Travel Daily First with the news

Friday 27th Oct 2023



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news, including our Corporate Update page, an NDC opinion piece from **Travelport**, plus full pages:

- Ponant
- Disney Destinations

Disney's dream deal

DISNEYLAND Resort is making dreams come true with a new trade-facing child tickets offer for any of its theme parks.

Packed with value, the special offer tickets are valid for kids between the ages of three and nine, with guests able to choose from one-, two-, and three-day options, as well as add upgrades such as Park Hopper tickets and the Disney Genie+ service.

The child tickets are valid for use Jan-Mar 2024 - see the last page.

ATIA chief on global stage

AUSTRALIAN Travel Industry Association CEO Dean Long has been able to press global issues via a presentation at the ITB Asia 2023 Conference in Singapore. Long joined other senior industry figures discussing key topics seen as critical to the future of business events, corporate and leisure travel as well as travel technology.

ATIA's presence at ITB is part of the Association's ongoing international engagement as part of groups such as the World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA) as well as key IATA panel participation.

"ATIA's work at a global level helps shape the landscape for the benefit of our members and, while the detail is often so granular that it doesn't feature in our regular member updates, it is important," Long said.

"Attending significant conferences and conventions such as ITB Asia, which prides itself on being a cradle for travel's cutting-edge trends, matters both from a leadership and relationship building level."

Long helped host an ITB Asia panel exploring the lifestyle of travel experiences, alongside senior executives from The Travel Corporation, Discova, Tui Musement and TakeMeTour. BP

QF Accelya pact

IN WHAT must have been one of Igor Kwiatkowski's final acts as QF Head Executive Manager of Global Sales (TD 25 Oct), the carrier has expanded a new longterm New Distribution Capability (NDC) agreement with software provider Accelya.

Accelya has worked with QF for some years, with the tech firm's solutions now promising to further enhance the carrier's NDC online retailing offering.

Kwiatkowski said, "Accelya's NDC expertise has helped us provide the best-in-class NDC retailing experience, and we look forward to delivering more value to our customers".

Sail away to Japan

BOOK your clients on a dream holiday to Japan with Ponant, which is offering several cruise packages from \$7,590pp including return flights.

The seven-night Japanese Subtropical Islands Southbound sailing is just one example of what's available - see page eight.

Magic at sea arrives

DISNEY Cruise line's *Disney* Wonder cruised into Sydney Harbour for the first time ever this morning, marking the line's debut in Australasian waters.

Senior Disney executives are on board including Thomas Mazloum, President of Disney's New Experiences Portfolio and Disney Signature Experiences.

Disney is hosting industry partners on board the ship in a major event this afternoon.





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ATAC embraces evolution

EXCLUSIVE

THE evolution of Australian Travel Agents Cooperative's (ATAC) business model was high on the agenda at its AGM in Canberra last week (TD 23 Oct), with Chairman Jack Taylor hailing better future incentives as the pathway to continued growth.

Taylor (pictured) and General Manager Michelle Emerton sat down with *Travel Daily* this week to discuss how ATAC plans to keep its value proposition healthy in 2024, with Taylor shedding more light on a new sliding scale overrides model which will come into effect from 01 Jan 2024.

Revealed to members back in Jul (*TD* 19 Jul), the shift in focus will see more rewards offered to those who support ATAC's preferred partners.

"We've already had a great distribution of overrides back to our independent travel members...but [the new model]

Air Vanuatu resumes

AIR Vanuatu has confirmed that Tropical Cyclone Lola has now passed and its services safely resumed yesterday.

"Flight schedules for guests affected by the cyclone have been updated on the website and all efforts will be made to return these guests to their destinations overseas and domestically as quickly as possible and to resume normal schedules," a spokesperson for the carrier said.



means if you deepen your preferred partner support, you're going to receive a lot more in your back pocket as a business commercially," Taylor said.

"We already distribute well over 70% of the revenue that comes into the company and goes straight back out to members, so these types of elements are all really trademark cornerstones of the ATAC brand," he added.

Despite the turbulence of the pandemic, ATAC has also avoided any shrinkage in its membership base, having added multiple members over the past few years to grow its ranks at a rate of around 2% to 3% year-on-year.

When asked about how ATAC has managed to avoid the fate of so many other travel brands who have seen memberships dwindle, Taylor said the key lies in its flexible model that both supports and empowers members - even through the tough times.

"We really aim to provide industry-leading support despite being a very economical head office...our members also own a piece of what they belong to so it's easy to reduce the burn and churn rate in groups like ATAC because...they're able to be involved in the decisions...and run their own race," he said. AB

Korea Sparkling Tour

13 days Seoul to Mt Seorak from only \$6,899*





On track to a bigger 2024



MANY team members from wholesaler International Rail had the chance to meet face-to-face for the first time as part of the company's recent gathering to celebrate its recent sales growth.

Staff made the journey to Melbourne from around Australia and across the Tasman to participate in a range of social activities and brainstorming sessions about the year ahead.

"I feel it is critical for support teams such as ours to meet, reconnect and establish strong working relationships in person," MD Jonathan Hume said.

"This year brought an unprecedented amount of work and with that, the team has grown from six to 20 people in just one year.

"This was the first opportunity after the hectic high season to come together and confirm the groups position in the industry."

The main objective for 2024 discussions was how to be the first-in-mind for agents in

Australia and New Zealand when booking trains and ferries, with the company also hinting that a new direct booking connection for global ferries is in the pipeline, as well as a new booking service to assist agents with complex rail itineraries, which will greatly benefit services between agents and their clients. AB

Pictured: Staff members enjoying the event on the banks of the Yarra River.

Link retreats to SA

OWNERS from Link Travel Group member agencies and their partners are preparing to gather at Mount Lofty House and Sequoia Lodge in the Adelaide Hills for the company's inaugural Owners Retreat.

Sponsors for the event include Virgin Australia and Globus, with the gathering to see members review the past year and its future strategy, while at the same time enjoying some of the best produce the region has to offer.





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SiteMinder sales up

LISTED accommodation channel manager SiteMinder Limited continues to expand its subscription revenue, which rose 30.8% year-on-year to \$46.8m in the three months to 30 Sep.

In an ASX release to investors this morning, CEO Sankar Narayan said "with strong growth and improving free cash flow, the past quarter demonstrated our continued progress in building a profitable SiteMinder".

Green, not black

HURTIGRUTEN has launched an Australian-first partnership with sustainability-focused shopping event Green Friday.

The initiative includes an exclusive \$500 onboard credit per cabin for bookings via greenfriday.com.au, while agents can quote GREENFRIDAYHX or GREENFRIDAHHRN when booking to access the deal which is on offer between 27 Oct and 03 Nov.

Finnair debuts on QF routes

FINNAIR will this weekend start operating select Qantas flights between Sydney and Singapore, with agents urged to ensure clients are aware of the change which was announced earlier this year (*TD* 19 May).

AY Airbus A330s will operate QF291/2, with QF assuring the industry that "while these services will be operated by Finnair with Finnair crew and pilots, and look a little different to our aircraft, we have worked very closely with the Finnair team to ensure these flights meet the same exceptional level of comfort and service your customers expect from Qantas".

The wet lease will still feature QF in-flight dining and entertainment, and there's no change to flight schedules, checkins, carry-on or checked baggage allowances, the carrier said.

However the aircraft will feature Finnair branding, with AY's



lay-flat seating in Business class alongside QF pyjamas, amenity kits and lounge access.

Customers booked on the AY operated services can rebook to the alternative Qantas services (QF1/2) at no additional cost.

Finnair will also operate QF295/6 flights between Sydney & Bangkok from 31 Mar 2024. *BP*

ADL sports bar

ADELAIDE Airport will boast its first "dedicated sports bar" shortly, with the new ADL Grounds Bar at international departures paying homage to the city's iconic sporting grounds.

The new outlet will open by mid-Dec in place of the current Penfolds Bar & Kitchen.

FJ flies into Storm

FIJI Airways is ramping up its presence in Melbourne, signing a major sponsorship deal with NRL team the Melbourne Storm.

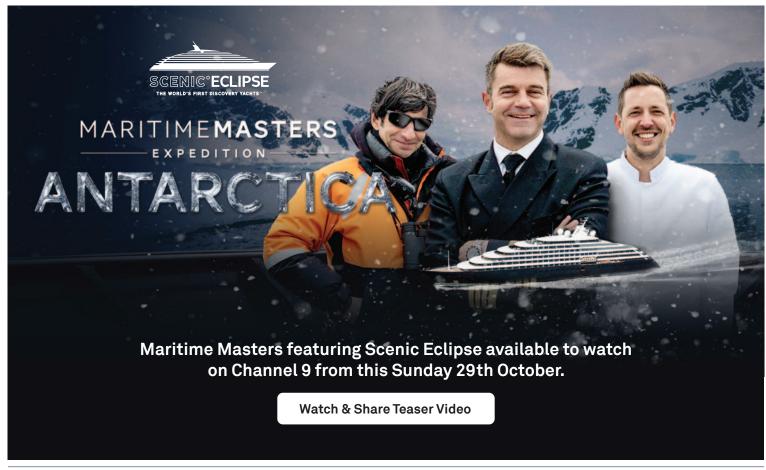
The 2024 season deal marks the first NRL partnership for the carrier, with hopes of attracting more Melburnians to Fiji.

WIN a WA road trip

TRAVEL agents can score themselves and a friend a road trip along Western Australia's Coral Coast valued at more than \$8.000 with Tourism WA.

To win, advisors must complete the tourism body's new Road Trips module in the West Aussie All Stars trade training program to go in the draw.

The prize includes Economy class tickets to Perth with return flights from Exmouth, seven days of car hire, a week's worth of accommodation and a whale shark or manta rays swim experience - learn more HERE.







QF neighbour seats

QANTAS is expanding the ability for passengers to pay to keep the seat next to them empty, with the option now available on a range of international flights to the US.

The service is already available on QF domestic services, and is rolling out onto flights to DFW, LAX, HNL and SFO from Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne.

The elbow-room initiative costs \$225 and is only available on QFoperated flights with unsold seats 48 hours prior to departure.

SH Hotels turns a new page in APAC

THE parent company for sustainable hotel brands such as Baccarat Hotels, 1 Hotels & Homes, and Treehouse Hotels has appointed Damon Page to be its new Area Managing Director for the Asia-Pacific region.

SH Hotels & Resorts said Page was needed to oversee its growth in the region, including the opening of the 1 Hotels & Homes Melbourne next year.

Page will also be charged with ensuring a smooth debut in 2026 of Treehouse Adelaide, billed as bringing "playful luxury" to the Australian hotel market.

Page is no stranger to debuting brands in new markets, having already assisted in the launch of the 1 Hotel Haitang Bay in China, which opened in 2020.

Page will be based in SH Hotels' Melbourne office and brings more than 30 years of hospitality experience to the role.

SYD volunteers looking sharp



SYDNEY Airport's volunteer ambassadors are now sporting a new uniform - the third official change since the ambassador program began in 1999.

The 80-strong team of volunteers are now decked out in jackets from M.J. Bale and scarves and ties designed by Indigenous artist Charmaine Mumbulla.

Ambassadors have been offering travellers support in the terminals across T1 international and T2 and T3 domestic terminals for more than two decades.

"This dedicated team are in the terminals 365 days a year, giving directions, answering questions, problem solving, offering support and always doing it with a smile," Sydney Airport Chief Executive Officer Geoff Culbert said.

"With travel now well and truly back, it was time for a reinvigorated new quality uniform for our much-loved ambassadors," he added. AB

Seabourn 2025/26

SEABOURN has opened bookings for its 2025-26 expedition itineraries, which will visit the Arctic, Antarctica, the Amazon, the Kimberley region, the South Pacific, the Northwest Passage, and more.

The cruise line's ultra-luxury ships, Seabourn Venture and Seabourn Pursuit, will offer 40 sailings featuring new experiences, including a pearl reveal in the Kimberley and a night safari in the Amazon.

HAL appoints

HOLLAND America Line (HAL) has appointed Seven Communications as its new public relations agency for its Australia and New Zealand markets.

The deal aims to boost the line's presence across the region, and coincides with Noordam arriving in Sydney on 12 Nov.



Window

FORGET the Olympics - a much more significant sporting event is set to be held early next year in St Augustine, Florida, celebrating all the aspects of the so-called "Florida Man".

Perhaps reminiscent of Darwin's NT News, it will poke fun at the southern US state's



reputation for strange news stories involving large reptiles. as well as guns, alcohol and evading law enforcement.

The Florida Man Games will feature competitions including sumo-style beer-belly wrestling, a "weaponised pool noodle mud duel" and even an "evading arrest obstacle course" where contestants are chased by real police officers.

Spectators can also entertain themselves with a host of other activities including riding a mechanical alligator, and in a nod to the Melbourne Cup's Fashions on the Field there will also be a "mullet contest" to showcase some of the best hairstyles on site.

Tickets to the one-day spectacle are now on sale for US\$45, with more details at thefloridamangames.com.



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CORPORATE UPDATE

Snowfall seals CT deal

TECHNOLOGY platform Snowfall is further expanding its footprint in the Australian market via a new strategic agreement with CT Partners.

The pact will see CT promote Snowfall to all of its TMC members as a preferred technology solution, with the system already in use in the local operations of Gray Dawes (previously MP Travel) and Traveltrust (TD 09 Jun).

CT Partners now boasts a 31-strong membership with combined TTV in excess of \$2 billion, with the Snowfall deal covering the Junction platform which includes the "consumergrade" Junction One booking and trip management tool.

Snowfall Chief Executive Officer Stefan Cars said the move was "game-changing for the market... CT Partners is empowering its members by delivering cutting-

CTM keeps winning

CORPORATE Travel

Management continues to win new clients, with almost \$3 billion in additions during 2022/23 now starting to transact.

Speaking at the CTM AGM earlier this week, MD Jamie Pherous confirmed that large clients' travel activity in North America, Europe and Australia/NZ was gradually improving, with this segment being a "recovery laggard" up until now, and forecast an uplift in profit expectations for the current half.

edge shopping, booking and content solutions to their customers".

CT Partners CEO Matt Masson said the deal was particularly relevant because of the lack of competition in the market in terms of online booking tools.

"Junction will help members to become more competitive while providing our customers with a next-generation user experience.

"We've been impressed with the way that Snowfall has listened to TMCs in the market, has understood their technology pain points, and recognised an opportunity for Junction to fill a gap," Masson said. BP

Corporate traveller is a shoe-in...

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's Corporate Traveller SME brand has partnered with professional networking organisation Business Chicks for a series of upcoming experiences featuring footwear legend Jimmy Choo.

Choo, who is now Ambassador for Footwear Education at the London College of Fashion, will appear at events over the next 10 days in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Corporate Traveller will also partner with Business Chicks for six International Women's Day events in Mar next year and Office Professionals Day events in May 2024.

Which guest on Season ONE has visited 122 countries? Catch up on episodes to find out. CLICK HERE to listen

Platinum on board at ATMC



PLATINUM Travel Group (**pictured**) has become a member of the Association of Australian Travel Management Companies (ATMC), with Platinum MD Sarah Szubanski (second from right) to also join the organisation's Board.

Melbourne-based Platinum Travel is part of the Link Travel Group, and also has offices in Auckland, Bendigo and Perth.

The company said "being closely surounded by industry peers for the purpose of continuous learning, support and influencing change allows Platinum to drive forward with even more momentum".

Also joining the ATMC is Queensland corporate agency Jetstream Travel, with the Association saying "having Jetstream as part of our dynamic and innovative community is a significant step forward".

BCD M&E Engage

BCD Meetings & Events has launched Engage, described as a new technology platform which "removes barriers to engagement and drives learning and desired participant behaviour".

The industry-agnostic system "transforms the way you engage with employees and stakeholders", with the platform able to be customised and white labelled to extend engagement and learning over time.

Engage is said to combine all the tools needed to communicate, train, motivate and meet (face-to-face and online), with BCD SVP Ted Stone saying it allows the firm to offer clients a digital experience to "unify communication, training, motivation and meetings across one responsive secure web-based platform".

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Without seamless servicing, NDC is stuck on the tarmac

NDC-obsessed

companies are

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booking servicing

aspect that agents

and travellers need

OPINION

Tom Kershaw is the Chief Product and Technology Officer at Travelport.

Got an opinion to share? Let us know in up to 400 words via email to



THE industry's now been talking about New Distribution Capability (NDC) for over a decade; and despite the recent headlines about it, there hasn't been nearly enough progress towards making NDC truly consumable by mainstream travellers.

Sure, that may be an unpopular opinion. There are a few carriers out there that are actively live with NDC and making a lot of noise about it but with that noise, many are forgetting why NDC was created in the first place.

It's just another source of content: NDC was created to give airlines the opportunity to create distinctive and unique air offers that are personalised for the individual traveller.

This is essential to modern retailing as we know it, because as consumers, we want to be able to easily find and purchase the products we want.

With so many options available, from extra legroom and early boarding privileges to preordered meals and lounge access, agents need to be able to easily consume the plethora of data at their fingertips and quickly search and compare options.

Despite all the expectations and opportunities to modernise travel retailing, we must not forget that at the end of the day, NDC is, at its core, an opportunity to deliver truly differentiated content to travellers in a way customised to their unique needs.

Even though NDC was created as an industry standard for distributing air content, the industry's obsession with NDC is morphing it into anything but a "standard" - and it's getting increasingly complicated.

Having access to NDC content and being able to book an NDC offer is not enough for our modern travel retailers of today.

There's a servicing aspect for NDC-sourced content that seems to be de-prioritised or overlooked entirely, despite the growing need for agents to be able to easily manage a return or exchange when the unexpected happens.

The only alternative to easy servicing is time-consuming and inefficient calls to airline systems

- something no consumer wants or understands.

Standardisation is more important than ever: Let's talk about another elephant in the room: widespread adoption of NDC makes content aggregation more important than it ever has been. Over the last two years, the volume of trip searches has grown by a factor of five and we expect to see trip

search volumes double their prepandemic peaks next year.

Very few retailers or agencies can deal with the complexity of dozens (or even hundreds) of simultaneous connections to assemble the best possible itinerary. Aggregators are critical to quickly (we're talking milliseconds) and economically (lower cost per transaction) sort through an increasing volume of supplier options that are extremely similar, deciphering these incredibly nuanced options to curate and elevate those that are most relevant.

Where we are seeing the aggregation role evolve even

more from a 'dumb' content pipe to a fully dedicated travel retailing platform (like Travelport+), is the use of artificial intelligence and machine-learning to eliminate manual tasks and provide faster search responses, more relevant results, and greater accuracy.

Suppliers will benefit from intelligent aggregators as well.

Airlines are able to expand their reach to travel retailers all over the world through a single system that also normalises and enriches their content for those retailers that are selling on their behalf.

Airlines cannot take on this tremendous feat themselves.

Travel retailing platforms today are now needed to manage the infinite options from suppliers, making sense of those options and making them retail-ready for agencies and travellers.

And, with its tremendous growth in the number of offers, NDC has only amplified the

need to help simplify and manage these complexities for retailers.

Without seamless servicing, NDC is stuck on the tarmac: In a multi-source content world, what's equally as important as connecting to new content sources is how that content is aggregated and presented.

Supplier content should be normalised and enriched for travel retailers in a way that simplifies the ability to compare, sell and service - because travellers themselves will not necessarily know (or care) if their flight was an NDC booking or from another content source.

able to make changes quickly and easily when needed - even if it means switching from an NDCticket to an EDIFACT ticket.

Unfortunately, NDC-obsessed companies are focusing so heavily on being the first to deliver access to NDC content that they are forgetting the crucial post-booking servicing aspect that agents and travellers need.

A modern retailing experience in travel will only work when an agent or traveller can easily search, compare, book & service an offer from any content source, anywhere, and at any time.

Business travellers expect the same seamless experience as leisure travellers, and delivering content that agents can book, but not service, can ultimately create more of the frustration that NDC was intended to eliminate.

Agents are the true retailers for travel, which - among many things - means they need to be able to quickly process a refund or exchange without having to point customers to the airline to manage changes.

Effective NDC solutions need to be built for agencies, and not just the airline community.

That is why at Travelport, we're laser focused on delivering complete, end-to-end retailing solutions, rather than interim NDC solutions that restrict agents from being able to fully service their travellers post-booking.

Rather than obsessing about 'being the first' in the NDC race, the industry needs to focus on making all types of content retail ready. Our role at Travelport is to integrate and normalise content from any source, including NDC, so that agencies can easily consume, sell and service that content in a modern way.

By putting the agency channel first when it comes to NDC solutions or making any source of content accessible, we make it easy for retailers to deliver seamless experiences.

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There are only a few days left until a solo traveller offer expires on a wide range of selected Hurtigruten Norway departures in 2023 and 2024. Single travellers can avoid paying any solo supplements on the nine-day Arctic Circle and Norway's Capital: Tromso to Oslo voyage, the 16-day North Cape Express itinerary, and many more. More T&Cs apply - view eligible tours or book HERE.

Airnorth is bringing a festive Halloween to keen holiday planners as it announces its 'Spook-tacular' sale, offering discounted regional flights until 31 Oct for travel periods between o6 Jan 2024 and 31 Mar 2024. One-way fares are priced from \$170 for the Dili, Timor-Leste to Darwin service or fly from Kununurra to Darwin from \$181 per person. More destinations available HERE.

To celebrate its grand opening, Le Meridien Phuket Mai Khao Beach **Resort** has launched a Sip, Savour and Stay deal for guests. Priced from \$260 per room per night, travellers can enjoy two welcome drinks, daily breakfast for two, an Au Soleil beach picnic or a Thai meal and a bottle of sparkling wine. Guests can also enjoy a 10% discount at all F&B outlets and 20% off at the spa. Learn more and book HERE.

Experience the Essence of Southern Africa with APT's latest offering which allows travellers to score up to \$1,400 of savings per couple. The tour begins with an immersive stay in Cape Town and will visit the Kruger National Park, as well as Victoria Falls aboard the Royal Livingstone Express steam train. Priced from \$15,395 per person, twin share, the offer is strictly limited and valid until sold out. Call APT on 1300 278 278 to learn more.

Viking's Deals of the Week offer savings of up to \$2,000 per couple on two voyages. Enjoy the 12-day Cities of Light journey from Prague to Paris or vice versa from only \$4,995 per person. The 15-day Ancient Mediterranean Antiquities sailing between Istanbul and Rome from only \$9,995pp is also up for grabs. Call Viking on 138 747 to enquire.

Ending on 31 Oct, Hamilton Island is launching a Sun, Sea and Savings sale, inviting guests to save up to 20% when they stay three nights or more at the Reef View Hotel, Palm Bungalows, or Beach Club. The offer also includes daily breakfast, use of non-motorised watersports, and a \$200 spending credit to splurge on the island. Learn more and view what the island has to offer HERE.

Cruise Traveller is offering Aussie travellers a half-world voyage with massive savings and complimentary hotel stay when bookings are made prior to 30 Nov. The all-inclusive voyage starts with a flight to London before embarking on a 51-night cruise from Southampton to Sydney aboard Fred. Olsen Cruise Line's 1,360-guest ship *Borealis*. The voyage departs 04 Jan 2024 - call Cruise Traveller on 1800 507 777 for more.





Marble rocks new runway



THE first-ever passenger jet flying directly from Perth recently touched down on Marble Bar's newly extended runway.

The remote WA mining town welcomed an Alliance Airlines Fokker F70 aircraft (pictured), the result of hard work and consultation between the local council, Calidus Resources and Atlas Iron to bring forward the delivery of the CASA-certified runway and airport facilities.

The new runway is 2,150

VA now more trusted than Qantas

VIRGIN Australia has made its debut in the Roy Morgan Australia's Most Trusted Brand list, ousting long-time top 10 inclusion Qantas.

While it would not surprise many to see Qantas slip out of the list considering the tumultuous time the carrier has had around consumer trust, VA making the list may be a surprise to many in the wake of similar policies on COVID credits and tardy take-off and landing times in recent months.

metres in length and 30 metres wide, boasting the capacity for safe landings by larger aircraft, including 180-seat Airbus A320s and Boeing 737s.

The new airport has also had a Precision Approach Path Indicator landing system installed to guide aircraft in to land on visual approaches. AB

Uber whacked with uber spam fine

RIDE-SHARING platform has been slugged with a massive \$412,500 penalty by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) for breaching Australian spam laws.

An investigation found that Uber had sent more than two million marketing emails to customers on a single day in Jan to promote an alcohol home delivery service, with customers unable to unsubscribe from the mailout.

ACMA Chair Nerida O'Loughlin chastised the company for not having robust systems in place to accurately categorise consumer messages when they are such a large consumer marketer.



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These limited-time child tickets are a great value and will be valid for use between **January 8, 2024 – March 10, 2024** (no blockout dates, subject to park reservation availability).*

For more information and bookings, contact your preferred wholesaler today!

*Offer tickets valid for use beginning 1/8/24, and expire 13 days after the first day of use or on 3/10/24, whichever occurs first. To enter a park, both a theme park reservation and a valid ticket for the same park on the same date is required. Theme park reservations for Kids' Special Offer Ticket holders are limited in number and subject to the availability of park reservations allocated to the Kids' Special Offer Tickets as a determined by Disney and theme park capacity. Reservation availability for Kids' Special Offer Tickets is not guaranteed for any date, and reservations may be difficult to get for any particular date, especially as the ticket expiration date approaches. To ensure best availability, make reservations early. On any given date, park reservations may be available for general theme park tickets even though park reservations allocated to the Kids' Special Offer Tickets are fully reserved. Kids' Special Offer Ticket holders are not entitled to any reservations Disney makes available to others. Subject to restrictions and change or cancellation without notice. Sales may be paused from time to time or terminated at any time.