to-be-opened New Zealand luxury hotel Kitea.

Located in Wanaka on the South Island, the property's membership program will be sold via blockchain.

There are two tiers of membership available in limited quantities - 650 Nomad

memberships (for individuals), and 20 Teams memberships (for friends/companies).

Set to open mid-24, Kitea will feature 35 rooms, a restaurant, and a rooftop bar, as well as a guest and member-only courtyard and private lounge.

Set against the backdrop of the Southern Alps, Kitea is designed for local adventuring, with a range of complimentary activities available.

Virtuoso on tour

NEXT week Virtuoso will host its first-ever "On Tour - Destination Day" event in Australia, offering attendees a full day of networking and learning across six pavilions.

A total of 36 unique partners will participate including tourism boards, tour operators, DMCs and hotels from across the globe.

The event is on both 06 and 07 Jun at Sydney's ICC.



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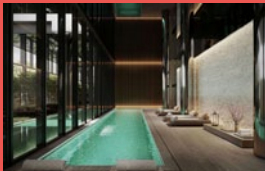


ACCOMMODATION

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 **Kimpton Brice**, a boutique hotel nestled in the quieter part of Savannah in the USA, has announced the completion of its renovation, which will see a new look for the hotel's lobby, guestrooms, corridors, meeting rooms, pool terrace, Secret Garden and Pacci Italian Kitchen + Bar. The presentation of the revamp boasts the brand's identity with Southern luxury and sophistication upon arrival, as well as new amenities in its guestrooms and restaurant.



Located on the intersection of Hermosilla Street and Nunez de Balboa Street, the new **Mandarin Oriental Residences, Madrid** will feature 30 apartments. Slated to open in Jan 2025, the Mandarin property will span seven floors and feature two and three-bedroom units with living spaces of up to 283m², including six units with private pools. Residents of the property can also enjoy the residence lounge, fitness centre, and an indoor lap pool.



The upmarket **Curtain Bluff** ultra-luxury resort in Antigua will undergo an extensive multi-million dollar transformation with the reopening date set to be Oct 2023. The hotel's two Hulford Collection Suites, Morris & Grace Bay Pool Suites, and a selection of Junior Suites will receive a refurbishment to provide a more modernised environment, alongside a new adults-only wellness area.

Disneyland's Pixar Place



DISNEYLAND California has offered a sneak peek at Pixar Place Hotel, which is set to become America's first fully Pixar-themed accommodation.

Formerly known as Paradise Pier Hotel, the Disneyland Resort property in southern California is currently under renovation, which is slated to finish in the Northern Hemisphere winter season.

According to the Disney Parks Blog, the hotel lobby will feature "larger-than-life" iconic images from Pixar films, the Pixar Lamp balancing atop its ball, and a colourful character-inspired mobile hanging from the roof.

The property will also house

a family play area inspired by Pixar's short films, as well as an outpost of Southern California chain restaurant Great Maple, which will replace the now-closed Disney's PCH Grill.

Later this season, a new *Finding Nemo*-themed splash pad will open at the hotel, which has still been partially open and hosting guests during the renovation, and Crush the sea turtle will sit atop the hotel's 186ft-long waterslide.

Pixar Place Hotel will be the most affordable of Disneyland's hotel options, with rooms starting at just over US\$400 a night.

Pictured: Concept art of the Pixar Place hotel lobby.

Vistara LH c'share

INDIAN carrier Vistara looks set to expand its wings into Europe via an extensive codeshare agreement with Lufthansa.

The carrier has filed its UK-coded flight numbers on a range of routes to and from Frankfurt, however at this stage reservations for the codeshare sectors are not yet open.

Destinations include Amsterdam, Berlin, Budapest, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Helsinki, Lisbon, Munich, Oslo, Prague, Rome and Stockholm, according to GDS.

Italy tourist deaths

FOUR passengers aboard a tourist boat in Italy's Lake Maggiore have drowned after the vessel capsized during a storm.

The 16m boat had been chartered by a group for a birthday cruise, according to Lombardy Tourism chief Attilio Fontana, when strong winds rose.

Some of the 25 passengers and crew were able to swim to safety, but victims included two Italian citizens, one Israeli and a Russian.

Lake Maggiore is in Italy's north near the border with Switzerland.

AI in travel:
threat or superpower?



travelBulletin

Abercrombie & Kent

DISCOVER A&K'S INDIA WITH JACQUI TUFALA

Full of vibrancy, culture, colour, history, and with a wealth of diverse experiences on offer, India is one of A&K's top selling destinations.

When your clients travel to India with A&K, they are taken beyond the extraordinary with privileged access to authentic and immersive insider experiences, the services of expert guides with unrivalled insight, and stay in exquisite palace-turned-luxury-hotel accommodation. A&K sets the benchmark for bespoke itineraries in India.

You are invited to join A&K QLD/WA Sales Manager Jacqui Tufala to hear firsthand all about her recent experience to India with A&K.

Wednesday 21 June @ 10.30am AEDST

All attendees have a chance to win a \$200 Gift Voucher.

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Showcase

Capella Lodge, Lord Howe Island, NSW



AUSSIE SPECIALIST PROGRAM

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SYDNEY

Tuesday 20 June, 6pm - 8.30pm
QT Sydney, 49 Market Street, Sydney

MELBOURNE

Wednesday 21 June, 6pm - 9pm
Kino Cinema, 45 Collins Street, Melbourne

BRISBANE

Thursday 22 June, 6pm - 9pm
Elizabeth Theatre, 175 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane

Places are limited, please **RSVP before 9 June.**

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