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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of the latest news including **Business Events News**, plus a front cover wrap from **Flight Centre** and full pages from:

- Entire Travel Group
- Helloworld
- Abercrombie & Kent

Travelmarvel in NZ

TRAVELMARVEL has unveiled its New Zealand program for 2024/25, featuring land and rail journeys including a new 15-day rail and cruise tour.

The collection takes travellers to vibrant cities on the North and South Islands, including Auckland.

Couples can save up to \$1,200 for bookings made by 29 Feb - more info [HERE](#).

NCL plots air-inclusive fares

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) is actively working on plans to add airfares from Australia as part of its cruise offering, with the initiative possibly rolling out as early as the first quarter of 2024.

The move was revealed in Sydney yesterday by Jason Krimmel, who became NCL Vice President of Int'l Business earlier this year (*TD* 12 Jan).

Krimmel told *Travel Daily* "we've been toying with it for a while now; we are looking at hopefully being able to offer air from Australia to the places where our cruise ships are".

"The Australian market is a priority for us in terms of expanding our air offering," he confirmed, "because we know that when we can offer end-to-end pricing that's an easier sell

for our travel partners."

Krimmel said selling cruise can be complicated, but "we're going to put it in a nice bow, wrap it up".

He said NCL is experiencing a phenomenal year, with bookings from the local region now on par with 2019 levels, when Australia was the cruise line's biggest international market.

In the meantime, however, the UK and Europe have also performed much better than 2019, with Australia's performance now constrained by high airfares and flight capacity.

"Australia continues to be a large opportunity for us...we expect that we will see marked, consistent, incremental growth over the next decade," he said.

Krimmel also highlighted NCL's strong commitment to its trade partners in Australia.

"I believe with my whole heart that NCL remained the best partner through COVID and beyond, and when we look at the things that we've been doing here, it's not just about the financial relationship, it's about true partnership and it's about the ways that we engage our partners differently," he said.

Much more from NCL in today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*. *BP*

FC goes your way

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's (FCTG) Independent division promises to help travel advisors do it their way, by offering a raft of advantages including commissions at the time of ticketing, plus dedicated marketing and product support.

See the **cover page** of today's edition to learn more.

JQ asks wine not

WINE-LOVERS are rejoicing at news that Jetstar will soon launch direct flights from Sydney to Busselton, near Margaret River.

Qantas' budget carrier, which has been on an expansion spree in recent weeks, said the new service will take off on 26 Mar next year and will operate three times a week.

This week JQ confirmed it will resume Sydney to Osaka flights in Apr 2024 and operate Melbourne to Hervey Bay in Jun next year.

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SIA-PAL eyeing Oz

AUSTRALIA has been listed as one of the markets to be explored via a newly expanded codeshare agreement between Singapore Airlines and Philippine Airlines.

The revelation was made as part of a wider codeshare announcement that will see the two carriers collaborate on routes from Manila and Singapore.

These include 27 domestic PAL routes from Manila and six SIA flights to destinations in Europe, including Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Milan, Paris, Rome, and Zurich, to be rolled out progressively over the next six weeks.

No specific Aussie ports were mentioned by time of publishing.

Sell travel your own way

EXCLUSIVE

TRAVEL professionals will soon have the ability to launch fully customisable e-commerce travel websites through a new white label platform solution developed by the expanding travel-as-a-service company Travlr.

Hailing the new B2B service as having the potential to “transform the digital landscape” in 2024, Travlr said its new content management system will give users instant access to a range of global tourism operators via a single, easy-to-use interface.

To make the new service a reality, Travlr has partnered with

respected wholesale leaders including Aeronology, Hotelbeds and TourRadar.

User benefits include the option of designing the website’s shopfront, access to unique travel packages comprised of flights, accommodation and activities from companies such as Intrepid and AAT Kings, as well as the flexibility to customise the site to reflect branding needs.

Travel professionals will also be able to upload and manage tailored travel deals independently or in conjunction with Travlr’s 24/7 support team.

Reflecting on the new service, Aeronology CEO Russell Carstensen said the tie-up will showcase his company’s bespoke air booking technology and help travel advisors leverage the dynamic changes in buying behaviour taking place in the travel sector.

“Aeronology’s aim is to complement their non-air services with our own air booking services as the Travlr product evolves to be the best-in-market as a full self-service booking engine,” he said.

“The travel industry is in a transformational moment built on cloud computing, AI and the digitalisation of travel distribution, GDS, NDC, and low-cost carriers are creating amazing APIs that will change the buying behaviour of...travel advisors.”

More details on the new service available [HERE](#). AB

Apply with A&K

A&K Travel Group is on the hunt for new team members, with a variety of roles up for grabs including several cruise-focused positions across its A&K, Crystal, and Akorn Destination Management brands.

Find out more on the [back page](#).

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The Dutch ditches

THE Netherlands has bowed to pressure from European airlines and scrapped a controversial plan to cap flights at its busy Amsterdam Airport Schiphol.

If the plan to cap emissions and noise went ahead, it would've axed 60,000 flights a year.

CT celebrates in Vietnam



CT PARTNERS has wrapped up a successful Annual Business Meeting, which attracted a record number of the travel buying network's members.

Around 100 delegates, including 33 preferred supplier partners and Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) CEO Dean Long, attended the event in Ho Chi Minh City at the end of Oct.

Usually held in Bangkok, the new location and revised format of the meeting contributed to high excitement and energy levels among attendees.

"We were excited to be able to host this meeting in as vibrant and inspiring a destination as Ho Chi Minh City," CT Partners CEO Matt Masson shared.

Focusing on the theme 'Transform', the event included panel discussions, member breakout sessions, and partner and keynote presentations, which addressed a wide range of

topics including AI adoption and generational booking patterns.

The second day of the event saw members and suppliers connect via one-on-one meetings conducted in a new speed dating format, which took place in the Park Hyatt Saigon ballroom.

Attendees also heard from founder of not-for-profit hospitality training program KOTO, Jimmy Pham, who delivered a moving keynote.

Delegates enjoyed several off-site experiences, including a speedboat trip up the Saigon river to a glamorous evening event at The Deck, and a final night Gala Dinner hosted at the historic Reunification Palace. *JM*

Pictured: Anastasia Kotanidis, Seabourn; Nicole Boyer, CT Partners; James Sitters, Oceania; Alice Ager, Uniworld; Anabelle Brown, Ponant; Emily Potter, Regent Seven Seas Cruises; and Nansi Gidiess, Malaysia Airlines.

Muwa Niseko rep

JAPANESE luxury ski resort Muwa Niseko has appointed LG Lux Collective and Great Southern Outbound to be its exclusive reps in the Australian market.

The resort boasts ski-in, ski-out access, state-of-the-art facilities, and gourmet dining options.



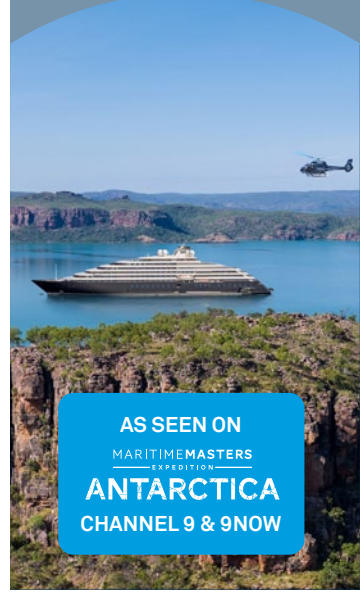
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Lindblad expands Nat Geo

LINDBLAD Expeditions has extended its partnership with the National Geographic brand, opening up a raft of new expansion opportunities for the expedition cruise line.

The two companies' long-standing agreement has been extended for another 17 years, with the new deal aimed at tapping new cruise markets and enhancing promotional activities.

Among the new benefits include Lindblad cementing global rights to the National Geographic brand for expedition cruises, which will enable the line to scale up its fleet capacity of 17 ships into new cruise markets and segments.

Another key perk of the agreement is Lindblad's added ability to leverage National Geographic Partners' affiliate brand The Walt Disney Company, which will provide access to the family-focused company's far-reaching sales channels to



create more effective marketing campaigns for the line.

Labelling the recent tie-up a "milestone" in its global growth strategy, Lindblad said a global license to use the National Geographic Expeditions brand and offer passengers co-branded trips on expedition ships will elevate its position as the leader in expedition cruises.

"Over the past two decades, our intuitive connection and shared ethos has positively impacted hundreds of thousands of guests, and I look forward to our next two decades of industry-leading growth," Lindblad founder Sven-Olof Lindblad said.

The new deal will also see more money spent on enhancing the expertise on board its ships. *AB*

Branson delivers \$1m in free cruises

THE man revered for his marketing stunts is back at it again, with the human headline Richard Branson surprising everyone aboard a VA flight with free Virgin Voyages cruises to mark its arrival in Australia.

Delivered by Branson himself via Facetime, the announcement saw each passenger score themselves a spot on *Resilient Lady*, which will make her way to Australia's shores next month.

Branson's cruise brand has also announced more attractive pricing for its inaugural season, with cabins leading in from just \$149 per person, including up to \$1,000 of inclusions.

Watch the full stunt [HERE](#).



A321 window fail

THE UK Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) has identified the main cause of a recent incident in which the windows on a Titan Airways' plane, which was being used for filming purposes, were seriously damaged while departing London Stansted Airport.

The report found that high-powered lights positioned outside the Airbus A321neo for filming had melted some of the foam surrounding the windows; luckily, the aircraft was able to return to the airport before pressurisation problems occurred.

QF cool with Gen Z

DESPITE its falling reputation, Qantas is still in the good books if you ask Gen Z travellers, who voted the carrier the 'Most Trusted Airline' in StudentUniverse's annual awards; Singapore Airlines, however, took top spot as 'Best Overall Airline'.

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Aussies not social

NO AUSTRALIAN carriers were listed in a recent study to find out which airlines around the world are generating the most conversations on social media platforms in 2023.

The GlobalData report found American Airlines led the way with a 17% share of chatter, followed by United Airlines, Lufthansa and Air Canada.

SriLankan enhances

SRILANKAN Airlines has launched self-service check-in and self-bag-drop services at Bandaranaike International Airport to help make its passenger services more seamless and efficient.

The airline's customers will now be able to complete the entire check-in process independently, including flight check-in, seat selection, and the printing of boarding passes and bag tags, using the new self-serve kiosks.

MEL demand ready to K-Pop

ASIANA Airlines will launch direct flights between Melbourne Airport and Seoul Incheon Airport from Dec, operating two direct flights a week.

Tickets for the new route went on sale today, with Melbourne Airport Chief of Aviation Jim Parashos stating the direct services will take away any disincentives for Victorians to visit South Korea, which has been rising in popularity globally among tourists in recent years.

"These direct services will mean Victoria travellers and exporters can avoid the cost and inconvenience of transiting through another city to reach South Korea," he noted.

"Victoria has increasingly close business links to South Korea, with companies making significant investments in our state, such as the new Hanwha Defence facility at Geelong.

"As the home of K-Pop, South

Korea is attracting an increasing number of Australian tourists, while Melbourne's major events such as the Australian Open are a huge draw for Korean visitors".

MEANWHILE Melbourne Airport is on track to become the first Australian hub to exceed pre-pandemic levels of int'l capacity.

Overseas pax numbers were up 47% in Oct compared to the same month in 2022, while the total number processed during the month was 3,015,236 travellers.

The figure included 2.1 million domestic passengers, also a post-COVID record for MEL. *AB*

Viking adds more

VIKING has seen record registration and attendance across 11 of its 16 Explorer Sessions, which kicked off last month in Ballina, prompting it to add more sessions - for details and to register, [CLICK HERE](#).



Window Seat

IT'S no longer only crying babies who create unpleasant noise for flying travellers - now, it's also adults who apparently won't stop singing.

A gospel vocalist, who was sure to make it clear that she was Grammy-nominated, treated a recent Delta flight as her own personal stage, with all the pax her unwitting audience.

Detroit-born Bobbi Storm, 36, stood in the aisle to regale the plane with her latest song, and got snippy with a flight attendant when they asked her to stop singing and return to her seat, or else she'd be escorted off.

The songstress filmed the encounter and, for some reason, thought it was a good idea to post it on social media - where viewers called her out for being "entitled" and "annoying".



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travelBulletin



TTNQ lures overseas

TOURISM Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) has launched a new global campaign to boost international visitation.

The tourism body has partnered with Expedia and Trip.com to launch activity in seven key markets, backed by funding from the Qld Government.



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Greener road trips ahead

AUSTRALIA'S love of road trips isn't disappearing anytime soon, with over three in four (77%) travellers taking at least one road trip in the past year - however, new data from Avis Australia reflects shifting attitudes towards car usage and road travel.

The new *Road Ahead* report shows a rising trend towards electric vehicles (EVs), with three in five (62%) Australians willing to rent an EV for a road trip, and just shy of 60% stating they believe a road trip in an EV is a more sustainable way to holiday, compared to flying or cruising.

Authentically Latin

ADVENTURE World has launched its new Authentic South America Collection of tours.

The latest batch of itineraries include visit destinations such as Ecuador, Peru, and Chile - all with an emphasis on experiencing the locations as if you were a local.

The data also reveals that two in three (66%) Aussies plan to give up car ownership and opt for a car subscription model within the next five years, with Millennials at the forefront of this movement.

"We predict an uplift in Australian consumers seeking car hire solutions with sustainability and adaptability in mind, underscored by a desire to lower environmental impact and travel flexibly," Avis Budget Group Pacific's MD Tom Mooney said. *JM*

Iceland is watchful

KEFLAVIK International Airport in Iceland remains operational despite the imminent threat of an eruption from the Fagradalsfjall volcano, just 10 miles north of the aviation hub.

Earth tremors have rocked the surrounding areas of the volcano in recent weeks, and local authorities speculate a major eruption is likely to occur soon.

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Qantas found guilty

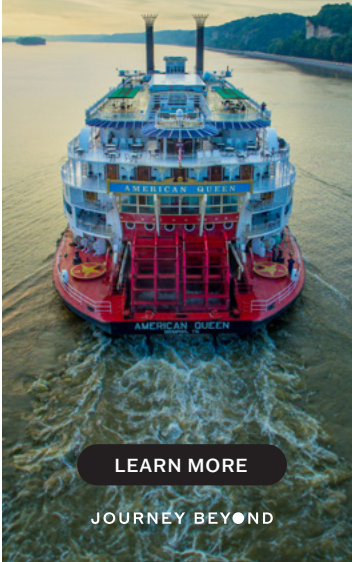
QANTAS will face sentencing after a judge found the airline guilty of breaching workplace safety laws during the pandemic.

The case related to QF standing down Theo Seremetidis after he ordered staff to cease work due to conditions on the ground being unsafe to proceed.



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AIME glocalises

THE Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) has released the program for its highly anticipated 2024 event at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) in Feb.

Next year's AIME is expected to attract more than 600 global event professionals and will be themed 'The 4Ps of GLOCALISATION', exploring how people, planet, purpose, and profit can be used to "harmonise the relationship between global insights and local nuances".

Marketing exec Lisa Ronson will take to the stage as a keynote speaker, as will bestselling author and founder of the 100 Things movement, Sebastian Terry.

ORGANISERS FORCED TO CUT COSTS

BUSINESS event organisers are having to fork out more to host events, according to new global research from The Eastside Rooms, which shows that 83% of the sector have seen increases in event costs over the last year.

The England-based venue's cost-of-living survey gathered responses from 125 event professionals from around the world in Oct 2023, with the aim of identifying the challenges and opportunities currently faced by the sector.

Of the 83% of event organisers who reported a rise in costs, 45% said the jump was "significant".

Associations/not-for-profits are feeling the pinch even more, with 88% noting their event budgets not stretching far enough,

compared to 73% of corporates.

The two different sides of the industry are taking separate approaches when it comes to covering the rising costs of events, The Eastside Rooms' survey results also revealed.

Just over half (51%) of associations/not-for-profits are reducing catering costs at their events, versus 25% of the corporates, who are more likely to reduce delegate numbers instead (28%).

Some of the rising costs are being passed onto attendees, with 59% of associations/not-for-profits bumping up their registration fees - with 23% of them increasing by more than 10% - while only 28% of corporate respondents are taking this approach.

Associations/not-for-profits are also more willing to shrink their AV/production spend (35%), compared to 25% of corporates.

Interestingly, both groups are fairly equal when reducing how often they are holding meetings and events, with 29% of associations/not-for-profits versus 25% of corporates.

The Eastside Rooms Director of Sales and Marketing, Leanne Bladen, commented that it's no surprise that organisers are facing financial challenges.

"It is clear from these results that it is not just the organisers that need to think differently as they deliver events but also the venues, caterers and myriad other suppliers in the event sector," she explained. *JM*

Royal's perfect vision

THE Royal International Convention Centre (Royal ICC) in Queensland has made a significant investment in its audio-visual technology.

Its long-standing partner Microhire has supplied the event centre with extensive new lighting, vision and sound installation, as well as a state-of-the-art LED wall.

The Royal ICC's meeting rooms also now feature new laser projectors, as well as a new array of speakers, subs and amps, and extensive light additions.

WA's bright minds shine on global stage

BUSINESS Events Perth has recognised Western Australia's brightest minds through the Aspire Awards program, now in its 24th year.

On Mon, 11 of the state's top-notch researchers, academics and professionals were named as recipients, including Natalie Marinho, a leader in the field of Augmented Reality (AR).

Marinho, who is pictured accepting the 'This is Fremantle' Aspire Award from Fremantle Mayor Hannah Fitzhardinge, founded Voyant Augmented Reality, which designs AR experiences for social impact



and creative industries.

The winners will receive travel grants to support their attendance at international conferences, allowing them to showcase their expertise on a global stage.


Marinho plans to represent WA at the Augmented World Expo in California next year.

GCCEC is green

AFTER 15 years of "hard work on sustainability", Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre has achieved master certification through EarthCheck.

"This reflects our dedication to taking a leadership position in driving a greener, more responsible future for the events industry," Centre GM Adrienne Readings said.

GCCEC has an overarching sustainability policy, green event checklist, waste and water reduction processes, power-saving equipment, and compostable products.









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Intrepid Travel has welcomed **Joanne Crisp** to its team as the new Head of Public Relations and Communications for the APAC region. She will work closely with ANZ and Asia Managing Directors Brett Mitchell and Natalie Kidd in her new role, as she draws on her diverse experience across B2B and B2C environments, including previous roles at Westpac, ANZ, and Graincorp. Crisp brings a deep understanding of travel, having co-founded Melbourne-based travel agency Forth and Wonder.

The boutique property **Tower Lodge**, situated in Hunter Valley, has welcomed **Anthony Fullerton** to the team as Hope Estate Group Chef. Fullerton will be in charge of the reinvigorated restaurant, where he will develop a menu using estate-grown ingredients, including beef and greens, as well as fresh produce from local small farms and suppliers. He was recently awarded 'Australian Hotels Association Australian Chef of the Year' in 2022.

Boasting nearly a decade of experience in marketing communications, **Laura Stephenson** has been named as the new Marketing Manager at **Qantas**. Stephenson's key responsibilities include focusing on trade marketing with Qantas' online and offline travel agency partners. She was the Director of Tourism Development & Events at Gate 7 prior to joining, and has also worked with other carriers including American Airlines, where she headed up the marketing department in Australia and New Zealand for nearly five years.

Former Virgin America Executive **Peter Hunt** has been appointed as **Virgin Voyages'** Chief Financial Officer, effective from Dec. Hunt brings a wealth of varied experience spanning 30 years across financial and operational fields. He will work closely with Nirmal Saverimuttu, who was recently promoted to become the cruise line's Chief Executive.

The **World Travel & Tourism Council** has appointed **Gloria Fluxa** as its Vice Chair, and Chair of its Sustainability Committee. She succeeds the outgoing Darrell Wade, who has been in the position since 2020. Fluxa is currently the Vice Chairman and Chief Sustainability Officer of Iberostar Group and is passionately championing green initiatives and the responsible tourism movement. She was also declared a 'Young Global Leader' by the World Economic Forum in 2018.

Kanit Sangmookda has taken on the role of Country GM for Thailand and Laos at **The Ascott Limited**. Sangmookda will oversee a portfolio of over 30 properties, a third of which are slated to open in the next three years. He boasts over two decades of experience in the hospitality sector in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, and has held senior positions with leading hotel brands such as Marriott International, Minor Hotels and Starwood Hotels & Resorts.

A tropical rendez-vous



NEW Caledonia Tourism and Aircalin recently gave a group of Australian wholesalers the opportunity to explore the French slice of paradise as part of the tourism board's Rendez-Vous Workshop 2023.

The agents were treated to famil activities during the week leading up to the B2B event, including a historical tour of Noumea, snorkelling in Bourail, and watching a traditional Kanak dance performance.

The lucky cohort also enjoyed

plenty of sumptuous dining experiences, including lunch at the overwater bungalow restaurant, Le Roof and L'Entrecote. *JM*

Pictured: L-R back row - Jeremie Jezequel, NC Voyages; Benoit Cadenel, Booking.com; Jonathan Huyghe, Expedia; Middle row - Cheree Farrell, Aircalin/New Caledonia Tourism AU; Kristen Hanger, Ignite Travel; Lisa Tappin, Entire Travel; Rebecca Marchal, New Caledonia Tourism AU; Jacqui Constable, Omniche; and Jose Sentieiro, Trip.com in front.



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The Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre

How do I win?

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Travel Specialist (MEL)

A&K - Australian Inbound (DMC)

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Crystal - Sales Team

Cruise Consultant (MEL)

Finance

Senior Payroll Officer (MEL)

Akorn Destination Management

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Cruise Operations Coordinator (MEL)

Cruise Commercial Assistant - Short-term contract (MEL)

Cruise Specialist - Land Programs & Events (MEL)

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