Travel Daily First with the news

Thursday 21st Sep 2023



Regional staff worry

LEAKED government discussion papers confirm a new temporary skill mobility visa is being considered by the Federal Government, which could have a detrimental impact on tourism businesses in regional areas.

Proposed changes to the visa rules would make it easier for temporary visa holders to change employers, extend their stay, and make claims for unpaid wages, The Australian has reported.

If approved, the move would see a shift away from a single employer sponsorship model.

Italy is just so hot

TRAVEL advisors wanting to upskill on one of this year's most popular European destinations for Aussies are being urged to complete the Travel to Italy Academy training program.

The free online platform offers the latest insider info to impress your clients - details on last page.

FCM to "disrupt" events

FLIGHT Centre's FCM Meetings & Events (M&E) division has announced plans to shore up its global expansion ambitions.

Events expert Simone Seiler. who has been leading the organisation since 2020, has been formally promoted to Global General Manager, which will see her charged with bringing all the global M&E businesses into one.

FCM Global MD Marcus Eklund offered his congratulations to Seiler, sharing that "the M&E business has been firing in the last 18 months and the scope for growth is outstanding".

"With our superior technology & decades of industry experience within our teams, we couldn't be in a better position to capitalise on industries that are desperate to be back to face-to-face."

The announcement comes as the global MICE market is tipped to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 6.6% from 20222030 to reach US\$1,563.3 billion in revenue, according to a recent White Paper compiled by FCM M&E (see it HERE).

"We believe the meetings. events, and event travel markets are ripe for disruption worldwide," new Global GM Seiler said.

"With this investment, we're well-positioned to capitalise on the growing demand for highquality and personalised event experiences that has seen an exponential bounceback."

The FCTG offshoot is expecting a steady annual growth rate of demand of 12% year-on-year for in-person meetings.

In addition to widening its global footprint, FCM M&E revealed it will also focus on investing in new talent and developing technology solutions across the three areas of meetings, events & event travel.

For more business events news. see page six. JM

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest news including **Business Events** News, and a full page from Italian National Tourist Board.

New Bali role for Mason Adams

FORMER Asia Escape Holidays MD Mason Adams has been named as the new General Manager of The Bali Bible.

Adams founded Perth-based Asia Escapes in 1998, and sold a 60% stake in the business to Helloworld Travel Limited about five years ago (TD 10 May 2018).

The specialist wholesaler was placed into hibernation during the pandemic (TD 08 Jun 2021), and its website remains out of operation at this stage.

Adams' new role at The Bali Bible sees him become part of Simon te Hennepe's TRAVLR Group - for more appointments news, see page seven.













Our popular Viking Explorer Sessions will be touring 16 regional locations across Australia this October and November. These are not just events, they're an opportunity for you to wow your clients, earn extra commission, and score bonus Rewards by Viking points.

Simply choose the location and session time that is most convenient for you and your clients and register—but be quick, these information sessions fill up quickly!

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Qld Airports sale?

MEDIA reports suggest Macquarie's The Infrastructure Fund is mulling a possible sale of its 40% stake in Queensland Airports Limited, the holding company for several major airports in Queensland including Gold Coast Airport, Townsville, Mount Isa and Longreach.

Only last year, Queensland Airports Limited marked the highest number of pax ever recorded in Jun (TD 29 Jul 2022).

Lally joins Baillie Lodges

BAILLIE Lodges has appointed Justine Lally to the newly created role of General Manager, Marketing and Communications.

The highly regarded Lally joins the luxury accommodation operator from her most recent role at Journey Beyond (TD 24 Sep 2020), prior to which she was a long-time executive at APT.

Her new Baillie Lodges role will see Lally oversee all marketing and communications strategies for the Baillie Lodges collection of properties, "to both cement the brand's premium position and steer it for the future as the portfolio continues to grow in Australia and overseas".

It's a back-to-the-future move for Lally who started her career with the then P&O Resorts properties which included Baillie's Silky Oaks Lodge.

Baillie Lodges Chief Operating Officer, Craig Bradbery, said the company was "delighted to have secured a tourism marketing professional of such high standing as Justine," with the timing of the appointment coming in the lead-

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Intelsat on Airbus

INTELSAT'S inflight satellite internet connectivity will be expanded to all Airbus aircraft from early 2026, under a new deal agreed to this week.

The technology will be made available to airlines and aircraft lessors through Airbus' Airspace Link (HBCplus) solution.

Airbus Senior VP of Commercial Aviation Dave Bijur said the tech will offer a highly reliable and low latency service for its airline clients and their passengers.

up to the imminent reopening of the company's flagship Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island later this year.

"Justine is a natural fit for the Baillie Lodges family and its broader community of industry stakeholders," Bradbery said.

As well as its Australian portfolio of luxury lodges, the private equity-backed Baillie Lodges also now boasts New Zealand's famed Huka Lodge as well as properties in Canada and Chile. BP

The Daydream team

DAYDREAM Island Resort and Living Reef has announced an expanded commercial team, with the appointment of four new leaders including David Janz as GM of Sales and Marketing.

Janz joins Daydream with extensive hospitality industry experience including roles with Starwood and IHG Hotels, and will work alongside Tayla Scannell who has been named as the resort's new Marketing Manager.

Also new to the team is Sarah Halliday, joining as Business Development Director MICE, and Joseph Reaiche as Daydream's new Reservations Manager who joins from Sheraton Grand Sydney Hyde Park.

More appointments on page 7.

Vale Dorothy Payten

THE travel industry is mourning the death last week of Dorothy Payten after a short illness.

Payten was the first GM of Aer Lingus and led the Irish Tourist Board in Australia and New Zealand for about 25 years.

She retired in 1990 but kept her hand in with part-time work at Nordic Travel, with Payten's funeral to be held at 11am tomorrow at Blessed Sacrament Church Clifton Gardens in Sydney.



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QF admits "acute" trust issue

QANTAS has admitted the airline is currently experiencing an "acute loss of trust from the community" in the summary of its latest annual report published late vesterday.

A statement from Chairman Richard Goyder accompanying the release noted that much of the loss of trust had stemmed from recent allegations levelled by the ACCC relating to the sale of cancelled flights (TD 31 Aug).

"We recognise the important role of the ACCC and the company has cooperated fully with its investigations, which only crystalised into material allegations when legal action was announced on 31 Aug this year," Goyder said.

"The legal process now underway limits what we can say for the time being and we look forward to the opportunity to respond properly on the detail of the allegations, but what we can

say is that Qantas' longstanding practice is that when a flight is cancelled, customers are offered an alternative flight or a refund."

The annual report also showed that former Qantas CEO Alan Jovce received \$21.4m in "total pay outcome" for the 2022/23 period (TD breaking news).

Reporting also confirmed Joyce's base pay of \$2.15 million was topped up with a \$1.45 million short-term cash bonus and about \$8 million in shares.

The report made clear that \$2.2 million in short-term bonuses for Joyce have been withheld so far, while a further \$8.3 million is subject to recovery "if the board deems it necessary".

MEANWHILE Qantas CEO Vanessa Hudson and the head of the Transport Workers' Union, Michael Kaine have been ordered by a judge to meet and make a call on compensation for 1,700 workers sacked by the carrier. AB

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Clearer for carbon

TRAVELPORT has introduced a more transparent carbon dioxide (CO2) emission estimates tool for flights on Travelport+.

The carbon calculator uses publicly accessible info on Travel Impact Model, which has been developed for the industry by Google in partnership with the Travalyst coalition.

Hurtigruten rebrand

HURTGRUTEN Group will take its adventure travel brand Hurtigruten Expeditions "to the next level" with a new name and global brand identity, HX, which will launch this Dec.

The new branding will see the cruise line's brochures, websites and social channels all updated, while the livery will be repainted on the fleet's six ships over the next 18 months.

Hurtigruten Norway's Coastal Express has also returned to its Hurtigruten branding.



A BEAR has caused havoc at Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom this week in the US after the massive animal was spotted in a tree on the site.

Horrified tourists were forced to flee the area and the park was temporarily closed while authorities attempted to extract the bear from what is usually a safe space full of childhood magic for guests.

Thankfully, the hairy intruder was captured and removed by chopper without incident, and readers will be happy to hear the adult female has been safely relocated by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission.

How a bear was able to scale a tree at the theme park is not yet clear, but we're betting she didn't have a day pass.







Boyes exits Accor

SCOTT Boyes has announced his resignation from Accor after 29 years with the accommodation company, most recently holding the role of Senior Vice President Hotel Operations, Pacific North.

"I will forever cherish the friendships and the invaluable personal and professional lessons I have learned," Boyes shared on his LinkedIn account, with Accor vet to name his successor.

Brissy's \$12.6m win

BRISBANE has secured one of the largest international incentive groups in the city's history, worth a whopping \$12.6 million.

Around 2,000 delegates from Cathay Life Insurance in Taiwan will visit Brissy in May 2024, making the group among the first to experience the new \$3.6b Queen's Wharf precinct.

The gathering is expected to fill more than 10,000 hotel nights more events news on page six.

NZ deal takes off in Asia

WHILE there has been plenty of consternation in Australia around a need to forge more open skies agreements to bolster capacity (TD 20 Sep), across the ditch in New Zealand the situation is much brighter, this week announcing a major new Air Services Agreement (ASA) in Asia.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which includes 10 nations as members. inked a deal with the NZ Govt to enjoy unlimited 3rd- and 4thfreedom traffic rights.

A number of carriers from each country will also be sanctioned to fly up to seven services a week using 5th-freedom rights, which will operate alongside existing bilateral entitlements between each nation and NZ.

According to global travel data provider OAG, markets between New Zealand and ASEAN member countries are all underserved. which include Indonesia.

Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia.

The ASA needs to be vetted legally before being granted final approval, and arrives fours years after talks started. AB

NYC's shore bet

NEW York City is pushing ahead with tougher environmental standards for visiting cruise ships, with two council members this week tabling a bill that would require all cruise ships to switch off their engines and exclusively use shore power.

"No cruise company should be allowed in our city unless they respect the communities...our residents are suffocating and the city must act," the bill stated.

Shore power at both of NYC's cruise terminals are reportedly not in regular use.

Dreaming bigger

FUNCTION facilities, hotels, sports centres and short-term accommodation are just some of the new attractions Ardent Leisure wants to add to its Dreamworld theme park.

For the significant expansion to take place, which would see the site grow from 55 hectares to 85 hectares, the Gold Coast City Council will need to green light changes to the existing development code.

The blueprint for the major Qld tourist attraction seeks to divide the site into four zones, with guided nature tours also part of the mix, in addition to theatres and various commercial precincts.

"This application seeks to protect the site's major tourism intent while also allowing for an expanded set of supporting and complementary land uses...where they reinforce the major tourism character of the site and do not undermine adjoining [town centres]," the plan stated.



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(PTMs) have certainly been at the forefront of this evolution. We've seen a significant shift in how they perceive their role and how their clients value their expertise.

However, the most exciting aspect is their forward-looking approach. In these last 18 months and inspired by our 2023 conference theme, "Future Fit", more PTMs are passionately carving out their own niches. Our team has been collaborating closely with PTMs to help them create a forward plan - from creating exclusive products, to selecting suppliers, defining target audiences, and determining marketing content and channels.

Our tagline "As individual as you are" is just as important for our PTMs' businesses as it is for each of their clients. When PTMs tap into their passion and find their niche, they excel at what they do.

This transformation not only benefits them but also enhances the overall travel experience for our valued clients.



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New graduates for Voyages



VOYAGES Indigenous Tourism Australia recognised 15 new graduates from its National Indigenous Training Academy (NITA) program last week, bringing the total number of graduates from the school to 659 since kicking off in 2011.

"We are really proud of the NITA program which provides not just job opportunities but career pathways for Indigenous Australians," Voyages CEO Matt Cameron-Smith said.

"Our goal at Voyages is to ensure these young people are provided with skills for life and many of them go on to work with us long-term.

"We are one of the largest Indigenous employers in Australia, and we're committed to our ongoing work to empower a growing Indigenous workforce

Travel with Geoff

TRAVELLERS can take part in Abercrombie & Kent founder Geoffrey Kent's latest itinerary called Around the World with Geoffrey Kent.

The luxury private jet adventure will depart on 13 Oct and conclude on 07 Nov 2024, jetting off to a range of remote destinations in countries such as Malta, Chile, Uruguay, Japan, the United States, the UK and India.

Trips are capped to 48 passengers and seats are priced from \$285,000 per person.

For more info, see HERE.

across the country," he added.

NITA was established to deliver employment programs for young Indigenous Australians, and was developed in partnership with William Angliss Institute and Far North Training Consultancy.

Pictured: the NITA graduating class alongside Cameron-Smith; Kristin Howden, Chief Legal and Compliance Officer; Rick Aller, Chair; Joe Morrison, Group CEO, ILSC; & Ian Hamm, Chair at ILSC.

Gaidzkar retires

AFRICAN Wildlife Safaris has announced its most senior travel consultant and well-known industry figure, Taleen Gaidzkar, is retiring after more than 30 years with the tour operator.

Gaidzkar kicked off her fourdecade-long career with Ansett Australia in the mid-1970s, before moving into various retail travel agency roles and then joining the African travel specialist in 1993.

Cathay milestone

CATHAY Pacific (CX) has surpassed the milestone of carrying more than 10 million passengers over the first eight months of 2023.

Newly released traffic data for Aug showed the carrier flew a total of 1,784,980 pax last month - up an incredible 603% compared to Aug 2022 - while CX's revenue pax kilometres also increased 342.8% year on year.

Big win for hotels

WHILE the likes of Airbnb and Stayz are clearly unhappy with a new levy to be applied to short-term stays in Victoria (*TD* 20 Sep), Accommodation Australia (AA) has expressed its jubilation at hotels being exempted from the new policy.

Hotels being immune to the Victorian Short Stay Levy reinforces the important distinction that hotels do not contribute to the removal of housing stock from the long-term rental market, the body said.

AA Vic GM Dougal Hollis also observed the call by the Andrews Government was "common sense", adding that hotels are huge employers and are a key part of any vibrant city.

"Victoria has led Australia's new hotel development boom since 2020, with almost 9,000 new hotel rooms now available across Melbourne alone," he said.

Qatar expo packages

QATAR Airways Holidays has launched new flight-and-hotel packages that offer complimentary access to Expo 2023 Doha.

The major event in Qatar is expected to draw around three million visitors, and will take place in Al Bidda Park and run from 02 Oct 2023 to 28 Mar 2024.

"Green Desert, Better Environment" is the theme of the expo, which aims to inspire guests about innovative solutions to mitigate desertification.

AirAsia shoots goal

AIRASIA has signed on to become the official sponsor of the Central Coast Mariners soccer team as the club competes at the upcoming Asian AFC Cup.

"Football has the unique power to bring people together, regardless of borders, and we believe this partnership will not only elevate the Mariners but also inspire fans and communities across the region," AirAsia said.

businesseventsnews.com.au

Budget winner

THE NSW events sector came out on top in the newly released State Budget 2023/24, with the NSW Govt setting aside \$1.2 billion for arts, culture, music and the night-time economy.

The budget also includes continued funding for NSW's biggest festivals, including Vivid Sydney, Mardi Gras and the Sydney Festival, as well as the Narooma Oyster Festival on the state's south coast and the Great Southern Nights festival.

MEANWHILE, the upcoming SXSW Sydney festival will include a series of free activities in Tumbalong Park from 15-22 Oct, including live music and tech demos - find out more HERE.

TNZ events upskill

TOURISM New Zealand has revealed it will host an in-person ICCASkills Training Hub in Sep 2024, which will be open to international business events professionals to take part in.

The tourism body said the three-day intensive training event will help "ensure the expertise of our people is recognised at a global level and helps to elevate New Zealand's event standards".

TNZ announced it will also continue its ICCASkills scholarship program; to register your interest for the training hub, email leonie. ashford@tnz.govt.nz.

AUSSIES DE-PRIORITISE EVENTS

AN INCREASING number of Australians are forgoing events due to cost barriers, according to new findings from the 2022 National Arts Participation Survey facilitated by new national arts funding body, Creative Australia.

While 68% of Aussies aged 15 or over attend live events such as concerts, theatre or festivals - the same number as before COVID-19 - two-thirds of that cohort are now attending less frequently.

The survey found that half of event-goers expressed a desire to attend events more often, however, they said cost and distance are preventing them from doing so.

Rising ticket prices were found to be the number one barrier to events attendance for more than half of the survey respondents (55%) - up from 34% in 2019. Unsurprisingly, given that the most recent data from Live Performance Australia shows the average Australian ticket price for a live performance shot up from around \$55 to almost \$93 from 2014 to 2019.

Additionally, the Creative Australia survey shows that two in five (40%) of the Aussies who are attending fewer events say there are no arts events near where they live, representing a 25% increase compared to 2019.

On a brighter note, the study revealed that almost all Aussies (97%) participate in the arts as makers or audience members,



while there is also a growing number who attend arts and cultural events to improve their wellbeing (32%, up from 25%).

In fact, 56% of the survey participants believe the arts have a big impact on their wellbeing and happiness, and their ability to cope with anxiety and depression.

Creative Australia argued the results demonstrate that access to free or low-cost arts events should be a priority. *JM*

Melbourne's new performing arts venue

MELBOURNE'S East will soon gain a new performing arts venue called The Round, which is slated to open next month.

The brand-new facility will feature a 600-seat proscenium theatre, a 200-seat studio theatre, two multi-purpose rehearsal studios, as well as versatile function spaces.

Expected to become a "thriving hub of art and culture", the new venue is set in parklands on the site of the former Whitehorse Centre, and



will offer an exciting program of professional theatre and music.

Patrons will be able to enjoy food and drinks at The Round Bar, as well as utilise the venue's free car park or easily access the venue via public transport, with Nunawading Railway Station close by.

MCA, AV1 deal

LIVE event production company AV1 will invest in renewed state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment, including new LED lighting and PA system installations, throughout the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Australia's venue spaces.

The move comes as the two companies renew their long-standing partnership for an additional five years, which also sees AV1 raised to Major Partner status.

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APPOINTMENTS

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Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) has appointed Hugh Cavill as its new Director of Government Affairs in Australasia. Cavill's role will strengthen the cruise industry's presence among policymakers and stakeholders across Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. Boasting extensive senior experience in the government, Cavill brings in-depth knowledge and connections to the role. He was most recently the Director of Strategy at the Office of the Deputy Premier of New South Wales.

After an almost 10-year-long tenure at Belmond as its Account Director, Karen Conlon has joined Plateau International as the new Sales Director. The well-regarded sales expert brings a wealth of experience in the luxury travel industry, which she will use to aid the PR agency to continue expanding relationships with its B2B travel partners across the Australian and New Zealand markets.

Loryn Blaikie has been appointed as the new International Sales Manager at New Zealand International Convention Centre. Blaikie has experience in client relationship management, event management, marketing, and more in the business development scene. She will collaborate with Auckland Convention Bureau and Tourism New Zealand to further promote the nation as an ideal business event destination.

Business Events Sydney (BESydney) has named Rahul Shah as Director for North America. He will draw on over two decades of experience in the business events industry to lead the organisation's presence across the US and Canada. Based in Toronto, Shah represented the Metro Toronto Convention Centre for the last 11 years as Senior Manager, Sales - International Associations.

Bringing more than 15 years of experience in the travel and hospitality scene, Sophie Pratt has taken on the role of Senior Product Executive at APT Travel Group, where she will be based in the tour operator's Melbourne office. Pratt was most recently the Manager for Melbourne Day Tours at AAT Kings, while prior to that she enjoyed a one-year stint at Jonas Leisure as Business Consultant.

The Pacific Asia Travel Association has announced the appointment of Noor Ahmad Hamld as its Chief Executive Officer, effective from o1 Oct. Hamld joins on a three-year term and will be a key figure in leading a tranformative phase for the organisation, with more than three decades of experience in travel and tourism under his belt. Hamld's previous experience includes a two-year stint with Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau as COO, and as Regional Director for Asia Pacific for the International Congress and Convention Association.



Welcome to Intrepid Country



TO MARK Indigenous Business Month, Intrepid Travel joined forces this week with Welcome to Country, a not-for-profit marketplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences, to deliver a number of free First Nations tourism experiences across Narrm (Melbourne) and Warrane (Sydney).

Each Intrepid experience offers guests the chance to connect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through activities

Make your vote count

SMARTRAVELLER is advising Aussie travellers who will be away for the 2023 Australian Indigenous Voice referendum on 14 Oct to plan ahead.

Eligible voters who are travelling overseas prior to the referendum date can cast a pre-poll vote on Mon 02 Oct in the NT, Tas, Vic and WA, and Tue 03 Oct in ACT, NSW, Queensland and South Australia.

CLICK HERE to view a list of available voting locations.

Other voting methods, including postal voting and voting overseas are available as well - for further information, see HERE.

delivered directly by First Nations owned businesses.

In Sydney, travellers can explore The Rocks while learning the history and Dreaming of Eora Country with Aunty Margret, while in Melbourne guests can participate in a jewellery-making workshop with Wiradjuri mixed media artist Ange Jeffrey.

There are 100 free spots available - for more details or to book, see HERE.

Intrepid Managing Director ANZ Brett Mitchell pictured welcoming guests on the new tours of Melbourne and Sydney.

Royal's game-changer

ROYAL Caribbean International's highly anticipated Oasis-Class ship, Utopia of the Seas, has floated for the first time over the weekend in France, marking a significant milestone to its 2024 debut (CW 21 Jun).

The vessel will offer more than 40 ways to dine and drink, and an abundance of experiences for guests to enjoy on board.

Setting sail in Jul 2024, Utopia of the Seas will offer a series of midweek short getaways.



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Travel Daily is part of the Business Publishing Group family of publications. Produced each weekday since 1994, *Travel Daily* is Australia's

leading travel industry publication.

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