

## A brand new journey

**JOURNEY** Beyond is currently seeking to appoint a National Trade Sales Manager in a newly-created position looking after its 14 brands.

The successful candidate will travel across Australia regularly to lead its sales team, Executive GM Alicia Triggs stated on LinkedIn.

## Qantas tests loyalty reform

**QANTAS** has confirmed one of the biggest loyalty shake-ups in its 35-year history, (*TD* breaking news), announcing the details of its Classic Plus Flight Rewards.

The intention to revamp its loyalty offering was confirmed to *Travel Daily* last month (*TD* 18 Mar), with Qantas this morning announcing the formal launch of the new rewards program in a bid to improve the scheme's value and availability for its most valued customers.

Classic Plus Flight Rewards offers its Frequent Flyer members access to over 20 million more reward seats, which can be booked from today on Qantas international flights departing Australia for travel from 01 Jul 2024 exclusively via [qantas.com](https://qantas.com).

The Classic Plus payment options for seats will be rolled out across the rest of the airline's international and domestic network by the end of the year.

Classic Plus will typically require more points than existing Classic reward seats do, with fewer points needed during off-peak periods or when booking early, and more during peak periods.

A return Economy flight from Sydney to Tokyo for example will cost 147,100 points under the Classic Plus scheme during peak periods, compared to 63,000 under the Classic structure.

Qantas Loyalty CEO, Andrew Glance (*pictured*), said the widespread availability of Classic Plus means that frequent flyers have more options to fly "where they want and when they want".

"We know how much our members love the existing reward seats and have been booking them in record numbers, so the new Classic Plus product we're announcing today is over and above our commitment to five million Classic reward seats," Glance said.

The carrier's newest type of reward seat will be available to all destinations on the Qantas international and domestic network across all cabin classes, including first, business, premium economy and economy.

Loyalty program changes are expected to deliver an improvement in member engagement and drive the long-term growth of Qantas Loyalty, as it targets \$800 million-\$1 billion in Underlying EBIT by 2030.

The change is also in line with ongoing efforts to win back brand trust with consumers after a turbulent period. *AB*



### Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features five pages of the latest travel industry news.

## Virgin appoints Hass

**VIRGIN** Australia has appointed Bain Capital MD Ray Hass to be Office Holder of the airline.

The change occurred last month but details of the move were only handed to ASIC late last week.

Office Holders are authorised to make major strategic and financial planning decisions.

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## AABH crosses the Tasman in growth push

**AUSTRALIA** and Beyond Holidays (AABH) has announced the expansion of its inbound tourism services to New Zealand for the first time.

Supporting the Kiwi launch of New Zealand and Beyond Holidays (NZABH) is the appointment of Nicole Wang as Country Manager, who will lead the division from a new office established in Auckland.

Speaking to *Travel Daily* about the expansion, Managing Partner of the company, Simon Bernardi (pictured), said the decision to launch New Zealand operations followed a series of strong feedback from existing clients. "Our international customers



wanted to combine Australia and New Zealand itineraries under one operator," he explained. "Australian agents are also seeking unique New Zealand

tailor-made or group options for customers and we are proud to announce the opening of our New Zealand office based in Auckland," Bernardi added.

Client benefits of the new Kiwi division will include support on the ground by the NZABH team in addition to the presence in Australia, access to multiple direct agreements via New Zealand suppliers, and a range of new unique curated content.

Net rates can also be offered in NZD for the first time, while flexible payment terms are also available, as they are in Australia.

A new website for the NZ arm will launch over the next couple of weeks. AB

## Saudi women's tour

**INTREPID** Travel has launched a new 12-day 'Saudi Arabia Women's Expedition', designed to empower women and support female-owned businesses.

Starting in Riyadh and finishing in Jeddah, the tour will be led by female leaders and guides and showcase "a different side of the country" beyond Saudi Arabia's well-known luxury resorts.

Experiences include a sunrise visit to the Nabataean site of Hegra with an expert storyteller.

## Ponant to unleash brand-new Spirit in Jun



**PONANT** will bolster its fleet of maxi-catamarans when *Spirit of Ponant* (pictured) arrives in Jun.

The six-stateroom vessel can accommodate up to 12 guests and four crew - including a chef - and will initially sail Corsica, France, before heading to the Seychelles for winter 2025.

The highly personalised voyages include gastronomy, wine cellar and signature cocktails, room service, as well as a range of nautical marine activities such as paddle boarding and snorkelling.


Seven-night cruises will start in Corsica from 13 Jul, departing and returning to Bonifacio, followed

by Seychelles sailing in 2025.

Prices for sailings lead in from \$12,400 per person, with the full deployment of itineraries and price lists to be announced by the cruise line later this month.

The ship is part of ongoing efforts by Ponant to raise the bar of unique sustainable cruising. AB

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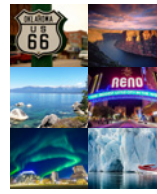
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## NCL ANZ promotions

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line (NCL) has promoted Damian Borg to Director of Sales Strategy and Operations for APAC, and Angela Middleton to Director of Field Sales for Australia/New Zealand.

Borg's expanded role will see him provide strategic direction to the sales team in Asia to further support APAC VP and MD Ben Angell, while continuing to drive more momentum for NCL's itineraries to Europe, Hawaii, Alaska, Asia and South America.

Meanwhile, Middleton is charged with strengthening trade relationships and mentoring an expanding local sales team.

This includes roles that are currently being recruited to cover the South Australia/Western Australia markets, as well as a BDM looking after NSW/ACT.

The high-profile promotions follow NCL achieving a robust growth in bookings in Australia over recent months compared to the same time period last year.

## 2024 will break all records: WTTC

**IN A** positive sign the travel and tourism sectors have left the damage of the pandemic behind, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has projected a "record-breaking year" in 2024, with the global economic contribution set to reach an all-time high of US\$11.1 trillion.

International visitor spending is expected to almost reach the 2019 peak at US\$1.89 trillion, while domestic tourists are predicted to spend more than in any year to hit US\$5.4 trillion.

The WTTC also said it expects 142 countries of 185 involved in its study to be outperforming previous national records by the end of the year.

While work shortages have plagued the sector here in Australia, globally the WTTC said travel and tourism will underpin almost 348 million jobs, representing an increase of more than 13.6 million in 2024



compared to 2019.

"Against the backdrop of uncertainty, the travel & tourism sector remains a global economic powerhouse," WTTC President & CEO, Julia Simpson, said.

"This isn't just about breaking records, we're no longer talking about a recovery - this is a story of the sector back at its best after a difficult few years, providing a significant economic boost to countries around the world and supporting millions of jobs," Simpson added.

By 2034, the sector will

"supercharge" the global economy, and be on track to contribute US\$16 trillion in value and make up 11.4% of the economic landscape.

On the employment front, the industries will also be a "job creation juggernaut", providing work for 449 million people.

While there were many bright spots, the WTTC did temper its forecast by stating the US and China both needed to do more to support travel and tourism, or they will "suffer" while other nations thrive. *AB*

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## Dixon to Brand USA

**BRAND USA** has appointed Fred Dixon as President & Chief Executive Officer from 15 Jul.

The announcement was made as part of a succession plan to replace long-standing Brand USA head, Christopher Thompson, who has held the role since 2012.

Dixon joins the tourism body from his current role as President and CEO of NYC Tourism + Conventions, New York City's destination marketing organisation, bringing 30 years of marketing acumen.

"Fred's wealth of knowledge and experience from across the travel and tourism industry and his strategic, visionary and humble leadership proved that he is the right person to take Brand USA and the marketing of the USA's rich and diverse destinations and experiences to even greater heights," Brand USA Chair, Todd Davidson, enthused.

Thompson said Brand USA was in good hands moving forward and that he will work closely with Dixon and the board to ensure a "seamless transition of responsibilities".

Dixon also serves on the board of the International LGBTQ+ Travel Association.



## UK flight impacts

**AIRLINE** travellers in parts of the United Kingdom and Ireland were impacted by flight cancellations on Sat as a storm swept across both countries.

The storm, labelled Kathleen, saw flight services cancelled at Manchester Airport, Dublin Airport and Belfast City Airport.

## Open up the golden gates



**AUSTRALIAN** visitor numbers to San Francisco are finally "moving in the right direction", San Francisco Travel Association Executive Vice President, Hubertus Funke, has revealed.

While the market still has a fair way to go before reaching its historical peak, Australian travel to the American city has reached 69% of 2019 visitor arrival levels.

"It's been heartening to see Australian travellers returning to San Francisco, continuing a long history of friendship between Northern California and Australia," Hubertus said.

"San Francisco is looking forward to welcoming even more Australian travellers in the coming years and expects visitation from

the market to surpass pre-COVID figures by 2025.

"This recovery is just in time for a number of major sporting events taking place in San Francisco, including the 2025 Laver Cup and both the Super Bowl LX and FIFA World Cup in 2026, which will attract tens of thousands of visitors from around the world," he added.

More broadly last year, San Francisco attracted 23.1 million visitors - a 5.2% year-over-year increase on 2022 - who spent US\$8.8 billion.

Total visitor-related spending into the city was US\$9.3 billion.

San Francisco is forecast to grow visitation in 2024, driven primarily by increases in leisure and business travel.

Visitor volumes are expected to reach 23.7 million, with 2.36 million international visitors predicted to contribute US\$5 billion of the anticipated US\$9.45 billion in total visitor spending.

The city's biggest airport SFO also expects continued growth and projects will see it service 54 million passengers in 2024. *AB*

## Boeing compo paid

**ALASKA** Airlines has been compensated by Boeing for the infamous door panel blowout that occurred during a flight operated by a B737 Max 9.

The carrier received US\$160 million from the aircraft manufacturer, with further recompense expected in the current quarter, Alaska Airlines revealed in a filing this week.

Alaska Airlines also confirmed it experienced a temporary downturn in bookings following the incident, however demand for tickets in Feb and Mar has returned to be ahead of pre-grounding expectations

## QF US agent refresh

**QANTAS** has relaunched its Qantas Learning Hub for agents in the United States.

To celebrate its latest rollout, Qantas is offering American advisors the opportunity to win monthly prizes until Sep.



## Window Seat

**LITHUANIA'S** capital city, Vilnius has launched a self-deprecating tourism marketing campaign in a bid to stoke more travel interest.

The European city's cheeky new 'Expectations vs Reality' push pokes fun at preconceived notions some travellers may have of the city, including the bold play of depicting Soviet-era buildings, drunks defacing streets, thieves, and even shady market sellers (**pictured**).

The advertisement then shifts from images that look similar to scenes depicted in the film *Borat* of Kazakhstan, to the "reality" of what life is really like in the vibrant Eastern European city.

"When asked about Vilnius, many international residents either don't know it or know very little about it and it's normal that our perception of places might be affected by what is featured in media and pop culture," Go Vilnius CEO Dovile Aleksandraviciene said.

"What many don't know is that in the last 30 years, many cities in Eastern Europe have become unrecognisable thanks to rapid changes.

"We are not patronising or critiquing those who still base their knowledge of Vilnius and Lithuania on the prevailing stereotypes but rather, in a true 'Unexpectedly Amazing' Vilnius style, laugh at them together and ignite people's desire to see what reality looks like over here".

Watch the campaign **HERE**.



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### Entire Travel Group - Europe 2024/2025

Agents can now get their hands on Entire Travel Group's new 184-page Europe brochure - a comprehensive guide to the operator's ever-expanding program across Italy, France, Spain, Switzerland and Scandinavia. The publication, which was created in response to an in-depth agent survey, features detailed maps and highlights of each region, as well as presenting a variety of travel options, from independent

holidays to river cruises. One of the many itineraries showcased in the brochure is the 12-day 'Best of Sicily & Malta' escorted group tour, where guests will explore ancient towns and archaeological sites, as well as Europe's highest volcano. Agents can view the guide online on Entire's website, or order a sustainably-made print copy via TIFs.



### Cunard - August 2024 to January 2027

Luxury British cruise line, Cunard, has unveiled its latest digital brochure to help travellers discover their perfect cruise. Covering itineraries departing from Aug 2024 through to Jan 2027, the 79-page publication introduces Cunard's fleet, as well as highlighting its dining experiences, spa, sustainability, fare types, stateroom amenities, and more. Readers will learn all about the cruise line's worldwide offerings, including its itineraries

in Australia and the South Pacific, Asia, the Mediterranean, the USA and Canada, Northern Europe and the British Isles, Alaska, and more. There is also a helpful 'frequently asked questions' section, information on how to make a booking, and a voyage calendar.



### Greece and Med Travel Centre - Turkey 2024

Travellers who are looking to plan a holiday to Turkey will appreciate Greece and Mediterranean Travel Centre's new Turkey 2024 brochure, which is filled with an exciting collection of guaranteed departure escorted group tours as well as private tours, gullet cruises, Gallipoli tours and other services. The regular tours are designed to cover all of the Middle Eastern country's 'must-see' sights, while the expert guides add plenty of hidden

gems. Agents can use the 48-page digital brochure to help clients plan the trip of a lifetime by choosing one of the operator's group tours - which can be combined to form a longer holiday, as well as design their own customised itinerary, or experience a yacht charter.

## Agents get the full Round Up



**TWENTY-FOUR** Australian and New Zealand travel agents arrived in the Top End last week to attend the Northern Territory's annual NT Round Up trade training event.

Travel agencies on the trip included Infinity Holidays, Helloworld, and Travel Associates, with the group of advisors experiencing a jumping croc cruise, food and street art tours, as well as visits to the Kakadu and Nitmiluk national parks.

Further highlights included jumping aboard a champagne sunset cruise in Darwin, a Kakadu air scenic flight, and a NitNit Gorge Cruise and dinner package at Cicada Lodge.

NT Round Up is part of a year-long trade agent training program that includes webinars, online training modules and incentives, such as trips to the NT where tourism operators can present their products to agents.

"Providing travel agents with firsthand experience of the wonderful experiences we have on offer in the Top End will

encourage and inspire them to become ambassadors for the Northern Territory," NT Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, Joel Bowden, said.

"Business-to-business events such as NT Round Up complement our 'Different in Every Sense' marketing campaigns, positioning the Northern Territory as a world-class destination, offering experiences, culture and landscapes like nowhere else in the world," he added. *AB*

Agents **pictured** at the Round Up's Welcome to the Dry session.

## Tesla blows budget

**IN A** blow for fleet providers looking to secure low-cost EV options, Tesla has cancelled plans to proceed with its long-promised budget car in the face of stiff competition from Chinese rivals.

Sources told *Reuters* that a cheaper mass-market car won't be built, a long-mooted goal touted by founder Elon Musk.