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ATIA names AAC members

EXCLUSIVE

THE Australian Travel Industry Association will today introduce the newly appointed members of the ATAS Advisory Committee (AAC), **TD** can exclusively reveal.

Ten industry experts have been appointed to oversee the Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS), with members chosen to reflect the wide diversity within the sector.

The inaugural members include:

- **Brett Mitchell**, Intrepid Travel
- **Chad Carey**, Chimu Adventures
- **Deb Fox**, Abercrombie & Kent
- **David Walker**, Snow Ski/ITC
- **Ken Morgan**, Australian Travel Agents Cooperative
- **Scott Darlow**, Link Travel Group
- **Steve Hui**, iflyflat
- **Gina Norman**, RAA Travel
- **Brett Dann**, Hunter Travel Group
- **Lauren Gray**, 1000 Mile Travel

Tour operators, wholesalers, hybrid/online, corporate and retail agency networks are represented, with ATIA CEO Dean Long telling **Travel Daily** it's been a "concerted effort to reflect the dynamic and multifaceted nature of the travel industry".

"We are thrilled to welcome the new members to the ATAS Advisory Committee," he said.

"Their collective wisdom and extensive industry experience will undoubtedly contribute to the robust oversight and strategic direction of ATAS."

The ATIA CEO said AAC members demonstrated a commitment to the future of ATAS as an

accreditation scheme that "not only evaluates, but inspires travel businesses to reach the pinnacle of operational excellence".

Long noted ATAS accreditation is contingent on strict criteria such as in-depth business model analysis, insurance, Australian Consumer Law compliance, workforce standards, director checks, annual financial reviews and a "robust consumer complaints program".

The new AAC members are key to ensuring the scheme remains "relevant, rigorous, and responsive to the evolving needs of the travel industry and consumer expectations," he said.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily has eight pages of news, including a photo page from **Travellers Choice** and our **Corporate Update**, plus a front cover wrap from **CVFR** and full pages from:

- Norwegian Cruise Line
- Tourism NT
- A Force for Good

WIN an NT trip

TOURISM Northern Territory will host live webinars later this month, featuring two touring operators and offering the opportunity to become an NT Expert and experience the destination - more on **page 10**.

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TRAVEL agents can now double their money on all sailings when they deposit any Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) booking between 16-27 Nov through Partners First Rewards - for more information, see [page nine](#).

Halfpenny flips roles

HERITAGE Expeditions has appointed Robert Halfpenny to the newly created role of Head of Global Sales, with the move marking an "exciting new chapter" for the Christchurch-based expedition operator. Halfpenny is currently at Quark Expeditions, and will remain Sydney-based in his new position. Quark is expected to announce his replacement next week - more in today's *Cruise Weekly*.

itravel links with two more



ITRAVEL has announced two new additions to the LINK Affiliate membership group - Angela Meek from Be Inspired Travel in Queensland, and Karen Ridge from Mildura Travel and Cruise/Food & Wine Travel in Vic.

itravel CEO Steve Labroski shared he was delighted to welcome Meek and Ridge to the team, and said "they bring a wealth of knowledge and experience, and add to our national expansion strategy". Ridge (**pictured right**) said itravel's "more personalised and connected approach" inspired her to join, while Meek (**pictured left**) was enticed by the travel

network's "member-driven care and support". "There are so many different models you can choose from, and the financial gains are fabulous too," Meek added. For more information about joining the itravel membership group, [CLICK HERE](#). JM

Get your tix now!

TRAVEL Daily's Bon Voyage 2023 gathering on 06 Dec will help the industry see the year off in style, with tickets now available for the event at Sydney's Hilton Marble Bar - for more details see the [page four ad](#).

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Australia gains *Edge*

CELEBRITY Cruises has confirmed its *Celebrity Edge* vessel will return to Australia in the 2025-26 season.

The update was revealed as part of the line's newly revealed 2025-26 season, which features 800 sailings to 300 destinations in 72 countries, plus new itineraries in Japan, Iceland and more.

The collection also marks the debut of a Caribbean season for *Celebrity Xcel*, as well as new ports in Europe - more in **CW**.

Qantas expands QBR tools

ENHANCEMENTS to the Qantas Business Rewards (QBR) program (**TD 10 Aug**) have now gone live, giving members access to real-time reporting, new trips functionality and the ability to book and manage Qantas Hotels and car hire.

After being trialed with select customers over the last few months, the Spotnana-powered upgrade was rolled out to all clients today, essentially making QBR a comprehensive travel management platform offering end-to-end trip booking and management capabilities.

As well as being able to book flights, hotels and car hire, customers can use their QBR account to track membership, monitor flying activity and see the discounts available under their

company's QBR membership tier.

Clients can also redeem Qantas Points directly for Classic Reward seats, upgrades and more, and access limited-time bonus offers from QBR's more than 50 program partners.

Travel agents are reminded that client ABNs and QF Frequent Flyer numbers must be quoted in bookings in order to earn points.

Discounts of up to 10% are available on base fares, or up to 5% on Red e-Deals, depending on the membership level which is based on booking volumes, while agents can earn 10% commission on Qantas Club memberships.

QF has also released a Qantas Business Rewards Clue Card for travel advisors to help clients get the most out of the program - to download **CLICK HERE**. **BP**


Qatar takes a dip

DISCOVER Qatar had added a new weapon to its growing list of stopover incentives, this time unveiling the country's first all-inclusive beach and accommodation concept.

Leveraging its brand-new B12 Beach Club (**TD 10 Oct**), the country's tourism body is offering travellers the choice of standard and premium packages starting from just US\$134pp and US\$170pp per night respectively.

Packages launch from 01 Dec.

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A Force for Good

A **FORCE** for Good Events is preparing to make a huge comeback, returning to Sydney in Feb 2024 with a speaker line-up of 15 inspiring industry leaders, including Adventure World MD Neil Rodgers - head to the [back page](#) for further details.

Small tours, big future



SMALL tours have a big future in the travel industry according to Tauck's Vice President of Global Sales, Steve Spivak.

The travel brand's chief, who is US-based, addressed attendees alongside Australian Managing Director David Clark at a special lunch hosted by Tauck at NEL in Sydney yesterday.

He admitted that Tauck didn't focus on small tours initially, but that they are now the priority.

"It used to be that our small groups were sort of an afterthought," Spivak said.

"If we had a classic departure of 36 people on average that wasn't selling well, we converted it to a small group.

"That used to be about 25% of what we offered but small groups are now built from the ground up for fewer people and they are now 75% of our business - these groups average 18 to 24 guests."

Such was the success that it has led Tauck to develop new tours for even smaller groups.

"For next year we are debuting a very unique concept created by our marketing department

called 'smaller groups,'" Spivak announced.

While he joked about the name, Tauck is serious about the investment in the strategy.

"Perhaps not the best name for now, but we will average 14-16 guests," Spivak insisted.

He added it was less about cost and more about value and experience for the traveller. *DF*

Pullman pulls name

THE Pullman Melbourne on Swanston has made the decision to change its name to Pullman Melbourne City Centre, effective from 28 Nov.

Owners of the hotel said they made the decision to emphasise its central location in the city.

The property offers guests generously sized rooms that feature GHD hair straighteners, Nespresso machines, make-up, 55" Smart TVs, and Foxtel access.



Window Seat

AN INNOCENT mistake has led to two New Zealanders embarking on an extra adventure after returning from their travels in Australia.

Wellington woman Kiri Ipolito, who was on the same Air New Zealand flight from Brisbane as passenger James Sauvao, told the *NZ Herald* that she grabbed the last bag off the carousel, only to get home and realise it wasn't her bag at all.

As it turns out, Ipolito and Sauvao had bought an identical bag from Kmart the night before their flight - and neither had checked the luggage tag before taking the wrong bag home.

Sauvao, who admitted that he took the wrong bag first, blamed his oversight on exhaustion.

After tracking each other down, the two arranged to meet halfway, driving across the lower North Island to reunite with their rightful belongings.

Both were in good spirits about the mix-up, with Sauvao saying, "she was really nice and we were both so thankful to get hold of each other and exchange our bags".

"It's just amazing to see people work together to help solve problems."

We're sure they will both be double-checking their bag tags from now on!

Travel Daily
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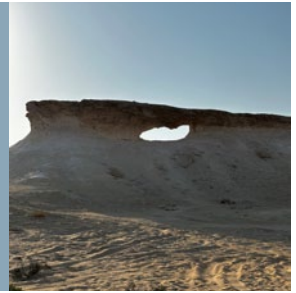
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Airbnb moves in on agents

AIRBNB has revealed intentions for its app to become “the ultimate travel agent”, according to recent comments made by co-founder and CEO Brian Chesky.

Speaking at the company’s recent third-quarter earnings conference, Chesky shared that “before the internet, there were travel agents, and they actually used to learn about you.

“And then travel got unbundled, it became self-service and it became all about price.

“But we do think that there’s a way that travel could change, and AI could lead the way with that... we’re just at the beginning of this,” he explained.

Airbnb has already begun to action these plans, announcing this week that it purchased tech startup Gameplanner.AI, marking its first acquisition since becoming a public company in 2020.

The vacation rental firm splashed around US\$200 million on the fledgling business, which was co-founded in 2020 by Adam Cheyer, one of the brains behind Apple’s smart assistant, Siri.

The acquisition will help fast-track Airbnb’s AI projects,

according to Chesky, who believes generative AI will completely transform its platform.

He revealed Airbnb will utilise the startup’s technology as a “travel concierge” that gathers information about users over time in order to improve customers’ travel experiences. *JM*

NRMA’s Yamba buy

NRMA Parks and Resorts has added to its expanding resort portfolio, after acquiring Angourie Resort at Yamba on the mid-north New South Wales coast.

Located in the beachside town of Angourie on the northern tip of Yuraygir National Park, the popular holiday spot offers great views of the ocean and a range of modern self-contained accommodation, including one-bedroom apartments and two-bedroom villas.

Etihad charts growth

ETIHAD is expecting to return to its peak 2017 pax numbers by late next year or early 2025, CEO Antonoaldo Neves revealed at the Dubai Airshow earlier this week.

As part of its Journey 2030 strategy, the UAE carrier is set to expand to over 125 destinations, focusing on connecting short and medium-haul destinations in the GCC, and plans to double its fleet to over 160 aircraft, which will help it achieve a target of 33 million pax by 2030.

We’re more than just rooms



THE Sebel in Sydney’s CBD is getting close to launching to the market after undertaking a major renovation and rebrand from its previous life as a Mercure hotel.

Billed as bringing a new “essence of style and sophistication” to the city, the 86-room Sebel Sydney Martin

Place will offer guests luxurious interiors and a contemporary design to attract travellers looking for an “oasis” in the middle of the busy metropolis.

The rebrand has been led by new owner The Salter Brothers, which is working with Accor to deliver a complete sophisticated transformation of the property.

“Salter Brothers is excited about our investment in The Sebel brand and the newly branded property will elevate the hotel, providing guests with an intimate, bespoke upscale The Sebel experience,” The Salter Brothers MD Paul Salter said.

Coinciding with the 60th birthday for The Sebel business, the brand now has 34 properties located throughout Australia and New Zealand after a period of steady expansion.

The Sebel Sydney Martin Place has officially rebranded and its entire refurbishment will be revealed to the public in Jan. *AB*

Eurail and donate

FOR every Eurail Pass bought the brand will donate €10 (A\$17) to The Intrepid Foundation throughout the month of Nov.

The rail platform has launched the charitable initiative as an alternative to the traditional Black Friday sale taking place tomorrow, with Eurail’s Save and Donate campaign designed to encourage travellers to slow down, savour their journeys and build meaningful connections.

The donations will directly support European partners of The Intrepid Foundation.

EK banks on A350s

EMIRATES has ordered 15 additional Airbus A350-900s for an estimated US\$6 billion.

The announcement follows a massive Boeing order this week (*TD* 14 Nov) and takes EK’s total A350 order book to 65 units.



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CORPORATE UPDATE

ATMC takes off with VA

EXCLUSIVE

THE Association of Travel Management Companies (ATMC) has announced a new partnership with Virgin Australia, as part of the carrier’s ongoing strategy to be the “preferred airline in all areas it serves, delivering exceptional travel experiences to corporates and their travellers”.

ATMC Chair, Tass Messinis, hailed VA’s positive approach to corporate travel agencies, saying “the ATMC and its members welcome the opportunity in supporting key initiatives which benefit our industry and the customers we serve”.

Virgin Australia GM of Sales, Darren McDermott (pictured), said the airline is thrilled to work with key stakeholders to shape the future of business travel.

“By combining our expertise and actively engaging with ATMC and its members, we can



achieve shared success and deliver exceptional value to our corporate travel customers,” McDermott said.

Messinis said the pact will see VA work closely with the ATMC, its members and their customers to “drive initiatives that set new standards in corporate travel management”.

“Virgin Australia’s collaborative approach and forward-thinking mindset will create a more connected corporate travel industry for all stakeholders,” Messinis added. *BP*

Pascoe at CTC

NEXT week economist Michael Pascoe will join CAPA’s Corporate Travel Community (CTC) as guest speaker for the group’s Corporate Travel Summit & Awards.

The keynote presenter will share his experience and opinions developed over a five-decade career in finance commentary.

The summit takes place in Sydney on 23-24 Nov, with registrations now open to industry suppliers and corporate travel managers - **CLICK HERE**.

Mining for travel

REGIONAL travel in Australia rose 29% year-on-year over the nine months to 30 Sep, with the mining sector continuing to drive strong demand, according to new Corporate Traveller figures.

The SME division of Flight Centre found the top regional business routes in 2023 include Brisbane-Mackay, Perth-Kalgoorlie, Brisbane-Emerald, and Brisbane-Townsville.



The Chat with Jenny Travel Daily

Missed out on any episodes of Season ONE of ‘Conversations with women in travel’?

CLICK HERE to listen

Reed & Mackay expands to Sweden

NAVAN has announced the rebrand of Swedish TMC Resia as Reed & Mackay.

The company, at the time known as TripActions, acquired Resia two years ago, with the business now joining the global Reed & Mackay brand, which also includes Australia’s former Concierge Travel Group.

Reed & Mackay CEO Europe, Julie Oliver, said the new branding will “deliver even greater value to our Sweden-based clients as well as providing career opportunities to our employees”.

GBT revenue up

AMERICAN Express Global Business Travel (GBT) has reported a 17% uplift in revenue during the three months to 30 Sep, with a focus on growing its SME market “clearly paying off”, according to CEO Paul Abbott.

The company’s third-quarter update noted an 8% increase in TTV to US\$7.1 billion, with a net loss of US\$8 million - a significant improvement on the US\$73 million loss in the previous corresponding period in 2022.

Abbott noted caution going forward due to the “challenging” global economic environment.

Corporate key for FCTG

THE rebound of Flight Centre Travel Group’s (FCTG) corporate arm is outpacing the average recovery rate of the broader business travel sector, with TTV exceeding \$3.1 billion during the Sep quarter, according to figures released earlier this week at the company’s AGM (*TD* 15 Nov).

FCM Travel Solutions Global Chief Operating Officer, Melissa Elf, said FCM and Corporate Traveller had both enjoyed strong wins during the period “as we continue to gain market share across multiple sectors”.

“We have seen an 11% increase in corporate travel bookings for the first four months of the financial year versus 2022, with Mining/Oil/Gas, Government/NFP and Services leading the way in the industries most travelled

between Jul and Oct,” she said.

Elf noted strong performance on the “golden triangle” of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, with MEL-SYD bookings up 8.5%, BNE-SYD increasing 8.1%, and a 10% uplift on BNE-MEL.

Elf said the company is closely watching to see how the traditionally quieter periods of Dec and Jan would pan out this year for corporate travellers, with an ever-increasing trend for extended ‘bleisure’ stays and strong demand for in-person Christmas functions.

FCTG noted its “go-to-win” corporate strategy had delivered about \$4 billion of new client accounts so far this year, while longer-standing customers are contributing about \$7 billion in transactions to the division. *BP*



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Agents choose to win on the GC

THE Star Gold Coast was shining bright during the recent Travellers Choice National Awards Gala Dinner held last weekend.

In recognition of their support for preferred suppliers, 30 members won Gold, Silver or Bronze Choice awards and now have the option of exploring Vietnam, New Zealand or the Maldives.

After enjoying outstanding success over the past year, Everywhere Travel, based in the coastal WA town of Carnarvon, also received the 2023 Leading Agency Award.

Few agents are as loyal as Travellers Choice members and this year 15 agencies were honoured with service awards, including City Beach Travel & Cruise, which marked 30 years of steadfast membership with the group.

A new recipient of the Supplier of the Year Award was also unveiled, with members bestowing the accolade on the Globus family of brands for the first time.

Congratulations to all of this year's winners!

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information on Travellers Choice.



WINDSONG Travel, NSW.



BRONZE Choice Award winners.



SERVICE award recipients Michelle Hancock, City Beach Travel & Cruise, 30 years; Dianne Garbin, Floreat World of Travel, 25 years; Sue Holmes, Carine Travel Bug, 25 years; and Heidi Kervinen, Global Village Travel, 20 years.



SUPPLIER of the Year winners: Sarah Hoskin and Anji Tierney from the Globus family of brands.



HASTWELL Travel & Cruise, SA.



THE teams from Chris Watson Travel, NSW and Weston Cruise & Travel, NSW.



CHRISTIAN Hunter with the team from Everywhere Travel, Claire Van Dongen, Dianne Ramirez and Abby Punch.



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Insight Vacations is offering travellers savings of up to 15% through its Black Friday Travel Sale on a large range of holidays across its 2024 calendar. Eligible premium tours include the nine-day Highlights of Spain from just \$2,860 per person, or the 12-day Italian Elegance tour, priced from \$7,036pp and much more. Book before 05 Dec to enjoy the savings [HERE](#).

Book between 21 Nov and 01 Dec to enjoy the Thankful for Travel sale by **Windstar Cruises**. Save on voyages through the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, Tahiti and more. Sailors can pick a perk such as a one-night hotel stay pre- or post-cruise, or up to US\$1,000 credits to spend on board. Bookings will be available [HERE](#) from 21 Nov.

Merlin Entertainments has announced some Black Friday savings across its Aussie locations, including SEA LIFE Sydney, SEA LIFE Melbourne, SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast and more. Access to these venues are priced from just \$63 per adult from the original listed price of \$90, and \$49 per child down from \$70. Email kiah.wilson@merlinentertainments.com.au to learn more.

Savings of up to US\$5,400 per stateroom on more than 100 global voyages in 2024 are available with **Oceania Cruises'** Best-Ever Black Friday Sale. Featured sailings include the 14-day Asian Gulfs & Delta with savings of US\$3,400 per stateroom, as well as the 10-day Baltic Autumn voyage with discounts of up to US\$1,400 per stateroom. Learn more on the deal at www.nclhhd.com.

Exclusively available for Oaks Discovery members, **Oaks Hotels, Resorts & Suites** is now offering its loyalty members early access to the savings of up to 30% of stays of two nights or more from Mon 20 Nov. General public can enjoy the deal from 22 Nov until 29 Nov for the upcoming summer school holidays and the Christmas break. For more info, [CLICK HERE](#).

Collette is offering Aussie travel advisors early access to its Black Friday sale until 19 Nov. Up to 15% of savings are available with the promotion by using the code "TRAVEL23" at the time of booking. Itineraries including the Sicily and its Isles tour, which has been slashed down to \$4,589 per person, twin share from the original listed price of \$5,399. Visit www.gocollette.com to book.

Keen sailors can score up to half price on select voyages in **Hurtigruten's** "biggest" Black Friday deal ever. Almost all sailings with the Original Coastal Express, and the brand-new North Cape Express, which has launched in Oct are available on this offer for travels between 01 Jan 2024 and 31 Apr 2024. The cruise line is also offering discounts of up to 35% on select Svalbard Express tours - for more email Anders.Lindstrom@hurtigruten.com.

Rocky Mountaineer has launched its Black Friday Special offering travellers savings of up to \$1,800 per couple on the tour operator's Canadian routes, and up to \$2,400 per couple on its US itineraries. The deal is available for travellers when they book a package of six nights or longer. The promotion concludes on 04 Dec. Call 1300 336 932 for more.

The special Cyber Sale is currently on with select **Contiki** tours in 2024. Claimed to be its biggest sale promotion, travellers can score up to 25% off on the tour operator's hottest deals, which include the eight-day Thai Island Hopper West journey from \$889 per person, the 18-day European Whirl tour from \$3,910pp and nearly month-long European Escapade is priced from \$5,007 per person. Book and learn more by calling Contiki on 1300 172 967.

Coinciding with the bustling promotion period, **Paper Bark Camp** in Jervis Bay, NSW has offered travellers to experience luxury glamping for three nights only paying the price for two. Available until 21 Dec, the rates per night begin from \$745 per couple, or \$1,490 for the three nights (including the free night). Call Paper Bark Camp on 02 4441 6066 to book.

European Waterways is spoiling travellers with savings of up to 25% off on whale boat charters on two of its popular hotel barge cruises in France with its Black Friday Special. Departing on 07 Apr 2024, travellers can travel aboard the *La Belle Epoque* in Burgundy or select the eight-passenger on *Enchante* on the Canal du Midi on 31 Mar 2024. Book before 01 Dec to enjoy the offer [HERE](#).

Themed with Polar Friday, **Chimu Adventures** is telling travel advisors to forget Black Friday by offering up to 50% off on its Antarctic adventures. Travellers can apply the offer on the popular 16-day Penguin Safari: South Georgia & Antarctica from \$13,450 per person, The two-week Journey to the Antarctic Circle from \$11,417pp, and much more. View all of the eligible tours and price [HERE](#).

Along with a new travel brochure, **Wendy Wu Tours** is offering travellers savings of up to \$700 per person with its signature cruise holidays. The Black Friday Sale is available with the new 15-day Magical Mekong Cruise & Beach - view [HERE](#), priced from \$4,980 per person, twin share. Call 1300 727 998 or [CLICK HERE](#) to book before 30 Nov.

Those who book before 01 Dec can take advantage of whopping savings on select tours with **Journey Beyond's** Black Friday Savings. Travellers can save up to 50% off on the Great Southern train journeys departing Jan 2024, or a free upgrade from Gold Twin to Platinum for travel in Dec 2023 or Jan 2024. Solo travellers can also savor on the no single supplement on select tour dates between Mar and Jun 2024. To view the full suite of deals on offer, visit the landing page [HERE](#).

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8TH MARCH 2024 SYDNEY



Neil Rodgers
Managing Director for
Adventure World & Co-host



Dr. Jill Robinson
Headline Speaker - Founder
Animals Asia Foundation,
Travelling from Hong Kong



Dr. Rewena Keegan
Headline Speaker - Surgeon &
Lifestyle Medicine Specialist,
Speaking on Wellness



Damian Perry
Managing Director APAC -
Hurtigruten, travelling from
Melbourne

Meet some of our inspiring speakers

We are bringing together 15 + industry leaders, local & global, driving change, Championing diversity, equality, sustainability, Propelling the rise of women leaders, preserving our planet, Inspiring stories, empowering talks, and endless networking.



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