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Air NZ skis to CNS

AIR New Zealand has restarted direct flights between Auckland Airport and Cairns Int'l Airport in time for the winter ski season.

The seasonal flights took off on 02 Apr and at this stage will operate twice a week until 26 Oct using A321neo aircraft.



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MEL documents record Mar

INTERNATIONAL competition has helped Melbourne Airport hit a record high last month, setting a new milestone for overseas pax.

The increased flight volume saw Melbourne welcome 923,065 international travellers in Mar, surpassing the previous record for the month of 916,849 international passengers in 2018.

The year-on-year international traffic growth of 28% smashed the domestic increase of just 5%, which was attributed to capacity restraints and higher airfares.

Melbourne welcomed a total of 3,016,947 people in Mar overall, with passenger volumes now surpassing three million in four of the past six months.

Australian newcomer Turkish Airlines added extra capacity to the local market (TD 06 Mar), with flights from Melbourne to Istanbul via Singapore.

Chief Executive Officer, Lorie Argus, said the international market demonstrated more competition and capacity helped reduce airfares and allows more people to travel.

"It's clear from our international figures that Victorians want to travel, and they're prepared to do so in record numbers," she said.

"While domestic travel remains constrained by reduced capacity and subsequent higher airfares, it's unlikely we'll see a full recovery in the local market in the near future.

"It's important to acknowledge that airlines are grappling with a



number of factors outside of their control, but it's also worth noting that while domestic airfares went up over the Grand Prix weekend and Easter, the one thing that didn't increase over those periods was the airport charge the airlines pay."

Argus noted the plans Melbourne has submitted for a parallel north-south runway (TD 15 Nov 2022) to help improve operational reliability and cater for future growth, which will drive choice and enable greater efficiency for tourism.

"We are also working with the airlines to explore ways of increasing our terminal capacity in a timely and cost-effective way," she added. MS

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest news including **Business Events News** plus a cover wrap from **Journey Beyond**.

Making big Ghans

JOURNEY Beyond's The Ghan is celebrating 95 iconic years by giving away a trip for two.

All Ghan Birthday Sale bookings made this month automatically go into the draw for the trip, which will travel between Alice Springs and Darwin - **cover page**.

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Brazil flip flops on visa

IN WHAT has become one of the most indecisive policy decisions in global visa history, Brazil has back flipped on its decision to abolish its visa waiver program yet again.

The need for travellers to require an entry visa was supposed to be enacted yesterday (**TD** 10 Apr), however an update from the Consulate General of Brazil overnight said the waiver program had been extended to at least 09 Apr 2025.

“Nationals of [Australia] will only require an entry visa after that date,” the Consulate said.

The decision was made by official decree, and while the Consulate fended off **TD**'s questions about indecision around visa policy, local media reports suggest Brazil's tourism sector can't afford to limit visits.



Gimme, gimme, gimme famils



ELEVEN travel agents from Australia and New Zealand are currently participating in the 50 Degrees North & The Leading Hotels of the World Nordic famil.

Led by 50 Degrees North's Director of Global Sales, Brooke Schjellerud and owner Tietse Stelma, the tour is designed to showcase the best of Oslo, Stockholm, and Helsinki.

The Swedish leg of the Nordic adventure included tours of the Royal Palace and the Vasa Museum, as well as the famous cradle of seventies music history, the ABBA Museum (**pictured**).

Agents were treated to a backstage VIP chat with the museum's Director, Ingmarie Hallin, who toured with ABBA in the seventies and eighties.

Meanwhile in Oslo, advisors checked out Vigeland Statue Park and the Kon-Tiki Museum, and in Helsinki wandered the grounds of the Suomenlinna Fortress and the Helsinki City Hall.

The group also enjoyed some moments of relaxation at Hotel St George before indulging in culinary delights at Hotel Kamp.

Agents can learn more about 50 Degrees North **HERE**. **AB**

Ride to a million pts

ONE Uber rider will win one million Qantas loyalty points each day until the end of the month, under a new promotion forged by the carrier and the ride-sharing platform this week.

To be in the running to win a tranche of the 20 million points up for grabs, Uber customers need to link their Uber and Qantas Frequent Flyer accounts.

Travellers will need to download the Uber app and tap 'Account', then 'Settings' to scroll down to the 'Rewards' tab to link accounts, and once complete users will see 'Linked' under the Qantas Frequent Flyer section.

The tie-up follows hot on the heels of Qantas launching 20 million extra reward sets through its new Classic Plus Flight Rewards tier (**TD** 08 Apr).

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No loyalty for agents

THE World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA) has called on American Airlines to reverse a policy which will leave the clients of most travel agencies out in the cold when it comes to its AAdvantage loyalty program.

The American carrier made the call last month to only allow direct bookings, or those made through a small number of 'preferred' agencies, to qualify for AAdvantage miles accrual from 01 May this year.

However, the peak body representing travel agents globally has come out swinging this week, accusing AA of imposing "punitive measures" against travel agencies choosing to use third-party platforms.

"By discontinuing AAdvantage accrual on tickets booked through most agencies and imposing stringent thresholds for agencies to maintain preferred status, American Airlines is actively

discouraging travellers from booking through the travel agency channel," the WTAAA said.

"Travel agencies play an important role in helping consumers maximise the benefits of [loyalty] programs and AA's new policy undermines this mutually beneficial relationship, threatening to alienate loyal customers and disrupt the balance of the travel distribution ecosystem," the body added.

The WTAAA also suggested the "heavy-handed tactic" will ultimately fragment distribution, drive up costs, and reduce transparency for consumers who seek to compare offerings across multiple airlines.

Earlier this year, the WTAAA vowed to become more active in advocating for the rights of travel agents globally after appointing Otto de Vries to be its first-ever Executive Director (**TD 05 Feb**), with NDC reform in its sights. **AB**

Dreams could be a nightmare



A BOEING whistleblower has made the sensational claim that the company's long-haul 787 Dreamliner could fall apart mid-air after making numerous trips.

Speaking with *The New York Times* this week, former Boeing engineer, Sam Salehpour, said poor manufacturing practices had led to the Dreamliner's fuselage being assembled improperly, posing a flight integrity risk after flying "thousands of flights."

Boeing has responded to the claims, confirming that while the pieces of the aircraft do come from different makers, it refuted allegations that its sourcing has

had any adverse impact on the durability of the planes.

Salehpour also claimed he observed "shortcuts taken by Boeing" during the assembly of the Dreamliner, which resulted in drilling debris left in interfaces & deformed composite material.

Following the bombshell claims, the Federal Aviation Administration has launched an investigation into any potential assembly defects in the company's Dreamliner manufacturing process.

Salehpour also claimed to have observed issues with Boeing's 777 assembly process. **AB**

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World Asia on way

WORK has officially started at the Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard in France on MSC Cruises' newest World Class *MSC World Asia* ship.

The steel-cutting ceremony preceded the formal naming of the vessel, which will be the third ship in the World Class series for the cruise line, boasting cutting-edge technology and leading energy efficiency.

MSC World Asia will also become the fourth LNG ship to join the MSC Cruises fleet, as LNG continues to be seen as a path to maritime decarbonisation.

The vessel will look very similar to *World Europa*, which sails Mediterranean itineraries all year-round, and *World America*, which is scheduled to debut in Apr 2025, sailing Caribbean cruises out of Miami.

MSC World Asia (render pictured) is expected to start sailing in 2026.

MEANWHILE, *MSC World America* completed another important milestone with a float out that took place on 07 April at the shipyard in Saint-Nazaire, France, formally moving to her final phase of construction.

There will be a celebratory sailing to Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve to mark the ship's formal naming ceremony next year.



A pearl of Japanese advice



COLLETTE'S tours to Japan have become one of the company's top sellers in the Australian market, the operator revealed this week.

Noting strong growth in bookings for Japan among Aussies in 2023, that demand has continued into 2024, with Collette's small group '13-day Explorations Tour' proving to be the most subscribed.

On the trip, travellers can enjoy crafted experiences such as spending a day with female Ama pearl divers (pictured), as well as traditional Ama lunches where guests can learn about the divers and their fascinating profession.

There is also a visit to a working Buddhist Temple at Mount Koya, offering travellers an overnight stay sleeping on a traditional Tatami mat.

During a two-night stay in Hiroshima, there is an opportunity to hear first-hand

from an A-Bomb survivor at the Peace Park & Museum.

"With Collette's highly trained tour guides, language is no barrier as guides interpret and provide advice," Collette Product Designer, Roger Clulow, said.

"This makes delving into the nation's history and interacting with local experts much easier. "It's this focus that is making our tours so popular," he added.

Collette's 13-day 'Cultural Treasures of Japan Classic Tour' is also performing well this year, offering travellers the chance to explore ancient and modern Japanese culture firsthand.

Highlights include learning the art of the tea ceremony, and tasting locally made sake.

In Mar, **TD** spoke to Collette's global CEO Jaelyn Leibl-Cote, where she spruiked the growing popularity of small group touring in Australia (**TD** 05 Mar). **AB**



Window Seat

QANTAS is selling "pre-loved" premium economy recliners on its online marketplace.

The seats will only set loyalty members back 490,000 points - what a bargain!



New Windstar ships

SMALL-SHIP cruise brand Windstar Cruises has just welcomed on board two all-suite motor yachts: *Star Seeker* and *Star Explorer*.

New-build *Star Seeker* is currently being constructed in the WestSEA shipyard and will be delivered in Dec 2025, followed by *Star Explorer* in Dec 2026.

Both ships have 112 suites with a 224-pax capacity and a staff to guest ratio of 1:2.

Other new features of the vessels include full private verandas and infinity windows, as well as two new Owner's Suites with wraparound balconies.

Both also have ice-strengthened hulls, unlocking access to new and exciting destinations.

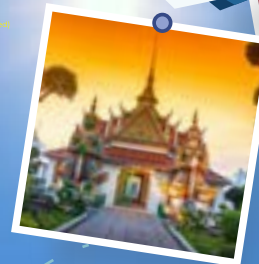
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QR can't be sued in case

AUSTRALIA'S Federal Court has ruled that five women alleging they were forcibly strip-searched after boarding a Qatar Airways flight can't sue the airline.

The five Australian women brought the case against Qatar Airways following the alleged incident at Doha Hamad International Airport (**pictured**) in



2020, however a judge in the case this week stated the case did not meet international airline liability protocols, which specifies that airlines can only be sued within set boundaries.

"My conclusion that the exclusivity principle precludes the applicants from pursuing any claim for damages against Qatar Airways is a complete answer to the claims that the applicants seek to bring against Qatar Airways," Justice Halley said.

While the airline is unlikely to face any legal proceedings, the judge did state the women's concurrent case against the Qatar Company for Airports Operation and Management (MATAR), a wholly owned subsidiary of Qatar Airways, should "still be on foot" under an amended claim.

After proceedings this week, the lawyer representing the women, Damian Sturzaker of Marque Lawyers said the firm was "carefully reviewing" the reasons given by the court.

"Our clients' resolve to continue to agitate their claims remains undiminished."

The case is next due before the Federal Court on 10 May. *AB*

WA tourism training

NEW tourism and hospitality training is rolling out in rural Western Australia, with sessions to run until Jun.

The program is being hosted by the Government of Western Australia to connect jobseekers with businesses, in partnership with the Regional Chambers of Commerce & Industry WA.

It is being supported through the Western Australian Government's Tourism Workforce Development Program, and will provide a series of job-ready training workshops.

Sessions are scheduled for Esperance, Geraldton, Margaret River, and Kalgoorlie-Boulder, following on from workshops earlier this year in Albany, Bunbury, Exmouth, and Broome, and range from half-day to three-day courses on a range of topics.

The program was first introduced in Carnarvon and Exmouth last year, which helped build local workforce capacity ahead of the solar eclipse event, and is now being extended.

Agents witness the Sun's rise



TRAVEL advisors have experienced Princess Cruises' next-level "Love Boat" *Sun Princess*, as part of a lavish Mediterranean fly-cruise.

The 10-day voyage saw advisors travel with Korean Air through Seoul, with complimentary flights, transfers, meals, and accommodation, before arriving in Spain for the five-day cruise.

Agents set sail from Barcelona to Mallorca, Messina, and Athens.

Pictured preparing to experience the ship's inaugural season are Paul Graham (Just Cruises), Lisa Trestail (RAA), Natalie Pope (Phil Hoffman Travel), Patricia Greene (Suncity Travel Caloundra), Greg Wilson (CruiseCo), Jennifer Winter (Helloworld Travel Erina Fair), Farouk Ismail (Pay Later Travel), Kelly David (Helloworld

Travel Sandgate), Benice Parkinson (Clean Cruising), Keryn-Leigh Edmestone (RACQ Maroochydore), Kellie Hatchman (Itineraries Travel), Wendy Acton (Helloworld Sunbury), Aleesha Shaw (Helloworld Travel Riverlink) and David Craven (Princess). *MS*

Accor campaign

ACCOR has partnered with content studio Beautiful Destinations to unveil its "For ALL the Travellers in You" campaign.

The push uses video content to inspire wanderlust and reinforce brand love, leveraging innovative storytelling and dynamic content creation to showcase Accor's leading brands and destinations.

APAC, the Middle East, and Africa will serve as the launchpad for the global activation.

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MUSIC EVENTS ICON PASSES AWAY AT 82

THE man responsible for pioneering the large-scale Australian music events industry has passed away at the age of 82.

Garry Van Egmond died on Sat following complications from an undisclosed surgery, leaving behind one of the most important legacies in Aussie events history.

The Melbourne-based music promoter, who was most well-known for organising AC/DC's tours for 30 years, also took charge of high-profile music shows involving Dire Straits and Bette Midler.

Testament to his success in emboldening the music events industry is the impressive 35 million tickets that were sold throughout the run of his shows.

In 2010, he was the promoter for AC/DC's *Black Ice Tour* - which at the time was the fastest-selling concert in Australian music history, with over 520,000 tickets sold in under three hours.

In the 1990s, Van Egmond was also responsible for bringing the hugely popular Irish *Riverdance* production to Australia, as well as one of the most successful local runs of *Jesus Christ Superstar* in 1992, starring John Farnham and Angry Anderson.

Global live entertainment and ticketing company, TEG, paid tribute to Van Egmond, who was still part of the executive team with his son Christo at TEG Van Egmond at the time of his death.

"Garry Van Egmond was a key figure in the Australasian entertainment industry, with over 50 years' experience in touring, production of theatrical events, event merchandising, marketing, and promotion," TEG said.

"His achievements are a testament to Garry's ability to meticulously plan and execute all aspects of successful promotion from marketing through to logistics," the company added.



Besides selling tickets to shows in Australia, Van Egmond also took charge of major events overseas in key markets such as New Zealand, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, Taiwan and Japan.

Commenting on his father's 40-year career, Christo Van Egmond said his dad was "a true gentleman in the business",

adding he was also highly regarded and respected by artists, managers, agents, and everyone he worked with.

"He was a superb mentor to me and I have enjoyed working with him for nearly 30 years.

"He was a fantastic father and friend to me and will be missed dearly by his family, friends, and colleagues," he added. *AB*

MCEC Banksia

THE Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) has sponsored the National Banksia Sustainability Awards again for a third year.

The program recognises excellence across a diverse range of areas including agriculture and regional development, climate tech, net zero action, sustainable tourism and more.

BEIA launches new Kiwi program to support emerging talent

BUSINESS Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA) has introduced its 11th annual BE Mentored program this week, sponsored for the first time by the New Zealand International Convention Centre (NZICC).

The eight-month program is designed to support and develop emerging talent in the industry, fostering 19 mentor-mentee pairs.

Experienced mentors from previous years will also make a return this year.

The online launch kicked off yesterday and is being facilitated by HR expert, Sally Doherty, from Sallyd & Co, with a team building session hosted by Team Up Events.

"Over the past decade we have seen the positive impact BE Mentored has had for

mentees on developing their careers, building valuable relationships and broadening their experience within the business events industry," said BEIA CEO, Lisa Hopkins.

"Our mentees receive a personal support system to help both professionally and personally, while our mentors have the chance to share and demonstrate their knowledge".



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Cordis, Auckland has announced a leadership transition, with **Craig Bonnor** promoted to Managing Director. The change was effective from this week, with Bonnor succeeding Franz Mascarenhas. He brings more than 30 years of experience in rooms division, business development, and management duties.

A new President & Chief Executive Officer has been appointed by **Visit Anaheim**, with **Mike Waterman** set to take over the organisation. He will bring his 30 years of leadership and sales experience to the DMO from 29 Apr, having previously served as an executive with other Sun Belt destinations, including Visit Orlando and Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau.

La Vie Hotels & Resorts has secured top talent to drive its growth in Asia, appointing well-respected hospitality leader **David Wray** to the position of Senior Director Growth & Development Asia. Bringing more than three decades of experience to his new role, Wray's key focus will be driving La Vie's growth across the region by working closely with owners to procure franchise agreements with major hotel brands.

Quark Expeditions has shared cruise industry heavyweight **Chris Catanzariti** has joined its APAC sales team as a Business Development Manager. Catanzariti began in the travel industry more than 20 years ago, and most recently served as a BDM with Norwegian Cruise Line.

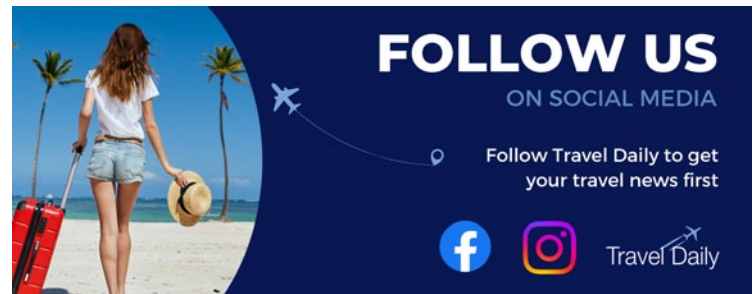
Travel Associates has announced its new Business Leader for **Travel Associates Brighton** in South Australia is **Karalee Watson**. She has an impressive travel career, which began in 2007 at Flight Centre West Lakes, before pursuing a number of other travel industry roles in Adelaide, before making the move to Brisbane.

Heather Pryde has started a new position as National Accounts & Trade Support Manager at **Princess Cruises**. It is the latest internal promotion for Pryde, who has also previously worked with Topdeck Travel.

Marriott International has appointed **Sera Cawanibuka-Seruvatu** as Market Director of Marketing for Fiji & Samoa. She began her role at the beginning of the month, and brings more than two decades of experience in marketing to her new position. Her extensive background includes distinguished roles within the tourism sector, notably with Tourism Fiji.

Sabre has appointed new leaders to propel its hotel distribution expansion, appointing Head of Supply Americas **Steve Peterman**. Joining him is **Nathan Brooks** to the new Vice President of Global Supply for Lodging, Ground, & Sea.

Hyatt has named **Antonio Fungairino** as Head of Development Latin America & the Caribbean at The Hyatt The Inclusive Collection. Fungairino will be based in Chicago for the role.



Waddingham the newest Princess



BRITISH actress Hannah Waddingham (**pictured**) is set to serve as Godmother of Princess Cruises' *Sun Princess*.

The 49-year-old is best known for playing businesswoman Rebecca Welton in the award-winning comedy series *Ted Lasso*.

Her newest role is set to see her join fellow Godmothers such as Diana, Princess of Wales (*Royal Princess*, 1984); Catherine, Princess of Wales (*Royal Princess*, 2013); Audrey Hepburn (*Star Princess*, 1989); and Sophia Loren (*Crown Princess*, 1990); as well as a number of others.

The cruise line's newest Love Boat will be officially christened in a star-studded ceremony in Barcelona on 23 Apr.

"We're delighted to welcome the illuminous and elegant Hannah Waddingham to serve as Godmother for our sensational new *Sun*," the cruise line's President John Padgett said.

"Just like *Sun Princess*, she exudes sophistication, beauty

and wonderment through her inspiring work as a talented and award-winning actress and performer," he added.

"We're truly honoured Hannah will officially name our most impressive, luxurious and stunning Love Boat ever created, and join an esteemed group of Princess Godparents including members of the Royal family."

Sun officially started her inaugural cruise season in Feb, and is currently sailing a series of Mediterranean voyages.

The ship is based on an entirely new platform designed exclusively for Princess by Fincantieri, which features more balconies than any of her fleetmates, as well as 'The Dome', a "transformational" entertainment venue inspired by the terraces of Santorini.

Sun is also Princess' first LNG vessel, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and featuring energy recovery systems for eco-conscious cruising. *MS*