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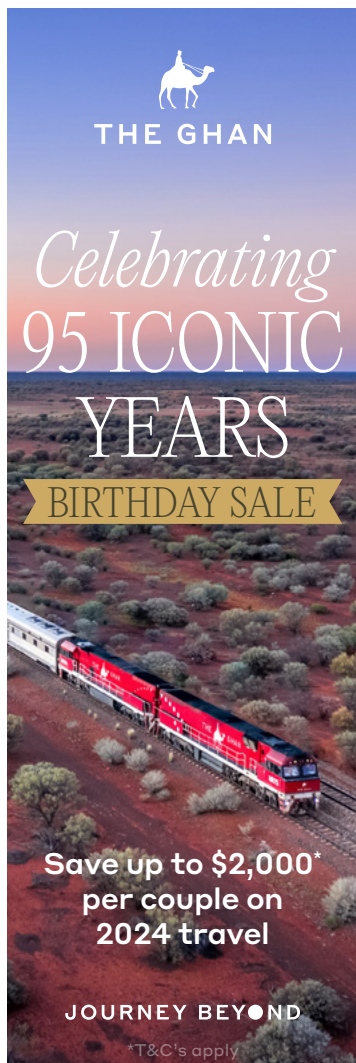
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Victoria must shift gears

SIGNIFICANT further investment is needed from the Victorian Government to return the state's tourism economy back to where it was before the pandemic, a Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) budget submission has claimed. "We are still sitting in the number three spot overall for total tourism spend in the country, relinquishing our number two position behind NSW to Queensland during the pandemic, and we are unlikely to regain that spot without the Victorian Government going hard at driving demand for our destination," CEO Felicia Mariani argued. "To now sit at \$37.8 billion in total spend from visitors to our state is an achievement we

Ama on the road

THE AmaWaterways local sales team is on a mission to visit as many travel advisors around the country as possible over the next two weeks, headlined by the news of its newly established local reservations centre, which went live last month (**TD** 14 Mar). On the road will be Kim Vaughan (Vic/SA/Tas), Kylie Chapman (NSW/ACT/NZ) and Christine Oliver (Qld/WA/NT), and as part of the brand awareness journey, two training sessions will be held on 10 April at 9am and 11am (GMT+8) at Perron Place. Email salesaunz@amawaterways.com to attend.

should be proud of, but the job is not done, and Victoria cannot afford to take its foot off the pedal as we revel in the glory of what has been achieved."

VTIC's budget submission includes 26 recommendations across five 'growth levers', including: shaping policy reform to encourage growth, investing in growth with an eye to the future, funding the tourism workforce, allocating more cash for tourism infrastructure, and supporting legacy development for growth in Metro Melbourne.

Victoria's international visitor recovery continues to lag behind the national performance at just 73% of pre-pandemic levels, compared to NSW (96%) and Qld (94%), and coupled with slowing visitation to its regional areas, the VTIC is calling on the next state budget to address the slide.

The tourism body has also criticised Victoria's planned 7.5% short stay accommodation tax, suggesting the impost will only serve to exacerbate the emerging slump in regional tourism spend.

Victoria's visitor economy has the potential to grow a further \$16b to \$53b by 2028, according to recent TRA projections. **AB**

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest news including our **Sustainability** page and a full page from **Luxury Escapes**.

PNG up in the air

QANTAS launched its inaugural service from Sydney to Port Moresby yesterday, marking the airline's first commercial passenger flights between the two cities in five decades. Two weekly return flights will add 36,000 seats each year.

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VIEW DEAL

SAA is "here to stay"

THE CEO of South African Airways (SAA) has moved to shore up confidence in the carrier's financial viability in the wake of a failed bid to refinance the business last month (**TD** 20 Mar).

In a letter to loyalty members penned by SAA's Interim CEO, Malesela Lamola, he suggested an aborted negotiation by the South African Government to sell its majority stake in the airline to investment firm Takatso Aviation means SAA can now "confidently explore" a range of new funding options independent of South Africa's national fiscus.

"SAA has unencumbered assets



that we are ready to convert into cash and our recovery has significantly repaired our credit rating with financial institutions, which have closely followed our journey to stability," Lamola said.

"This new economic profile of SAA has unlocked funding opportunities that were not available to us three years ago." The comments follow efforts by SAA to expand its network after a restructuring period that saw the airline "remodelled, resized, and repositioned" for future growth.

After ceasing operations in 2020, the carrier returned to the skies in Sep 2021 (**TD** 27 Aug 2021) with seven routes and six aircraft, and has since doubled its routes and fleet.

Part of that rebounding expansion plan has included this month's planned return of Perth and Johannesburg services from 28 Apr (**TD** 09 Jan), which will operate three times a week utilising A340-300 aircraft.

At the time, SAA declared Perth a "key" port in its post-pandemic recovery, with the route not only connecting Australians with South Africa, but also providing extra onward links to South America via its Sao Paulo to Johannesburg and Cape Town services.

The Australian expansion has seen the appointment of Michael Hall to the role of Country Manager, ANZ to spearhead local growth, and in the coming weeks, SAA will receive four extra A320s to foster expansion plans. **AB**

3K sweeps Broome

JETSTAR Asia (3K) will offer seasonal direct flights between Singapore and Broome in Western Australia from 25 Jun.

The Singapore-based carrier will operate two weekly services until 26 Oct, becoming the only airline to fly direct from the Lion City to the Kimberley region.

Jetstar Asia's Kimberley entry is expected to "turbocharge international visitor numbers" and inject millions of dollars into accommodation & tour operators.



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Travel Daily ON LOCATION

AT SEA

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Norwegian Cruise Line, which is hosting us on an Easter cruise aboard *Norwegian Spirit*.

NORWEGIAN Spirit has been sailing the South Pacific over the Easter long weekend, with the ship visiting Noumea on Easter Sun, where guests disembarked in the country's 'Grand Terre' - its main island.



Rail Europe

Unlock European Trains with James Hooper

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Accessing Planning Resources: Watch this [short video](#) and see how you can very quickly and easily access all of Rail Europe's rail product information. We have used Eurostar as an example to demonstrate how you can navigate and use this useful tool.

Offline Access: Save the product sheets as a PDF or copy the link to your desktop and share with your clients. Where necessary, print and compile the information into a folder for the whole office to use as quick reference.

Expert Tip: Please be aware that the Austrian ÖBB's fully flexible fares become non-refundable and non-exchangeable once the PDF ticket has been downloaded from the carrier site.

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Extent of Qantas brand damage exposed

A TOUGH 2023 for Qantas has seen a sizable \$384 million wiped from the carrier's brand value, according to new figures published by Brand Finance.

While it's no secret the airline has sustained major brand damage in recent years over poor schedule performances and allegations of unethical sales practices, the latest report has laid bare the full extent of its brand haemorrhaging.

Data showed The Flying Kangaroo dropped down to 21st on the list of airline brand value rankings, sliding by five places on the previous year.

Qantas' brand damage is made even more worrying in light of a strong broader recovery achieved by prominent airlines globally, with the top 10 carriers piling on 17% in brand value last year.

The Aussie carrier is well aware of the damage inflicted on its brand in recent times, with



CEO Vanessa Hudson (pictured) making clear to shareholders that "brand renewal" was a top priority at her first AGM as chief in Nov last year (*TD* 03 Nov 2023).

"I am determined to make Qantas one of the most trusted brands in the country again," Hudson said at the time.

"Doing this won't be easy and will take time but I am confident we will succeed."

Already her tenure as CEO has seen Qantas remove fees associated with changing the name on tickets if mistakes are made, paths forged with banks

to automate refunds, and a raft of enhancements made to the Qantas app to win back more trust with consumers.

Proving it may not be all doom and gloom for Qantas, Brand Finance Managing Director, Mark Crowe, believes both internal and external factors are likely to buoy the Qantas brand over the next 12 months.

"Favourable market conditions are expected to uplift Qantas's investment in customer experience to strengthen its brand, therefore arresting a further decline in value," he said.

The Brand Finance report also showed that British Airways has added the most brand value from 2023 to 2024, increasing by 45%.

Emirates and Qatar Airways were also strong performers, adding 30% and 27% to their brand stocks respectively, while Delta Air Lines was crowned the most valuable carrier globally. *AB*



THE DOURO

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Avalon Waterways, which are hosting us on an inaugural cruise aboard *Avalon Alegria*.

WE HAVE spent the Easter break sailing the Douro river, taking in the region's rugged landscapes, sleepy villages, and mouth-watering food and wine.

Today guests are spending a leisurely morning on board as we sail from Pinhao to Porto, waking to the beautiful view of the river from Avalon's signature window-facing 'Bed's with a view'.

This afternoon every guest can explore Porto in their favourite style, with excursion options available for everyone - active, classic, or discovery.

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Dazzling on the Douro



AVALON Waterways' key industry partners have spent the weekend sailing aboard the cruise line's newest vessel, *Avalon Alegria*, on her inaugural cruise on the Douro, Portugal.

Christened last week, *Alegria* is the 16th vessel to join the Globus brand's fleet and the first to sail in Portugal on the Douro river.

Purpose-built to sail the 'river of gold', *Alegria* can accommodate 102 guests across two room categories - deluxe staterooms and Avalon's signature panorama suites featuring the brand's unique open-air balconies.

Measuring only 80 metres in length to seamlessly sail the Portuguese river (in contrast to the brand's usual 135m long European vessels), *Alegria* is also the first to feature a rooftop pool, a beautiful addition to the stunning sky deck that has already been enjoyed by guests on board this week.

Guests have had the chance to experience Avalon's freedom of choice through the brand's three shore excursion offerings: active, discovery, and classic.

A particular highlight for guests on board was an historical wine farm tour run by Viscountess Maria Manuel Cyrne herself, followed by a delectable three-course lunch at the Michelin-starred Bomfim 1896 in Pinhao. AP

Pictured: The Australian and New Zealand contingent including Quentin Long; Astrid Richardson, Envoyage; Michelle Julius-Baty, MyCruises; Jeff Leckey, House of Travel; and Hilary Weir, Dream Maker Travel.

HWC to enter Oz

THE Hotel & Wellness Co (HWC) has unveiled plans to launch a series of urban wellness hotels and bathhouses around Australia.

The brand's inaugural property will see The Kinson in Melbourne transformed to offer a unique thermal bathing experience, with mineral salts supplied by Peninsula Hot Springs.

The hotel will include a top floor of various urban bathing spaces, sensory zones, a Hamman, and lounge area, with guests able to enjoy reflexology, sauna, daybeds, and medicinal spa treatments, plus food and beverage options.

"Our vision is to foster better overall human and environmental wellbeing, and we plan to do this through giving our guests the ability to prioritise health and wellbeing experiences," HWC co-founder Jamie Srubis said.

The Kinson's renovation will begin in the coming months, and is set to re-open as the country's first wellness and urban bathing hotel in early 2025.

ATIA UPDATE

from Nina Hedges, Compliance Manager



DID you know that ATAS decline around 25% of travel intermediaries that seek accreditation? Whilst we absolutely

welcome the addition of new members, our process is rigorous and not a mere formality. We are unapologetic about this stance as it ensures that the ATAS Accreditation remains to this day to be the most relied upon accreditation in the Australian travel industry.

The ATAS logo remains a symbol of excellence and is only reserved for those who meet and exceed criteria and are willing to be held accountable for their actions.

As we close off the ATAS membership year spanning from Apr 2023 to Mar 2024, we take the time to reflect on the milestones achieved and the unwavering dedication of ATAS and ATAS accredited businesses to excellence and accountability within our industry.

Over the past 12 months, ATAS has successfully hosted nine diverse webinars, developed valuable resources for member-customer engagement, offered invaluable advice and support to Australian travel intermediaries as well as facilitating industry collaboration with nearly 2,000 logins on our new online community platform, The

Travel Exchange.

In addition to these achievements, ATAS has been proactive in addressing consumer concerns by mediating 469 complaints to ensure fair and transparent practices within the travel sector, whilst at the same time taking the opportunity to educate consumers on the nuances of our incredible industry, the position of the travel intermediary and the benefits of booking with an ATAS Accredited business.

For those not yet a part of ATAS now is the opportune time to apply to join the elite group of travel intermediaries. The benefits are clear - valuable resources, industry and consumer recognition, support of the industry's peak body and the prestige of being associated with a trusted industry standard.

For those of you that already hold ATAS Accreditation, we thank you for your support and we remind you to proudly showcase your accreditation, your ATAS accreditation is what sets you apart from others and signifies your commitment to excellence that is recognised both within the industry and with consumers.

Finally, this is an urgent call out to members who have not yet completed their renewal that was due by the 31 Mar. If you did not complete your renewal by the 31 Mar 2024 then your ATAS Accreditation has expired and requires immediate attention - go to [ATIA.travel](https://www.atia.travel) to renew membership.

Bonza's holey launch

BONZA has partnered with the Kenilworth Bakery to create a limited-edition Bonza 'hotXnut' to mark its first Sunshine Coast to Launceston flight on 29 Mar.

The hybrid donut-hot-cross-bun was created to celebrate the agritourism opportunities the new route offers Australian foodie travellers.

It is Bonza's 12th route from its home base of Sunshine Coast Airport and the second route from Launceston Airport.

SIA moves dates

SINGAPORE Airlines will bring forward the launch of four more weekly flights between Brisbane and Singapore, moving the dates from 28 Nov to 04 Aug.

The decision will provide greater connectivity for those travelling from Brisbane to Singapore and beyond on the SIA network, with the additional services to see SIA operate 25 flights per week direct from Brisbane to Singapore following strong demand for its four times weekly flights in 2023.



CX doubles down

CATHAY Pacific has reinforced its commitment to decarbonising the aviation industry, setting a new target to improve its carbon intensity by 12% from the 2019 level by 2030.

The carrier will work towards the new near-term goal by introducing more than 70 new fuel-efficient passenger and freighter aircraft to its fleet over the coming years.

Scaling up its sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) use, Cathay Pacific said it will use SAF to offset 10% of the carbon emissions from employee duty travel on its flights from 2024 onwards.

The initiative aligns with the airline's aim to accelerate the development and distribution of SAF in the region, as well as moving it closer to its ambition of 10% SAF usage by 2030.

"We are determined to improve our climate performance even further via accelerating the use of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), modernising our fleet and driving operational improvements," the carrier's CEO, Ronald Lam, said.

"This new...target will provide the necessary drive for actions in the immediate future towards achieving our long-term goals."

DL LEADS THE WAY AS GREENEST BRAND

DELTA Air Lines is considered to be the most sustainable airline in terms of public perception, according to a new report by Brand Finance.

The study, which ranks the world's top five most valuable airline brands, includes a Sustainability Perceptions Index to assess how sustainability influences brand consideration.

Retaining its top position as the world's most valuable airline brand for the sixth year in a row, Delta Air Lines was also awarded top spot for its sustainability value, which was found to be US\$672 million - US\$20 million higher than American Airlines, which ranked second.

United Airlines, Emirates, Southwest, British Airways, Qatar Airways, China Southern Airlines, Air Canada, and Lufthansa rounded out the top 10 most

Top 10 Airlines Brands by Sustainability Perceptions Value

| Rank | Airline | Value (m) | E | S | G |
|------|--------------------------------|-----------|------|------|------|
| 1 | DELTA | \$672 | 0.95 | 0.96 | 0.98 |
| 2 | American Airlines | \$652 | 0.96 | 1.00 | 0.99 |
| 3 | UNITED | \$539 | 0.95 | 0.97 | 0.97 |
| 4 | Emirates | \$436 | 1.01 | 1.01 | 1.03 |
| 5 | Southwest | \$342 | 0.98 | 0.99 | 0.97 |
| 6 | BRITISH AIRWAYS | \$207 | 1.00 | 1.01 | 1.01 |
| 7 | QATAR AIRWAYS | \$204 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.01 |
| 8 | 中国南方航空 CHINA SOUTHERN AIRLINES | \$184 | 1.04 | 1.01 | 1.02 |
| 9 | AIR CANADA | \$181 | 1.00 | 1.01 | 0.98 |
| 10 | Lufthansa | \$162 | 0.99 | 1.01 | 1.02 |

sustainable airline brands.

The Brand Finance report also looked at the sustainability perceptions value of airports around the world, which saw Heathrow top the list with a green value of US\$52 million, followed by Changi Airport (US\$48 million).

Other airports that made it onto the list included Frankfurt, Los Angeles International, Zurich, Incheon, Avinex, Beijing, Haneda,

and Narita.

Meanwhile, the latest eco rankings follow a Spanish Govt proposal to ban select short-haul domestic flights in an effort to cut down on carbon emissions.

The restriction will see the scrapping of flights with a rail alternative that takes less than two and a half hours, "except in cases of connection with hub airports that link with international routes". *JM*

Melia shines a light on eco-initiatives

LAST month, Melia Hotels International showcased eco-initiatives undertaken by its properties in Southeast Asia for Melia Sustainability Week, ahead of Earth Day in Apr.

Strengthening biodiversity in Thailand and Vietnam has been a key focus for the Spanish hotel group, along with minimising food waste, supporting those in need in the local community, and reducing



plastic use at its properties.

In Thailand's south, for instance, Melia Koh Samui is working to enhance green spaces within the property, with volunteers so far planting an additional 40 trees.

Kenya eco safaris

VISITORS to Fairmont Mount Kenya Safari Club, located within the private Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy and on the slopes of Mount Kenya, can now enjoy eco-safaris.

The new experiences allow guests to get up close to wildlife, and immerse themselves in nature via walking, biking and horse riding - learn more **HERE**.



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TMC "powerhouse" on way

OPINION

Tony O'Connor is the Managing Director of prominent independent travel procurement consultancy Butler Caroye.



Got an opinion to share? Get in touch at feedback@traveldaily.com.au.

AMEXGBT'S slated US\$570 million takeover of CWT (TD 26 Mar) will create a dominant player in the business travel market globally.

It is a bigger consolidation event than any of AmexGBT's previous acquisitions, and one with greater consequences for clients and competitors alike.

Their previous major purchases, Rosenbluth (2003), HRG (2018),

Engenia and Ovation Travel (2021), have made them the largest TMC. This move would make them dominant.

In 2022, the picture saw AmexGBT have 10.6% of global sales, while BCD had 8.5%, CWT had 7.9%, and FCL had 5%. AmexGBT/CWT has 18.5%, larger than the next five TMCs combined.

If you adjust these figures to make them percentages of business travel only, assuming they retain clients, the merged entity has over a third of the global market.

I think there could be four consequences with potentially large market impacts.

Firstly, the combined volume would put the merged company in a superior position when negotiating supplier deals.

The new entity's capacity to defend commissions and benefits, and to even improve upon them,

would give a distinct advantage.

Secondly, the merged entity's financial strength, and its stable of existing systems, could enable it to create a dominant distribution platform.

Distribution channels are in a state of flux and this is a perfect environment for the emergence of a re-integrator powerhouse.

Thirdly, we need to also look at the shareholders and friends.

Sabre is a major shareholder of AmexGBT, which could fuel IT development and distribution power. Another major shareholder is Expedia.

It provides superior hotel inventory and assist with SME servicing. Booking.com has a similar SME arrangement with CWT. If AmexGBT/CWT managed to keep all the relationships

“Distribution channels are in a state of flux and this is the perfect environment for the emergence of a powerhouse”

ticking, they would have the buy-in of both of the world's two largest travel companies, and the largest GDS.

Lastly, when a dominant player breaks ahead to a market share of over 40%, they can be in a position to run away towards monopoly power.

Markets tend to have a competition tipping point.

AmexGBT/CWT is approaching this monopoly take-off zone and they would be operating with advantage in a distressed industry with downward trending revenues, and post-COVID high debt levels and low defensive cash reserves.

It's a market place primed for further consolidation.

The market situation differs by country of course.

Here in Australia, competition will be reinforced by the strength of both FCM and CTM.

Let's hope it continues to be an even contest.

CVFR division signs Alma

VIETNAM'S luxury Alma Resort Cam Ranh has appointed CVFR's Destination Rep Services to be its General Sales Agent in Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji.

The division of CVFR's Airline Rep Services, Destination Rep Services' new client has tasked the company with carrying out key representation and consulting services with the travel trade in our region through avenues such as tourism fairs, exhibitions, and trade shows, to name just a few.

Alma Resort Cam Ranh is looking to increase its market share in Australia this year, as Vietnam more broadly continues to make strong inroads into the Australian market, with the country now consistently maintaining its spot in the top 10 for short-term trips.

The property is situated on Vietnam's Cam Ranh peninsula fronting Long Beach, with major selling points including oversized suites and pavilions with sweeping vistas of the ocean, a broad selection of restaurants helmed by top chefs, as well as a 12 swimming pools cascading down to the beach.

For families, Alma Resort Cam Ranh also offers a waterpark with a lazy river, a wave pool, a youth centre with virtual reality games,



and a kids' club.

Meanwhile, wellness travellers can take advantage of a 13-treatment room spa and yoga facility, while movie-lovers can take a seat in the property's 75-seat cinema.

Those who love to putt can also play a relaxing 18-hole mini golf course. **AB**

Learn about the resort **HERE**.

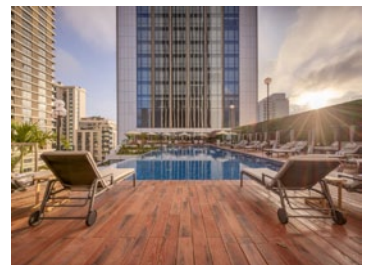
JW Marriott Nairobi

JW MARRIOTT has opened its second property in Kenya to offer travellers a "peaceful escape for the mind, body, and soul".

Standing as the tallest hotel in the country, JW Marriott Hotel Nairobi features 315 guestrooms, five dining destinations, a luxury spa, swimming pool, fitness centre, and eight event spaces.

The property will also include an additional 51 spacious serviced apartments and a sky bar and lounge, which are due to open later this year.

Inspired by the notion of African adventure, the hotel features an earth-toned colour palette of savannah browns, Maasai reds, cultural terracotta, and safari green, complemented by a collection of unique artworks, including sculptures, handmade ceramics, wall murals and regional textiles.



Melia's agent site

MELIA Hotels International has launched a new digital platform for travel agents, companies, and event organisers.

The new version of the Melia PRO website now offers more personalisation, with fresh features including differentiated segmentation by customer type.

Real-time access and booking management at any time of the day for immediate sharing with the customer, reduced loading times, and real-time monitoring of agents' commissions are also now available through the revamped B2B site.

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.649

THE Aussie continues to have a rough time under the influence of a stronger greenback, which is backed by better-than-expected US manufacturing data for Mar.

Contrary to the rising commodity price, the Australian dollar has dipped slightly against key global markets from previous weeks, losing almost A\$0.6 cents against the Japanese yen.

Wholesale rates this morning.

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| US | \$0.649 |
| UK | £0.517 |
| NZ | \$1.090 |
| Euro | €0.604 |
| Japan | ¥98.42 |
| Thailand | ฿23.75 |
| China | ¥4.692 |
| South Africa | 12.30 |
| Canada | \$0.881 |
| Crude oil | US\$87.48 |

Oceania free stays

OCEANIA Cruises is offering a free pre-cruise hotel stay on 33 sailings in 2024 and 2025, encompassing locations such as Brazil, the Canary Islands, Japan, Singapore, Bali, and New Zealand.

Available for reservations made between now and 31 May 2024, the offer provides guests with more time to explore the departure port on their itinerary, with a free stay at a deluxe city-centre property before embarking on their cruise - more info **HERE**.

Don't be April Fooled

IT'S that time of the year when pranksters from all corners of the travel and tourism sector try to sell their funniest furphies to the unsuspecting travelling public.

Thankfully, *Travel Daily* is here to catch these practical jokers in the act and expose their antics for all of our wonderful readers.

We start our coverage today with that cunning iFLYflat founder, Steve Hui, who spruiked a new AI travel assistant called Wilbur (**pictured**), whose alleged special skills included sleuthing through all personal emails and text messages to surreptitiously plan trips on the user's behalf.

The guilt must have been eating away at Hui, who posted an emergency update conceding he was forced to "pull the plug" on Wilbur after he started booking himself tickets on the side.



Flight Centre Travel Group was also caught trying to pass on bogus adult-free holidays for kids.

"Kids, leave your parents' rules behind, say 'later teachers' and pop into a Flight Centre store to ask about our Adult-Free Holidays today," the travel agency's Global Managing Director, Andrew Stark, jibed, adding that there is "no need to ask your parents first as they'll probably just say no".

The fake trips were purported

to help kids everywhere who are often dragged from one museum to the next and forced to smile for endless family photos.

In other news, The Travel Corporation's Contiki brand was up to its old tricks, this time pretending to offer travellers its first-ever 'underwater trip'.

Travellers were told they could board a brand-new, state-of-the-art Sub-Sea Contiki coach in London, before travelling to Dover where the transition from land to sea will begin.

"The 'Sub Sea' coach is capable of reaching speeds of up to 15 million kilometres per hour, which means travellers can explore the entire Indian Ocean in just half a day," Contiki claimed.

Activities on the trip were reported to include singing lessons with the mer-people, a fortune-telling experience with a descendent of Paul the Octopus, an underwater cooking class, a visit to the Gulf of Mexico's revered 'Museum of Sunken Treasures', and a trip to Atlantis National Park (one of the last places on Earth where you can witness the three-headed slime green conger eel in its natural habitat), plus much more.

And finally, Icelandair pretended to introduce a new feature in its app called "Icelandair Up to Date", focused on in-flight dating.

Interested passengers were asked to opt in and be matched and seated for a date during their flight, the carrier claimed.

But the pressure of the ruse was clearly too much for Icelandair, which admitted it was all a joke and those who fell for the gag can now win loyalty points. **AB**



Window Seat

FAIRBANKS International Airport in Alaska is resorting to a rather unusual tactic to scare off migratory birds and other wildlife, which have been known to settle near plane infields during the migratory bird season.

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is deploying a headless robot the size of a labrador retriever, which has been programmed to imitate predator-like movements while flashing green lights.

Affectionately named Aurora, the robot can apparently be disguised as a coyote or a fox by changing out replaceable panels - however, officials won't go as far as covering it in fur, so we're not sure how effective the disguise will be...

The idea of using a robot to keep wildlife away from the runway was favoured over a plan to use flying drones which spray grape juice as a repellent, and if the trials are successful, it will replace the current tactic of using wildlife service teams to scare them away with loud sounds.

We suspect Aurora may also give unsuspecting airport customers a bit of a fright too.



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WIN it *back*

Weekly winners throughout April, announced every Friday in Travel Daily

Terms and Conditions: 1. To qualify an individual agent must have made at least 1 booking 2. Commission will be paid directly to by the Thursday of the following week 3. Any tax implications are at prize winners expense 4. Credits / Re-Bookings do not count towards points tally. 5. All bookings must be paid in full to count during incentive period. 6. Incentive available throughout April with weekly winners announced in Travel Daily every Friday. Each weekly prize is considered a standalone week. 7. Prize is not transferrable 8. Winners must be still working as front-line retail travel staff at time of payment.