# Travel Daily First with the news

Thursday 18th Jan 2024



#### Today's issue of TD

**Travel Daily** today features six pages of the latest news including **Business Events News,** plus a full page from **Crystal Cruises.** 

#### Get updated on VV

TRAVEL agents can discover all the latest updates from Virgin Voyages, including new WAVE offers and special contests, in an upcoming webinar on 14 Feb sign up HERE.



# Glance to lead QF Loyalty

**QANTAS** has promoted Andrew Glance to the top job of its Loyalty division (TD breaking news), with the department's new boss set to take control at the end of next month.

Glance will take over from the departing Olivia Wirth, who announced her resignation in Oct 2023 (TD 16 Oct 2023) after 14 years with the company, having been overlooked for the CEO role, which went to Vanessa Hudson.

The new Qantas Loyalty boss is a company stalwart with more than 20 years service at the national carrier and will ascend to the top job from his current role as Executive Manager of Commercial Partnerships and Qantas Business Rewards.

Glance has steadily climbed the corporate ladder at Qantas, holding a variety of senior finance positions before moving into the loyalty division in 2016.

On announcing his appointment, Hudson said Glance had a deep understanding of both the Loyalty business and the wider organisation.

"Over the past few years, Andrew has done an outstanding job in leading the growth of points-earning opportunities for members, particularly through financial services, which has strengthened the program overall," Hudson said.

#### Upgrade on Crystal

TIME is running out to secure a complimentary suite upgrade for your clients on new Crystal Cruises bookings made by 31 Jan.

Find out more information on page seven.



"In the process, he's developed a very strong understanding of what drives success for Loyalty, both for our customers and commercial partners."

Upon Wirth's departure, Glance will be initiated as the latest addition to a heavily renewed Qantas leadership team which, along with Hudson herself, includes new QantasLink CEO Rachel Yangoyan and Chief People Officer, Catherine Walsh.

Glance said he is excited about the opportunities ahead as he takes control of the lucrative business division.

"Qantas Loyalty is a fantastic business that delivers a lot of value to its members and corporate partners, and I look forward to leading the team to build on that," Glance said. ML

#### Harwood to depart

**INDUSTRY** veteran Leanne Harwood has been appointed as SVP, MD for IHG Hotels & Resorts' Luxury & Lifestyle Americas portfolio.

The move will see her depart Australia after six years of leading the company's growth in the Japan, Australasia & Pacific region, during which time she helped drive record regional growth.

#### Goldfinch appointed

**ADELAIDE** Venue Management has announced Sarah Goldfinch as the new General Manager of Adelaide Convention Centre.

She will draw on more than 25 years' experience in the global tourism and hospitality industry, including senior roles within IHG Hotels & Resorts, as well as Accor, and her own business consultancy, Goldfinch Hospitality.

More business events news on page five.





London from \$1,519 Kuala Lumpur from \$669 Penang from \$679 Phuket from \$669 \$949 Seoul from Tokyo from

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#### Virgin regional link

VIRGIN Australia will expand its regional footprint by around 45% via a new codeshare agreement with partner carrier Link Airways.

Seventeen new services operated by Link, amounting to around 90 flights per week, will see the VA code added, unlocking access for Velocity Frequent Flyer members to earn points and status credits.

The expanded pact also increases Virgin Australia's domestic network to 42 ports, including Inverell, Wollongong and Biloela, which are not served currently by any major airline.

Other routes to join the fray include Brisbane to Dubbo, Wollongong and Orange; Sydney to Inverell and Narrabri; Melbourne to Wollongong; and Canberra to Newcastle & Hobart.

Travel agents can access fares on the expanded network now, with Virgin Australia's website to be fully updated by Mar.

Virgin Australia Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer, Alistair Hartley, said the new codeshare deal underscores the Aussie carrier's commitment to boosting connections for regional passengers.

Travellers flying on the expanded regional network will also be able to check-in and submit baggage through to the final destination.

#### Choice clears air

**CHOICE** Hotels International is appealing to shareholders of Wyndham Hotels and Resorts to understand the facts of its hostile amalgamation effort.

The hotel operator continues in its efforts to combine the two organisations, having tried to buy Wyndham for USD\$8 billion last year (TD 18 Oct 2023).

Taking to social media, Choice says Wyndham is creating "unsubstantiated antitrust concerns" in an attempt to cloud the judgement of its shareholders.

The post slams Wyndham's Board of Directors for continuing to dig in their heels and sow misinformation in an effort to maintain control and prevent an ultimately fruitful merger.

Choice said even if the two companies merged, the combined entity would still only account for 10% of overall US room revenues.

Both franchisees and guests will benefit from the amalgamation, Choice said, with guests gaining access to a combined loyalty program that would be "on par" with the top two global hospitality rewards programs.

Choice says it expects to "continue cooperating" with the **US Federal Trade Commission** during a Second Request review stage, which is expected to take place shortly.

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# QF connects DRW to SIN

**DIRECT** flights between Darwin and Singapore with Qantas will take off from Dec this year, providing Northern Territorians with one-stop access to London. Europe and Asia (TD breaking news yesterday).

Unveiled yesterday, the new service comes following Qantas' creation last year of an Embraer E190 base (TD 15 Feb 2022) in the NT capital.

Beginning from 09 Dec this year, Qantas will fly five times weekly between Darwin and Singapore, upping the service to a daily operation from Mar 2025.

The addition of Singapore as a direct option from Darwin will save Qantas travellers around five hours in the air due to no longer needing to connect via another Australian city.

Similarly, international tourists from Europe and Asia can now access the Northern Territory with the Flying Kangaroo with only one stop along the way.

Qantas International CEO Cam Wallace said the carrier's second international route from Darwin was a welcome addition to its expanding network.

"We're thrilled to be offering our customers another new international route out of Darwin and strengthening the important trade, business and tourism links between Australia and Singapore," Wallace said.

"The direct service is not just great news for Territorians



wanting to visit Singapore, but also for those travelling to London, Europe and across Southeast Asia, with connections to popular destinations like Phuket and Kuala Lumpur with our partner airlines, saving hours of travel time.

"This new route also allows us to restore the link to the UK which was established when international borders first reopened after the pandemic and we temporarily re-routed our London flight via Darwin with the support of the Northern Territory Government and Darwin Airport."

"The new flights will benefit locals wanting to travel overseas and also connect our evergrowing cohort of business travellers with international markets," Wallace added.

Qantas last operated flights between Darwin and Singapore way back in 2006.

The new service builds on the reintroduction last year by Qantas of international flights from its new Darwin base, which began with the East Timor capital of Dili.

More from Qantas' new route on page four. ML

#### **Business Development Manager**



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# Travel Daily

#### Concert cap lifted

**ACCOMMODATION** Australia **NSW Manager Stacey McBride** has praised the NSW Government for raising the cap on concerts in the SCG Precinct five-fold.

"Lifting the cap from four concerts per year to 20 just makes good sense," said McBride.

"Events consistently increase occupancy rates at hotels, we saw it with Ed Sheeran, Elton John and Harry Styles and we are seeing it again in a big way ahead of Taylor Swift," she added.

#### TIME to begin 2024

**THE** Travel Industry Mentor Experience will host its first event of 2024 on 13 Feb at Radisson Blu Hotel Sydney.

Fifty-five new mentees have been accepted into the program's first intake of 2024, TIME added.

The event will also welcome Virtuoso Senior VP Global Operations, Michael Londregan, as its guest speaker for the night.

# Mari to lead 50 Degrees

**FORMER** 50 Degrees North Australia General Manager, Mari Rasanen, has been elevated to the role of Global Chief Executive Officer effective 22 Jan.

Rasanen is a Finnish native and long-serving member of the Scandinavian tour operator's leadership team who has steadily progressed through the hierarchy.

Since departing Australia, Rasanen took on the role of Global Finance Manager in the company's Norway HQ prior to her most recent promotion.

Tietse Stelma, Co-Founder and current CEO of 50 Degrees North, said he was proud to step aside for somebody of Mari's calibre.

"We have dedicated 13 wonderful years to building the 50DN family and we are immensely proud of our accomplishments," Stelma said.

"However, I know that Mari will bring fresh perspective, enthusiasm, and continued



inspired leadership, guiding 50 Degrees North to new heights.

Rasanen said she was proud to lead a B-Corp Certified business with a strong, diverse leadership.

"I am immensely proud to work for a company where the workplace culture aligns so seamlessly with our destinations' values around sustainability and equality," she shared. ML

Rasanen is pictured above with 50 Degrees North Co-Founder and outgoing CEO, Tietse Stelma.



# **Window**

JAPANESE aviation is in the news again but thankfully, not because of a plane crash.

An All Nippon Airways flight from Tokyo to Seattle returned to the Japanese capital after an unruly passenger allegedly bit a flight attendant's arm.

Flight NH118 was enroute to its US west coast destination when the incident happened less than an hour into the trip.

The cabin crew member sustained minor injuries due to the bite and was treated by medical personnel in Tokyo, while the male culprit was detained by waiting police.

It's unclear what caused the incident, but as Travel Daily understands, it had nothing to do with the quality, or quantity, of food served to the traveller.





#### NT ready to benefit

TOURISM NT stands ready to ramp up international activity in Singapore on the back of Qantas' newly announced flights between Darwin and the Lion City.

The organisation's Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Tony Quarmby, told **TD** the national carrier's new route was a significant milestone for Darwin's international capacity.

"This new Qantas service will connect the Northern Territory to key international markets with one-stop options to Darwin via Singapore from London and other major international cities."

"Leveraging the extensive global route network of Qantas and their partners will provide more connectivity and choice for consumers, both inbound and outbound, whether travelling for business, leisure or reuniting with family," he added.

Qantas is set to begin its new service from Darwin to Singapore from Dec

#### Thomas Cook sale

**CHINESE** leisure group Fosun International is reportedly in talks to offload the Thomas Cook brand to Polish travel group eSky.

Fosun operates Thomas Cook Holidays, itself a resurrection of the famous label which collapsed in 2019, leaving 600,000 travellers stranded overseas.

#### WA aerial attraction

A NEW adventure attraction has opened in WA's Gloucester National Park, following a \$100,000 investment from the state government's Community Small Grants Fund.

Aerial Adventure Pemberton, which has already attracted hundreds of toursts since it launched on Boxing Day, features a multi-level treetop experience, including a flying fox, with a welcoming area and cafe set to open later this year.

Visitors can enter the park for free for the next six months.



Travel Daily Training Academy



#### Trip.com, Vietjet

TRIP.COM Group has announced a new partnership with Vietiet Air. which will see the two companies combine resources to offer a wide range of travel content, products and deals to travellers around the world.

Vietiet customers will be able to access Trip.com products, including hotels, airport transfers, attractions and activities, via the airline's website, in addition to enjoying benefits from both parties' loyalty programs.

The OTA will also provide Vietjet with its Virtual Interline solution to broaden the low-cost carrier's global network footprint.

To celebrate the partnership, both parties are offering up to 50% off airfares until 22 Jan.



#### Spend on the rise

TRAVELLERS spending more, booking earlier, and the return of delayed revenge travel are what will matter this year, according to Sabre travel industry insiders.

The company's new global team member survey found increased confidence among travellers surveyed, with more booking at least three months in advance for leisure trips, and more than half choosing long-haul travel.

More than three-quarters of travellers surveyed are planning at least two vacations, while more than one-fifth say they are taking four or five leisure trips.

Nearly 90% of travellers surveyed are spending about the same or more on travel than they did last year, with Gen Z increasing their budget the most.

Interestingly, the youngest travellers are also particularly concerned about losing their luggage, and are therefore purchasing insurance to guard against it, the survey found.

### COMMERCIAL MANAGER FULL TIME - QUEENSLAND



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# **EVENTS A KEY DRAWCARD FOR WA**

#### EXCLUSIVE

**EVENTS** will play a huge role in luring visitors to Western Australia in the coming years, Tourism WA MD Carolyn Turnbull told Travel Daily.

"We have secured an immense amount of events, which we feel is a great hook to book for our visitors, whether they're coming from NSW and Victoria or Queensland or from further afield," she revealed.

Business events in particular are set to position the Wildflower State on the global stage, with Tourism WA's successful bid to host Routes Asia in 2025 a "particuarly important one", Turnball (**pictured**) explained.

The leading aviation and tourism trade event will attract over a thousand delegates to Perth, and will put WA "on the radar of a lot of those international carriers".



In fact, the state's aviation strategy has already successfully secured 18 international routes (TD 07 Dec 2023).

"The power of those direct flights really plays in nicely to the event strategy as well, because then you know which markets you are going to target," Turnball added.

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) is also heading to Perth later this year, marking the first time the event will be hosted in the Oceania region, and providing Tourism WA with

a "terrific platform" to showcase the initiatives it's been working on, as well as highlight the state's Aboriginal tourism offerings.

In addition to WA's strong business events pipeline, Turnbull believes leisure, sporting and other big blockbuster events will also help drive visitation and spend by encouraging longer stays, supporting hotel occupancy all vear-round.

"Western Australia is, in some ways, the underdog here in Australia, and I love that we have a strategic vision that is setting a new bar for some of the other states to think as differently as we are," she added.

The state's vibrant events calendar could soon be bolstered by a redevelopment of the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, following a proposal to re-energise and expand the venue (TD yesterday). JM

#### Cliftons' new RAP

**CLIFTONS** Events Solutions has launched its first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which is endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.

The RAP marks the beginning of the Sydney event company's long-term commitment to fostering an inclusive, diverse, and equitable environment.

Cliftons will use the plan to help build solid foundations for relationships, respect and opportunities across the organisation, plus increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation rates within the business.

"We see this as an incredible opportunity to create more space for First Nations voices in the Australian meetings and events sector," CEO Vanessa Green said.

## MEA goes regional with Evolve 2024

**MEETINGS** & Events Australia (MEA) has announced that Evolve 2024 and the 2023 MEA National Awards Dinner will take place at Rydges Resort Hunter Valley from 12-13 Jun.

The event's theme will be 'Lead with Impact. Empower to Grow. Connect for Success'.

"It will be fantastic to bring the national events community together in the surrounds of the picturesque NSW Hunter Valley for the first time



since 2003," MEA CEO Peter McDonald shared.

Registration for the event will open in early Feb, while program details and other event partners will be announced over the coming months.

#### Live music grant

**THE** Australian Government has announced \$2.5 million in funding under the latest round of its Live Music Australia program.

The cash injection will support 37 live music festivals to be held at 105 venues across the country, including both established and grassroots level events.

One of the recipients is the Desert Harmony Festival in the Northern Territory.

#### Get a little Broke

THE 'Little Bit of Broke' festival, which showcases the Broke Fordwich region's food and wine scene, is returning in Mar for its 20th anniversary.

Set in the Hunter Valley, the three-day festival is also the perfect opportunity for visitors to discover the region's farm gate produce, events, live music, experiences, and accommodation.

Guests can buy a 'Festival Kit', which includes entry, a keepsake testing glass, and tasting tokens which can be used at any of the 16 venues - more info HERE.

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# **APPOINTMENTS**

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National Travel Group has announced the appointment of Mark Haddad as its National Sales Manager, in a move to bolster its sales division. The sales specialist will continue to grow the group's brands, including National Travel, National Seniors Travel, and Trade Travel. Haddad was previously BDM at Insider Journey in Sydney.

**Suzy Bohan** has been appointed as the new Trade & Industry Development Manager for the Visit Moreton Bay tourism portfolio at Moreton Bay Region Industry & Tourism. The seasoned trade professional brings a wealth of experience to the role, which she will use to elevate the destination as one of Queensland's most promising regions. She was most recently the Trade Manager at Tourism Whitsundays, where she was instrumental in attracting more visitation.

Lucy Siebert has taken on the role of Head of Global Corporate Communications at Intrepid Travel. Moving on from her previous role of Local Corporate Communications Manager, the promotion will see Siebert continue her journey with the travel operator, which she joined four years ago. The Melbourne-based communications specialist boasts two decades of experience in PR and media.

In a bid to strengthen the line's global commercial operations, Hurtigruten Expeditions (HX) has appointed Alex Delamere-White as its Chief Commercial Officer, after six months as the acting interim CCO. Delamere-White is based in the new HX HQ in London, and will further the line's long-term growth plan under a "one leadership model".

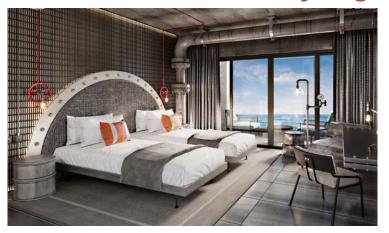
The CEO of Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, Candace McGraw, has become the first female Chair of the ACI World Governing Board (WGB). The ACI WGB consists of 28 leading airport CEOs, and is responsible for leading strategic discussions on key topics for airport operators, for the benefit of travellers around the world. McGraw will hold the post until Dec 2025.

MSC Cruises has welcomed a new Business Development Manager for the New Zealand region, with Alka Thapar the cruise line's latest addition to its sales team, where she will drive sales revenue in Australia's neighbouring nation. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the role, boasting an impressive career including her most recent role as National Sales Manager at Globus, as well as stints at Hawaiian Airlines, Princess Cruises, Rail Plus, and Air New Zealand.

Bringing more than two decades of experience to his new role, John Carfi has been appointed as CEO at Ingenia Communities Group. The group operates numerous holiday parks across key urban and coastal markets. Carfi replaces the departing Chief Executive, Simon Owen, who is leaving the post after a 14-year tenure. Carfi was most recently the CEO at Sydney-based Aqualand Australia.



# The Gulf's 'revolutionary' Rig



A MASTERPLAN has been unveiled for a "world-first" adventure tourism destination set to be built on an offshore platform in the Arabian Gulf.

Dubbed 'The Rig', the project is inspired by the design of offshore oil platforms, and will be positioned 40km from the coastline near Al Juraid Island and Berri Oil Field, spanning a total floor area of over 300,000m<sup>2</sup>.

The attraction will consist of three hotels with a combined total of 800 guest rooms (render pictured), as well as 11 restaurants, an extreme sports and adventure park, a world-class marina, and helipads.

Guests will be able to enjoy an array of water activities, including a diving centre and splash park, in addition to an e-sports centre, an immersive theater and a multipurpose arena.

The Rig will be developed by the Oil Park Development Company, and is expected to attract more than 900,000 annual visitors from all over the world by 2032, driving the Kingdom towards its Vision 2030 objectives of growing the destination's tourism sector.

Learn more about the ambitious new project HERE. JM





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Publisher - Damian Francis Associate Publisher - Anna Piper

#### ADVERTISING & MARKETING Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan

Advertising Operations - Nicki Harford advertising@traveldaily.com.au

#### **ACCOUNTS**

accounts@traveldaily.com.au

Suite 1. Level 2. 64 Talavera Rd Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760

#### info@traveldaily.com.au

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