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## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features six pages of news including our special corporate page.

## Bonza redeploys

**BONZA** has announced its newest route connecting the Sunshine Coast and Launceston, set to take off from 29 Mar.

The twice-weekly service is available now on the FlyBonza app from \$49pp one way as part of the carrier's Bonzaversary sale, which ends 05 Feb.

Meanwhile, the low-cost carrier will scrap its Townsville to Rockhampton route in Mar.

## India at its best

**GLOBAL** Group Travel Services is offering 20% commission on its new 23-day 'Discover Best of India' tour, which traverses from Delhi to Cochin over 23 days.

Priced from \$4,563ppts, the new adventure includes all accommodation and breakfast.

## AA makes history in Brissy

**BRISBANE** will make history in Oct when the first-ever nonstop service to link the city with Dallas takes off with American Airlines.

When the AA service clears the tarmac on 27 Oct, it will also represent the longest nonstop flight in the US carrier's network, with flight time durations set to average around 15 hours between BNE and DFW.

The decision by Qantas' codeshare partner to launch daily services follows a solid uptick in bookings from Aussies looking to explore more of North America.

"With our new route and our partnership with Qantas, we hope to open up the world to even more customers," AA Vice President International Operations Jose Freig enthused.

"Our customers in Brisbane will have access to our largest US hub, from where they can connect to explore unexplored and much-loved destinations around the



world; from sunny Miami, to the deep South in Sao Paulo and beyond," he added.

The upcoming service takes the number of carriers offering direct links from Brisbane to North American destinations to four, with Qantas (BNE-LAX), United Airlines (BNE-SFO) and Air Canada (BNE-YVR) already operating.

At this stage the seasonal route will run until at least Mar 2025, with tickets expected to go on sale by next week. *AB*

## KrisFlyer celebrates

**SINGAPORE** Airlines' loyalty program KrisFlyer is celebrating its 25th anniversary and its eight million member milestone with a raft of new promotions.

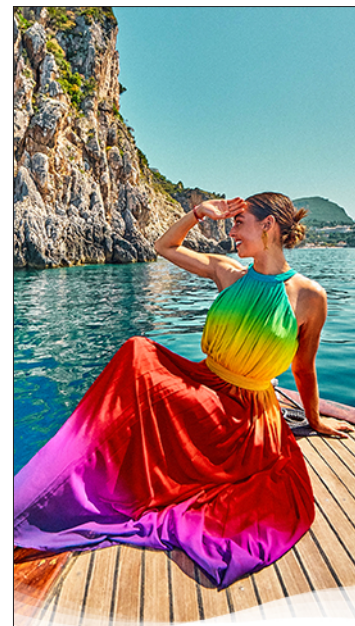
Until 10 Feb, members will earn 50% more KrisFlyer miles for all SIA flights booked on the airline's website or app for travel between 01 Jul and 30 Nov, while loyalty members who pay using MasterCard will also enter a lucky draw to win a share of up to one million miles.

KrisFlyer members will also earn 250 bonus miles for every S\$25 spent at the KrisShop from 01 to 14 Feb, and can participate in content competitions on KrisFlyer's social media pages from 05-25 Feb to win 25,000 miles.

## Outback savings

**TRAVELLERS** can save up to \$3,095pp with the pre-release sale of Journey Beyond's Outback Spirit's all-inclusive 2025 tours.

There are 10 flagship itineraries on offer, taking in destinations like the Bungle Bungles and the Cape York Peninsula - download the full brochure [HERE](#).



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## LA Co opens The Village

**MORE** than 150 guests turned out recently to celebrate the grand opening of The Village North Melbourne, the first hostel from The Leisure Accommodation Collective (LA Co).

A new hostel accommodation group on the scene, LA Co is set to grow under the experienced tutelage of former Tourism Australia Chairman and Mantra Group CEO, Bob East, and CEO Luke Moran, who brings 25 years of hotel experience to his role.

Carried out by Melbourne design firm Anthology Studio, The Village North Melbourne underwent a six-month refurb last year and now offers 300 beds across private suites, bunk rooms with privacy curtains and female-only multi-bed share rooms.

Guests can also enjoy a wellness space, cinema and rooftop lounge.

LA Co acquired The Village brand in 2022 and is now set to refurbish and relaunch eight



more wholly-owned hostels in Byron Bay, Surry Hills, Bondi Beach, Glebe, Canberra, Cairns and Melbourne CBD in addition to North Melbourne.

"Since reopening in Dec, The Village North Melbourne has seen exceptionally strong demand and is trading above 90% occupancy," LA Co CEO Luke Moran said.

"This demonstrates there is huge appetite for enhanced hostel experience that's more than just a bed to stay in." ML

## Seabourn extends

**SEABOURN** Cruise Line has extended its exclusive shipboard credit offer during its Sail of the Year event.

Travellers who make a reservation by the end of the month will receive US\$1,000 per suite, which can be used for shore excursions, spa treatment at Seabourn's Spa & Wellness, and the Reserve wine list - **CLICK HERE** for more info on the Sail of the Year promotion.

## EK rolls into HK

**EMIRATES** has expanded its Chauffeur-drive service to Hong Kong, with the carrier's First and Business class passengers now able to take advantage of complimentary premium transfers to and from Hong Kong International Airport.

The service must be booked at least 12 hours prior to departure through the 'Manage My Booking' link on the EK website.

## Love is in the Qld air

**DESPITE** adverse weather conditions dampening demand, the number of passengers passing through Queensland Airport Limited hubs in 2023 increased by 10% when compared to the previous year.

Just over eight million travellers made their way through the gates of Mount Isa, Townsville, Longreach and Gold Coast airports during the period, with the Gold Coast accounting for the lion's share with 6.2m passengers.

The love for Townsville is clearly returning as well, with the hub recording its busiest year in more than a decade, with 1.6 million people travelling through the terminal in the past 12 months.

Peak traffic flow for the four airports was in Jul last year, where 745,000 passengers passed through.

Load factor of flights was also a bright spot in 2023, with the GC performing the best with 86% of seats filled for the year.

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## Window Seat

**JAPANESE** Government officials have landed in hot water after an unconventional tactic to draw tourists to Tokushima.

The city's tourism division forked out US\$2,880 for a sex doll in 2017, which was dressed in a kimono and used in a tourist exhibition meant to promote the prefecture's traditional indigo-dyeing art at the Tokushima Awaodori Airport.

Officials had initially used a pair of cheaper mannequins at the exhibition, however an unnamed male official made the interesting judgement call to replace them with the offending sex doll, believing it would be better at drawing in tourists.

Auditors have reprimanded the Tokushima Prefectural Government for the purchase, declaring it in their report as "extremely expensive" and "grossly inappropriate".

The prefecture has been ordered to seek compensation from the officials involved in the purchase by 19 Jun.

It isn't the first time Japanese officials have been criticised for their use of government money.

In 2021, the seaside town of Noto came under fire for using nearly US\$170,000 of its COVID-19 relief grants on a giant squid statue in a desperate bid to entice more visitors.

## Air NZ brings in big bucks

**AIR** New Zealand spurred on NZ\$26.4 billion (A\$24.7b) in economic activity for the country in 2023, a new report which looked at the carrier's economic contribution and impact on NZ's economy has revealed.

Titled *Facilitating Prosperity: The Economic Contribution of Air New Zealand*, the 33-page document



showed the Kiwi flag carrier directly injected NZ\$2.7 billion into the country's economy across areas including tourism, exports, and imports.

Air New Zealand Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Mat Bolland, said the results "demonstrate the essential role the airline plays in not just connectivity, but also supporting New Zealand's economy".

The report outlined that while the airline's contribution reflected a return to pre-pandemic levels, Air New Zealand now anticipates its positive economic injection will continue to grow steadily throughout this year and beyond.

According to the latest figures revealed in the paper, the carrier enabled up to 5.6% of jobs across the country, supporting more than 130,000 New Zealand workers in the tourism, export and import industries.

The airline also acknowledged its biggest challenge will be in reducing its carbon emissions,

made especially difficult given how far away it is located from the rest of the world.

"We're acutely aware of the sustainability challenges faced by not only Air New Zealand but the wider aviation industry," Bolland said.

"We have taken steps toward our carbon goals in 2023 but are conscious there is a lot more work to do to before we reach our goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050." JM

## Traveltek beds down

**TRAVELTEK** has entered into a new strategic partnership with B2B accommodation network TravelgateX, in order to expand its hotel offering.

The alliance will see Traveltek gain access to over 600 accommodation suppliers, including channel managers and direct hotel connections, allowing travel agents and OTAs to search and book via its booking engine, iSell, and easily customise travel packages.

Traveltek said it will focus on developing its cruise API, while also utilising Travelgate's expertise in hotel connections.

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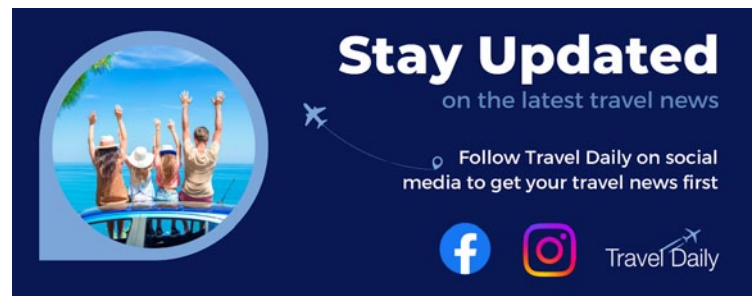
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## Tully takes charge of AQZ

**CHARTER** flight specialist Alliance Aviation has promoted from within to fill its vacant CEO role, with COO Stewart Tully to formally take the reins in Mar (**TD** breaking news).

The veteran aviation executive brings more than 34 years of experience to the position, and was previously in the COO role for just over three years.

Alliance's Managing Director, Scott McMillan, welcomed the appointment, which will see his own remit transition to focus more on higher strategic objectives at the airline.

McMillan said he was confident of Tully fulfilling the role's brief after working closely with him for almost a decade.

"I am delighted that Stewart will bring his broad expertise, which he will utilise in this role to run on a day-to-day basis," McMillan said, adding that the executive

change will free up more of his own time to concentrate on corporate development and strategic growth opportunities.

**MEANWHILE**, in an update to the ASX this morning, Alliance also confirmed plans to add an extra two board members as it seeks to push forward with an executive renewal program.

The management shake-up arrives only three months after Qantas sensationally backed away from its proposed takeover of Alliance Aviation (**TD** 19 Oct 2023) over competition concerns raised by the ACCC. *AB*

## Big APAC rebound

**ASIA** Pacific airlines recorded a full-year recovery rate nearly four times that of any other part of the world, according to the latest IATA traffic figures out this week.

Traffic for the APAC region shot up 126.1% for the year compared to 2022, however capacity failed to keep up, only climbing 101.8%, meaning airfares remained high.

Load factor for the region also performed well, growing 9% to a region-wide average of 83.1%.

Globally, full-year passenger traffic hit 94.1% of pre-pandemic levels, with the peak Dec holiday season reaching 97.5% of the mark set in 2019.

The final three months of the year was the strongest of the post-COVID era to date, with Q4 traffic at 98.2% on 2019 levels.

## TruTravels into Italy

**SOCIAL** adventure tour operator TruTravels has launched its first itinerary in Italy, with the first departure scheduled for Oct.

The eight-day 'Slice of Italy' adventure departs from Rome and heads south, visiting Naples and the Amalfi Coast, packed with Italian history, culture and food.

Highlights include guided walks in Rome and Pompeii, a visit to the island of Capri and more, with places priced from \$3,295ppts.

## Luxury buyers hunt in Dubai



**MORE** than 110 ultra-luxury suppliers have wrapped up the first Private Luxury Event of the year, with 27 Australian buyers and delegates among the 120-strong contingent in Dubai.

Suppliers were able to showcase their products across a rapid-fire schedule of 15-minute meetings.

Guests enjoyed four nights at Atlantis The Royal, with evenings reserved for attendees to get out and see the best of the UAE city.

Group experiences included an adventure into the desert, jet boat rides on the Arabian Gulf and helicopter rides.

"Attending the Private Luxury Event was an invaluable experience for us at Legacy Journeys. The event has set a new benchmark for luxury travel events," Legacy Journeys MD Monica Godfrey said.

"We look forward to incorporating the insights gained from this event into our bespoke travel services, further enhancing our offerings for families seeking that final, epic holiday experience," she added.

Dubai was the first event in a calendar of five for Private Luxury Events suppliers in 2024, with Copenhagen, Sardinia, Algarve and Mayakoba still to come, each attracting hundreds of buyers specialising in travel across the luxury and romance verticals. *ML*

Godfrey is **pictured** above right at Cloud 22 Atlantis The Royal with, from left, Nadine Jones, Hawthorn Travel; Mike Drew, Mike Drew Travel and Cruise; and Peta Godfrey, Travel Focus Group.

## Kudos' green deal

**KUDOS** Travel Technology has integrated a new API link with Sustainable Travel International, allowing businesses and employees to add carbon offsets to their business travel itineraries.

The new link enables agents to recommend a range of climate-friendly programs around the world for clients to support at an affordable price point.

These include efforts to combat deforestation in the Amazon, restoring mangroves in coastal areas, clean energy generation, carbon removal and more.

Agents can also inform clients of the individual carbon footprint generated by trips, while companies can measure their emissions against industry averages and opt to neutralise it with an offset purchase.

## Sommer's Turk tour

**PETER** Sommer Travels has introduced a new 15-day cruise itinerary exploring the southwest coast of Turkey on board a traditional handcrafted gulet.

Available to a max of 14 guests, the itinerary explores the Datca and Bozburun Peninsulas, travelling from Bodrum to Goccek.

Scheduled to depart on 15 Sep, places on the sailing are priced from \$9,680ppts.



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**CORPORATE UPDATE**

# Amex GBT tackles fraud

**AMERICAN** Express Global Business Travel (Amex GBT) has partnered with Expedia Group to introduce its advanced fraud detection & prevention software into its Egencia platform.

The corporate specialist will integrate Expedia's Fraud Prevention-As-A-Service (FPaaS) solution, which blocks fraudulent transactions before they occur.

The software draws on billions of data points from 25 years of travel industry transactions, mixed with artificial intelligence and machine learning to identify and block suspicious changes in spending behaviour.

Features of the program include 'Booking Screening', where AI reviews e-commerce transactions in real time and 'Account Takeover Protection', which reviews customer logins to secure customer accounts when fraudulent activity is detected.

A 'Chargeback Management' feature also sees Expedia's in-house fraud operations team handle the end-to-end dispute resolution process, dealing with banks and reimbursing partners for fraudulent transactions.

"By leveraging AI and machine learning, we're happy to be offering Amex GBT a simple and effective way to help them manage fraudulent activity, ultimately, giving their customers better peace of mind when they're booking trips," Expedia Group Senior VP, Demand Solutions, Karen Bolda said.

Research shows anxiety around fraud is climbing, with 70% of businesses saying they had higher concerns than the year prior, while 58% of consumers have either been victims of fraud or know somebody who has.

Fraud costs the travel industry more than US\$21 billion annually, including US\$6b in damages and US\$15b in lost productivity, on top of compromised personal data & reputational damage. *ML*

## EK loungewear set

**EMIRATES** has launched a comfortable loungewear outfit which will be provided to guests in Business class on flights of nine hours or more.

The set comprises a cowl neck top and drawstring pants along with slippers and an eye mask.

The Dubai-based airline says the outfit is ideal for sleeping but also to wear at the A380 onboard bar and lounge and even into arrivals after the flight has landed.

Made from super-soft modal, the ensemble is available in two sizes with botanic fibres and a jersey-knit style with an elegant drape the airline says "flatters various body types".



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# FCM appoints NSW Manager

**FLIGHT** Centre Travel Group has promoted 19-year company veteran Suzannah Randerson to the role of Regional General Manager NSW for corporate specialist brand, FCM Travel.

Bringing nearly two decades with FCTG to her new role, Randerson took charge of her new territory yesterday (01 Feb).

Randerson's time with the company began as a Flight Centre travel consultant, with time also spent with entertainment brand Stage & Screen before moving to FCM Travel 11 years ago.

FCM Chief Operating Officer, Melissa Elf, said she was thrilled to appoint Randerson to her new role leading the NSW market.

"We're very excited to have her take this step up within the business and to have her as part of the FCM Senior Leadership Team," Elf commented.



## Urban Rest homes

**EXTENDED** stay corporate accommodation brand Urban Rest has launched a new Homes product category for executives seeking a more homely stay.

The Urban Homes portfolio currently includes properties in NSW and Victoria including a renovated Double Bay townhouse.

Urban Rest says its Homes are tailored to accommodate families, groups and individuals seeking enhanced privacy and come fully furnished and equipped with modern amenities.

Urban Rest Founder and CEO, David Whelan, said travellers now "have a unique space to live, work and relax on extended stays".

The company is also inviting residential property owners to collaborate by including their homes within the Urban Rest Homes collection.

## Virgin status bonus

**MEMBERS** of Virgin Australia's Business Flyer corporate program can earn 8,500 bonus Velocity points in a new 'Back to Business' deal to kick-start the working year.

To activate, book and fly on an eligible Virgin Australia flight by 28 Mar to earn the bonus.

Individual members can also score up to 125 Velocity status credits by flying on six eligible sectors by the same date.

Fly two sectors to earn 45 status credits, while four will earn 85 credits or six for the top reward.



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## SPECIALS

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The BIG Tour Sale at **Trafalgar** is on now, offering travellers 20% off select 2024 tours around the globe, as well as exclusive flight deals with Singapore Airlines to destinations like Paris, Barcelona, Rome and New York. Call 1800 002 007 for more information.

To celebrate the upcoming Lunar New Year, **Sydney Airport** is offering savings of up to 20% on parking. Travellers can score cheaper spaces in the Year of the Dragon when they book and enter by 29 Feb. Use the promo code "LUNAR20" during checkout when booking your car spot to action the deal **HERE**.

**Cruise Traveller** is offering a 10% saving, free Business class flights and hotel stay, as well as a bonus US\$3,000 onboard credit per person on a 131-night holiday with Seabourn. The 'Grand Circle Pacific - Ring of Fire' package departs on 04 Jan 2026 with a flight to Los Angeles and a two-night stay in the City of Angels, before guests board *Seabourn Sojourn* which will sail across the Pacific Ocean, Australia, Asia and Alaska. The package is available from \$101,880ppts - call 1800 507 777 to book.

Snow sports aficionados can score massive savings with **Club Med's** Early Bird Sale for 2025. Up to 30% savings are up for grabs on select packages for travel periods between 29 Nov 2024 and 04 May 2025. Save up to \$1,510 per adult at Club Med Tomamu, up to \$1,250 at Club Med Sahoro, up to \$1,050 per adult at Clube Kioro Grand, and more. Book your next ski holiday **HERE**.

Tasmania's **Saffire Freycinet** has announced a new offer to celebrate the upcoming cool season, with up to 25% savings available on stays of three nights or more. Valid for stays between 01 Apr and 30 Sep through the autumn, winter and early spring seasons, guests will be ideally positioned to explore the stunning Freycinet National Park and Great Oyster Bay. Call on 03 6256 7888 to enquire or book.

Explore India and Sri Lanka with **TravelMarvel** by joining its 21-day 'In Search of Tigers & Leopards' tour, now priced from \$5,990ppts with savings of up to \$2,000 per couple available when you make your booking by 29 Feb. Departing between Sep and Oct, the tour will bring travellers to iconic highlights, including a walking tour in Mumbai, as well as a unique train ride through Sri Lanka's picturesque hill country. Call 1300 300 036 to enquire.

Couples can dial up the romance by booking **Ayers Rock Resort's** new Valentine's Day Package, priced from \$899. The package includes three nights' accommodation for two at either Sails in the Desert or the Desert Gardens Hotel, as well as a daily buffet breakfast, a three-course dinner, and complimentary cultural guest activities, including a Bush Yarn. The offer is available to book until 13 Feb for stays between now and 30 May 2024, and 01 Nov 2024-31 Jan 2025 - call 1300 134 044.

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## To infinity...and then to bed



**DISNEYLAND** Resort has opened the doors to Pixar Place Hotel, with guests now checking in to the first property themed on the beloved animation brand.

The 15-storey tower, which overlooks California Adventure Park, is welcoming guests to its 479 rooms and suites, each decorated to celebrate Pixar's unique artistry and animation.

Rooms and public areas are adorned with character artwork and concept renderings detailing the evolution of popular films such as *Finding Nemo*, *Inside Out*, *Ratatouille* and more.

Dining facilities include The Sketch Pad Cafe, Great Maple American Eatery and Small Bytes quick-service restaurant.

Guests with theme park tickets and reservations can also a 30-minute early entry to a select Disney theme park each day.

The transformation from the former Disney Paradise Pier Hotel has been several years in the works, having been originally set to open in 2018 (**TD** 06 Nov 2017) but curtailed by COVID. **ML**

## TEQ \$850m events

**TOURISM** and Events Queensland's (TEQ) annual events calendar is expected to pour \$850 million into the state's economy in 2024.

The line-up includes the 43 unique destination events announced yesterday as the latest recipients of funding through the Qld Destination Events Program, set to take place from May 2024.

## Hilton opens in PNG

**HILTON** has announced the opening of its first branded residences in Papua New Guinea, located alongside the existing Hilton Port Moresby Hotel.

The Residences include studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom apartments designed for extended stays, featuring fully-equipped kitchens and balconies.

Hilton Port Moresby Residences also offers an outdoor pool, gym, in-room dining, and more.