

## Sanford out of ATAS

**SANFORD** International Travel (ABN 13 055 085 062) has voluntarily withdrawn from the Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS), according to the latest update from ATIA.

Sanford is part of Helloworld Business Travel and was a National Travel Industry Awards finalist in 2016 and 2017, with the agency's website still currently touting its membership of ATAS.

MD Georgina Byrt told **TD** the business continues to focus on rebuilding, and is seeing strong growth with a new office in Brisbane and extension businesses in Fiji and Spain.

Also withdrawing voluntarily is educational school travel operator World Challenge Expeditions (ABN 69 104 769 584).

The UK-based business is part of experiential travel giant Travelopia, and is one of the founding members of CATO offshoot, the Student Educational Travel Organisation (SETO).

## EK codeshares with Batik

**EMIRATES** has announced a new codeshare agreement with Batik Air Malaysia, with the move seeing the EK code placed on Batik Air flights to five domestic ports in Malaysia and three Southeast Asian regional destinations via Kuala Lumpur.

The enhanced pact "has the potential to strengthen Malaysia's role as a prime gateway to the region", according to Malaysian Transport Minister, YB Tuan Anthony Loke.

EK will codeshare on flights to Penang, Kuching, Kota Kinabalu, Langkawi, Johor Bahru, Denpasar, Jakarta and Singapore, "offering

customers a seamless travel experience as they connect to new destinations using a single ticket", the carrier said.

Customers will also have the option of a Kuala Lumpur stopover prior to proceeding to their final destination.

Batik Air - formerly known as Malindo Airlines - is continuing its rapid growth trajectory, which has seen it expand services to Australia, now comprising over 75 weekly departures.

Currently EK operates 21 weekly Dubai-Kuala Lumpur flights. *BP*

## FCTG events hire

**FLIGHT** Centre Travel Group Independent has appointed Michelle Droggett to the role of Partnerships & Events Executive.

She joins after 11 years at FCM Meetings & Events.

## QF red tail sale

**QANTAS** today launched a flight sale to London, Singapore and Bangkok, with special fares on offer until midnight on 06 Nov.

Deals are available on selected dates between Jan and Mar 2024 as well as Apr-Jun - more at [qantasagencyconnect.com](http://qantasagencyconnect.com).

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features seven pages of news including a photo page from **Link Travel Group** and our **Sustainability** page, plus full pages from:

- **Infinity Holidays**
- **Disney Destinations**
- **Helloworld**

## James Hewlett leaves Collette

**COLLETTE** Head of Marketing, James Hewlett, is no longer with the tour operator, having been an integral part of all aspects of the local operation across seven years.

Hewlett told **TD** he's excited at the opportunity for a new challenge, and is looking forward to seeing Collette's newly appointed MD Karen Deveson and sales chief David Farrar continue to build the business.

He will continue volunteering on the Visit USA Executive while seeking a new role - to contact him, email [jthewlett@gmail.com](mailto:jthewlett@gmail.com).

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## Explore Hamilton

**EXPLORE** Group's Whitsunday Explorer will start departing Hamilton Island from 17 Nov, offering two-night cruises priced from \$1,499 per person twin share, with inclusions such as accommodation, meals, day tours and water activities.

## China makes full SYD return

**THE** return of Chinese air connectivity marked another important milestone yesterday afternoon, with Sichuan Airlines touching down in Sydney **(pictured)** as part of its new Sydney to Chengdu services flying three times a week (**TD** 23 Aug).

All eight Chinese carriers that flew through to Sydney before the pandemic have now returned following the removal of travel restrictions by the Chinese Government, a far cry from the three Chinese airlines flying just four return services in Jan.

"The return of Sichuan Airlines comes at a time when capacity to China is nearing pre-COVID levels, something that seemed impossible at the start of the



year," Sydney Airport's outgoing CEO Geoff Culbert said.

"We started the year with very few flights from China, but by November we'll be 86% recovered, with more flights coming online in the coming months," he added.

It's not just Sydney benefiting from China returning to the market, with Sichuan Airlines increasing its non-stop flights between Chengdu and Melbourne to daily by Sep 2024.

## QF ticked in India

**QANTAS** has been approved to vary a codeshare with IndiGo between Singapore and Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth.

The International Air Services Commission confirmed IndiGo will offer codeshare services as a marketing carrier on all flights operated by Qantas to Singapore under a free sale arrangement.

Qantas said the deal will enhance customer choice for Aussies travelling to India via Singapore and will provide onward connections to Tiruchirappalli, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai and New Delhi.

## Women protected

**FEMALE-FOCUSED** Stella Insurance has inked a new deal with insurer battleface to allow its customers to access a more flexible travel insurance solution in the Australian market.

Stella Insurance clients can now customise their travel cover to include features tailored to women, such as unexpected pregnancy complications, child minding services, and domestic violence protection.

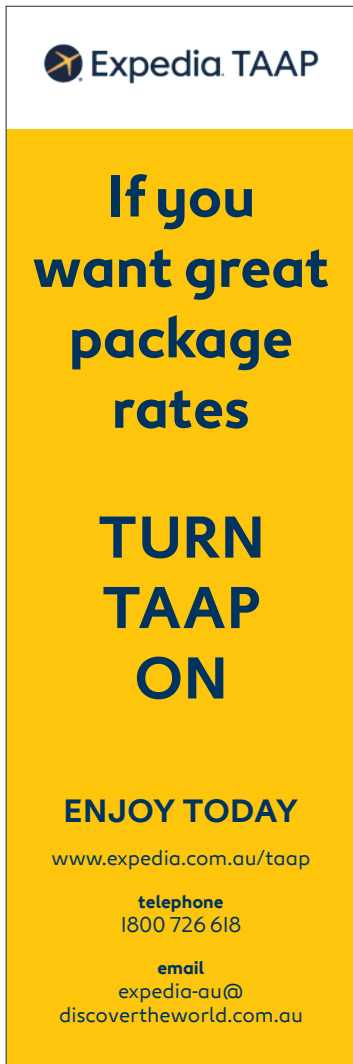
"Our partnership with battleface is about innovating and delivering exceptionally flexible and customisable travel insurance," Stella Insurance Chief Operating Officer Renee Cosgrave said.

The deal utilises battleface's modular API functionality.

## DL launches LAX-AKL

**DELTA** Air Lines has taken off on its first-ever service between Los Angeles and Auckland, with the flight departing LA with 91% of its 339 seats occupied.

The US carrier is operating daily until 31 Mar 2024, before scaling back to three times weekly.



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## Window Seat

IT'S all coming back to some Kiwi residents far too often for their liking, with the people of Porirua recently signing a petition to stop loud music battles that often feature ballads from Celine Dion.

Usually noted for its appeal to adventure and sporting tourists, the city is becoming more renowned in recent times for its unusual music comps, which involve groups of drivers blasting music from sirens typically reserved for the emergency services.

While the objective is to play songs the loudest and clearest, the inhabitants of Porirua are hoping it takes less than the power of love to have the competition outlawed.

Local resident Diana Paris said that while she enjoyed listening to Dion "in the comfort of my lounge and at my volume", she is no fan of hearing her hits played at aircraft-level decibels in dispatches between the sleeping hours of 7pm to 2am.

Why Celine Dion, we already hear you ponder?

Well, according to participants Dion's songs exude a high treble with not much bass, which is perfect for hearing the song clearly when played at the volume of an air raid siren.

One of the founders of the competition said the stigma around the battles was unfair.

"We just love music, we love dancing, and doing this is better than night clubbing or drinking in a bar in the city, where there's fights," he reasoned.



## SkyBus taps system

SKYBUS Australia has introduced a new Open Payments Solution for its shuttle services in Melbourne and Hobart, meaning passengers can now tap their bank cards or smart devices when purchasing tickets.

Powered by Justride, the new digital payment system was launched last Wed and adds to the number of ways travellers can buy seats on its airport transfer services, which currently include kiosk departure points, or via the SkyBus website and app.

SkyBus' airport bus services carry over 2 million passengers per year and account for 8.3% of all Melbourne Airport pax traffic.

## Stelma takes a hike

50 DEGREES North founder and CEO Tietse Stelma will personally escort a newly designed small group tour through some of Norway's most scenic hiking trails next year.

The Best Hikes of Norway adventure was personally crafted by Stelma, and was created to celebrate 13 years of operation for the Nordic tour operator.

Only one departure will be available on 16 Aug 2024, and will feature hiking trails from basic to strenuous, as well as a host of inclusions such as 14 nights in twin-share centrally located hotels, most meals, premium mini-coaches for scenic drives, and a 50 Degrees North tour escort for the entire trip.

## Fly a mate for free

JETSTAR has returned its Fly a Friend for Free promotion this week, applicable on flights to the Gold Coast, Cairns, Uluru, Hobart, Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne.

Examples of packages include a three-night stay at the Novotel Surfers Paradise in Qld and flights from \$625 for two people departing Sydney.

The sale will end on 06 Nov and includes buffet breakfast, welcome drinks & late checkout.

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## The best way to see Paris



THE timing of luxury French hotel brand Chevalier's mission Down Under was just 'parfait', especially as an increasing number of Australian travellers are now eyeing a trip to France in the lead up to the Summer Olympic Games in 2024.

Director of Sales & Marketing for the family-owned group, Vanessa Jacquot, was recently in town to meet with the trade courtesy of local rep The Hotel Connection, telling **TD** that guests at its exclusive hotels are treated to "the real Parisian experience".

Each of the privately owned company's four hotels in Paris tell its own story, Jacquot explained, with each located in the most sought-after locations in the city.

The properties on offer include Pavillon de la Reine located in the Marais, the oldest square in Paris, and only recently became a

member of the Virtuoso network, while Petit Moulin offers a very different "tiny hotel" boutique experience, housed inside a former 17th century bakery.

Australians are also being told to consider a stay inside the Pavillon Faubourg Saint - Germain, situated in one of the best locations on the Left Bank, as well as Pavillon des Lettres, a hotel that boasts each room dedicated to a famous writer, located off the Champs Elysees.

Jacquot added that while the Australian market had taken longer than most to return to pre-pandemic levels due to delayed border openings, the recent trends have been very robust and historically Australia has represented one of the Chevalier Group's strongest markets. **AB**

**Pictured:** Jacquot with The Hotel Connection's Sarah Whitty.

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## Banyan Tree gives the royal treatment



**THIS** lucky group of TravelManagers advisors were recently treated to the delights of Banyan Tree Bintan, put through their paces with a rigorous program of gourmet meals and signature Balinese massages.

The agents also took part in a tree planting ceremony and inspected the property's conservation program for baby Hawksbill Turtles, as part of Banyan Tree's ongoing

sustainability initiatives.

**Pictured** wearing their welcome "crowns" (men) and flower wrist garlands (ladies) are, from left: Philippa Williams, TravelManagers Adelaide; Dominic Bellissimo, Sydney; Banyan Tree's Victoria Hobbs; Emma Lucas, Melbourne; Michelle Smith, Perth; and Doug Harman, Perth. *BP*

### Sabre expands AI

**AIR** India has announced an expanded distribution agreement with Sabre, giving travel agencies within India access to the airline's domestic content.

The pact also gives Air India the ability to distribute New Distribution Capability content globally through Sabre's travel marketplace in the future.

Previously Air India had only given Indian travel agents access to its international inventory.

## ATIA UPDATE

from Ingrid Fraser, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy



**IN THIS** week's column, I thought I'd take the opportunity to share how you can feed into ATIA's advocacy

efforts, to ensure your voice is heard and increase our effectiveness in Canberra – meaning a greater likelihood of policy settings that benefit the travel industry.

What we are seeing more and more is that politicians love it when we share feedback and case studies directly from the individuals and businesses who make up the travel industry.

This direct feedback adds a human element and really brings our advocacy efforts to light.

So as we work towards finalising our submission on competition and aviation settings as part of the Aviation White Paper process, and our Workforce Report which will contain recommendations to address workforce and skills issues in the sector, we encourage you to get involved.

As part of this, our newly-established caucuses will be meeting for the first time in the coming weeks.

To recap, there are caucuses for

independent travel agencies, tour operators and wholesalers, and independent contractors.

These will add an extra element of ensuring ATIA hears voices that represent the diversity of the travel sector.

Richard Taylor will be sending out invites for the first meetings soon and it's not too late to join - you can sign up **HERE**.

Following on from CEO Dean Long giving evidence in relation to the Parliamentary Committee's Inquiry into international tourism, we have been asked what interactions ATIA members have with First Nations tourism operators.

This could include partnering with First Nations tourism businesses in different regions, for example.

If there's any initiatives you'd like us to highlight from your business, please get in touch.

Lastly, this Fri Dean is representing the travel industry at the Small Business and Franchising Consultative Committee Meeting, held by the ACCC.

This is an important forum where competition and consumer law concerns related to the small business and franchising sectors can be discussed by industry and government.

I'm sure you'll all agree there's a lot to discuss in that space!

### AC arrives in Dubai

**AIR** Canada yesterday operated its inaugural service between Vancouver and Dubai, with the new four times per week seasonal service complementing daily year-round Toronto-Dubai flights.

The new AC international route is timed to connect conveniently to and from destinations in British Columbia and the western USA.

### Sri Lanka free visas

**AUTHORITIES** in Sri Lanka are seeking to boost visitation by opening up free tourist visas to travellers from seven countries.

A pilot scheme in place until 31 Mar 2024 will apply to nationals from China, India, Russia, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia.

### SIA China increase

**SINGAPORE** Airlines is gradually resuming operations in mainland China, with GDS screens indicating the resumption of SQ narrow-body Boeing 737 flights to Chengdu, Shenzhen, Xiamen and Chongqing over the coming months.



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## LTG owners savour time in the Adelaide Hills

**MOUNT** Lofty House was the venue for Link Travel Group (LTG) members to collaborate and hear plans for growth and prosperity at its first owners retreat.

The food and wine was aplenty as agency owners heard from General Manager Scott Darlow about how the business will continue to maximise returns for members whilst leveraging the technology and capabilities of the wider group.

Commencing on Fri with a delicious dinner, important business discussions followed on Sat, which also featured a lunch courtesy of Virgin Australia.

The day concluded with an intimate bonfire, supported by Globus family of brands.

Penfolds Estate was another pitstop on the retreat, hosted by Bunnik Tours.

“The weekend was an amazing opportunity to hear from our owners about the benefits they are drawing from Link Group, whilst listening to their stories of recent success”, Chairperson Danielle Galloway said.

“Link has core values that guide the business; integrity, connection, collaboration and transparency, and all of these were displayed for our owners to experience and participate in,” she added.

**CURRENT** members of Link Travel Group.



**GAI** Tyrell, Globus Brands; Danielle Galloway; and Penny Spencer, Spencer Travel.



**A RARE** shot of Karsten Horne, Reho Travel making a cocktail, with Michelle Horne.



**MALCOLM** Bean, co-owner of Mt Lofty House and Sequoia Lodge addressing the group.



**DENNIS** Bunnik and Zoe Francis from Bunnik Tours with Penny Spencer, Danielle Galloway and Anthony Goldman.



**HENRY** Coles and Darren McDermott from Virgin Australia with the Link co-founders.



**TIM** and Emma-Jaye Lane, Travel Beyond Group; Mark Trim, Complex Travel Group; Scott Darlow; and Amy Trim.



**ANDREW** and Jennifer Want from Eden Corporate Travel at Penfolds Estate.



**RHETT** Martini, Martini Travel; Tim and Emma-Jaye Lane; Danielle Galloway; Edwin Spencer; Russell Brown; and Fiona Axford.





### Sheraton award

**SHERATON** Grand Mirage Resort, Port Douglas has been declared the first runner-up as a leader in Sustainable Tourism Excellence at Expedia Group TNQ Tourism Industry Excellence Awards last Fri in Cairns.

The resort achieved a 22% reduction in energy use over the past 12 months, after investing \$9 million in sustainable initiatives.

### FAB sales of SAF

**FARNBOROUGH** Airport (FAB) last week recorded the sale of its one millionth litre of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), a little over two years since it first made it available.

World Fuel Services supplies SAF to FAB and prior to the 2022 Farnborough International Airshow, the airport sold SAF for the same price as standard jet-A1 fuel.

FAB has been selling SAF since 2021 and is a Level 4+ on the Airport Carbon Accreditation scheme.

CEO Simon Geere said, "We are proud of this milestone and our vision is to become a SAF only airport before the end of the decade, acting as an early adopter 'of scale' and accelerating the wider take-up of SAF".

## APT AWARDED KIMBERLEY ECO STATUS

**APT'S** Kimberley Wilderness Adventures division has been recognised as Advanced Eco Certified by Ecotourism Australia.

The certification is only handed out to travel brands which have demonstrated a superior commitment to sustainability and environmental protection principles, including evidence of efficient resource use, conserving the environment, and supporting local communities.

"We are incredibly proud to be the only major tour operator in the Kimberley to hold this certification, and we are determined to continue leading the way in responsible tourism practices," APT's General Manager of Product and Operations Mladen Vukic said.

"At APT, we believe in setting



new benchmarks for sustainable tourism and by continuing to build on our 'Advanced' Eco Certification, it is not only a testament to our dedication to environmental stewardship but also a reaffirmation of our long-term responsibility towards the

communities we touch."

The latest development means all three of APT's premium Kimberley Wilderness Lodges, such as the Bungle Bungle Wilderness Lodge (pictured) all now have Advanced Eco certification. *AB*

### AIUla green plan

**THE** Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU) has unveiled the official design for the expansion of AIUla International Airport, with a new terminal to ancient Arabic destination to the rest of the world.

The sustainability-focused design blends "seamlessly" into the city's natural landscape, increasing annual pax capacity from 400,000 to six million, and offering travellers a luxury hotel, spa, and extensive retail spaces.

### Access progress

**EIGHTY** per cent of air transport passengers with disabilities said their expectations were met when using special assistance services, according to International Air Transport Association (IATA)'s 2023 *Global Passenger Survey*.

The results show progress towards supporting the needs of pax with disabilities, IATA said, and also reveals website accessibility for booking and reservation as an area for improvement.

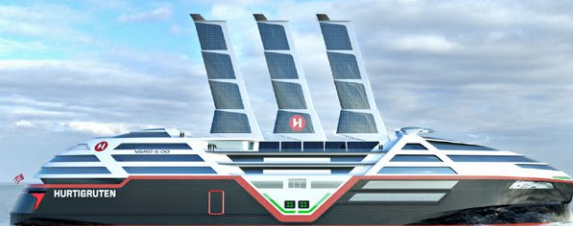
### UNWTO Forum

**SUSTAINABILITY** was a key focus for the 2023 UNWTO-PATA Forum this week, hosted by The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

The two-day event, attended by policymakers, business leaders and a range of tourism stakeholders from across the Asia-Pacific region, looked at the best ways of introducing greater sustainability into every level of the tourism ecosystem.



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## MONEY

**WELCOME** to Money, *TD's* Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

### AU\$1 = US\$0.637

**THE** Aussie performed better than expected on the back of higher-than-forecasted retail sales number.

Further bumps include a possible Reserve Bank of Australia interest hike next week, as well as the effects of ongoing conflict in the Middle East, which experts warn will have an adverse impact on currency exchanges due to the potential of a wider war.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.637
UK	£0.524
NZ	\$1.091
Euro	€0.600
Japan	¥94.99
Thailand	฿22.86
China	¥4.642
South Africa	12.00
Canada	\$0.881
Crude oil	US\$90.48

## TTNQ eco agency

**TOURISM** Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) has selected new Aussie agency Supermassive to oversee its marketing for an upcoming global project.

The indie agency, led by a trio of ex-Havas talent, will help drive awareness of Tropical North Queensland as an eco-travel destination, using a combination of "thoughtful strategy and non-traditional creativity".

Supermassive also won the P&O Cruises' account earlier this year.

## CATO sets new record



**THE** Council of Australian Tour Operators' (CATO) Victorian Members Networking Event at the Madame Brussels in Melbourne drew a record attendance last Thu.

Guests included members of the CATO Board, who were in town to host the event ahead of the group's annual strategy day last Fri, who mingled with members and various stakeholders, including Frontera Law, which sponsored the networking event. CATO Managing Director Brett

Jardine and Chair Dennis Bunnik also provided attendees with a comprehensive update on the advocacy body's ongoing activities.

"The overwhelming response from our Victorian-based members and the event's success demonstrates the solid state of the CATO community and its dedication to the advancement of Australia's travel industry," Jardine enthused.

**Pictured:** Dennis Bunnik posing at the networking session with Abercrombie and Kent's Michelle Mickan and Susan Haberle.

## Renaissance in 2024

**RENAISSANCE** Tours has announced its 2024 program, which features a privately chartered French Impressionism Art Cruise that will sail down the Seine River through Normandy next May.

The new collection also includes a selection of art, garden, and architectural tours, as well as opera in Spain, classical music festivals in the Swiss Alps, and more - see the brochure **HERE**.

## African safari boost

**SAFARI-LOVERS** will be happy to hear that Etihad will be flying daily from Abu Dhabi to the Kenyan capital of Nairobi from 01 May 2024.

Attractions in Kenya include the Masai Mara National Reserve, with visitors attracted by the chance of seeing 'the big five', African elephants, rhinoceros, Cape buffalo, leopards and lions.

## Fright night aboard spooky Virgin flight

**VIRGIN** Australia launched Halloween at more than 40,000 feet this morning with a very spooky midnight flight from Perth to Sydney, with the carrier's staff and passengers donning their scariest gear for the occasion.

As well as boasting some seriously frightful looks, the flight also featured a first-of-its-kind surprise mid-air trick-or-treat in partnership with Mars Wrigley.

The departure gate at Perth Airport was transformed into a haunted hall, while tickets on selected VA domestic Economy Reward Seats were also "slashed" in cold blood to celebrate.



## Demand driving up

**DRIVEAWAY** has seen a boom in demand for car and motorhome rentals for the end-of-year holiday period, particularly from mid-Dec through Australia Day 2024.

In response to the robust demand, it has launched a series of deals, including free additional drivers, reduced excesses, discounted one-way rentals, and reduced daily rates.

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