

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of the latest news including a photo page from **Norwegian Cruise Line** and our **Luxury** feature page, plus a full page from **Infinity Holidays**.

Win Infinity gift card

TOP-SELLING agents can win a \$1,000 Infinity Holidays voucher to book their own getaway in the wholesaler's Jan incentive.

Plus, points towards Infinity's 2024 EPIC trip are doubled in Jan. See **page seven** for more details.

New QF safety vid

TRAVELLERS on Qantas will see some familiar faces on the carrier's new pre-flight safety video with front line team members featuring in the production.

The video sees Qantas workers provide safety information while featuring their favourite QF destinations - **CLICK HERE** to view.

Airlines cancel for profit

A **COMPREHENSIVE** study of two decades of flight operations data has concluded airlines are strategically cancelling flights to maximise profits.

In a scandalous expose commissioned and released by ATIA today, significant research into Australia's aviation sector has revealed a broken system requiring urgent reform.

The study conducted by former Qantas economist Dr Tony Webber focused on slot misuse at Australia's major airports and found the '80-20 rule' was grossly unfit for purpose.

The report poses a scenario that a 5% drop in travellers due to flight cancellations could lead to an estimated \$405 million loss in domestic tourism revenues from Australia's top 10 airports.

In fact, cancellations at Sydney Airport alone could cost Australia's domestic tourism balance sheet between \$143m

and \$572m each year, with the top 10 airports collectively racking up annual losses of \$4.8m in aeronautical revenue.

For travel advisors, the report found the primary cost incurred was time spent reorganising trips including rebooking hotels and other services, resulting in lost revenue opportunities.

The economic modelling didn't take into account further out-of-pocket costs borne by travellers.

ATIA Chief Executive Dean Long called for immediate action and reforms to the aviation sector.

"The 80-20 rule is not fit for purpose," Long said.

"A 95-5 rule would be more appropriate to encourage airlines to operate to schedule."

"This research highlights critical issues within our industry.

"It's not just about the airports; it's about understanding where the chokepoints are and addressing them," he concluded. *ML*

Regent's overnights

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises has launched a new voyage collection which includes an overnight stay in each port.

In what RSSC describes as an "industry first", the 'Immersive Overnights' range features six itineraries in Northern Europe, the Mediterranean and Asia.

Passengers will enjoy overnight stays in European cities such as Trieste, Monte Carlo, Kotor, Istanbul, Dubrovnik, Barcelona and Rome among others, with two nights in other select ports.

In Asia, *Seven Seas Explorer* will spend the night in Kobe, Seoul, Shanghai and Tokyo, with each port also offering new evening shore excursions.

The six available itineraries are operated by four of RSSC's ships, with guests also able to take advantage of the line's free two-category suite upgrade and low deposit promotion.

For more details, see today's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.



EXPLORER SESSIONS

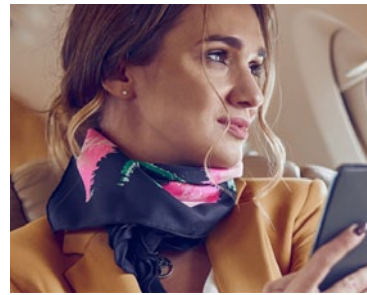


THE VIKING EXPLORER SESSIONS ARE COMING TO SYDNEY, MELBOURNE, BRISBANE, ADELAIDE, PERTH AND THE GOLD COAST IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH.

This is your opportunity to register you and your clients for these complimentary sessions, learn about the world of Viking and walk away with new bookings. Simply choose any of the 12 sessions your clients are most interested in and register to secure their place.

BUT BE QUICK, SESSIONS BOOK OUT FAST!

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Africa Safari Co fam

WILDLIFE spotting in the Kruger National Park and the winelands of Cape Town are among the highlights to be enjoyed on a new famil op from The Africa Safari Co.

Running from 21-29 Mar, the trip carries a participation fee of \$1,995ppts land only, with an extra \$550 for an internal flight.

There's space for eight agents on the trip, which departs from Johannesburg - for details, email enquiries@africasafari.co.com.au.

Crisis signs off from HLO

HELLOWORLD Chief Commercial Officer Peter Crisis will seek new opportunities from the end of this week, with the retail group yesterday announcing his departure (**TD** breaking news).

Crisis was hired last Jun (**TD** 16 Jun 2023), tasked with managing and developing the company's core retail network along with "other outcomes in the business".

In turn, Crisis was brought on to take over some of the duties left by his predecessor Nic Cola, who abruptly left Helloworld last Mar.

Lasting only a little over seven months in the role, the former

Crown Resorts boss and Tourism Accommodation Victoria President departs Helloworld with the best wishes of company CEO, Andrew Burnes.

"I want to thank Peter for his contribution to the business and wish him well for the future," Burnes said in a statement. **ML**

Bali fun tax rethink

FURIOUS backlash from Bali's tourism industry has forced the hand of government officials into postponing its controversial entertainment tax increase.

The proposed hike would have taken the levy from 15% to between 40-75%, forcing huge increases to the price of food, beverages and attractions, which the Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association said could cause the economy to collapse.

"Nearly 1.2 million of Bali's 4.3 million residents work in the tourism sector and subsectors, so this needs to be decided carefully," the association said.

Indonesia's Investment Minister Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan said the proposal will now be re-evaluated.

Travelex CBA cash

ONLINE Travelex foreign exchange cash orders can again be picked up at Commonwealth Bank branches.

The reinstated deal means cash for more than 30 currencies can be ordered online and collected at the customer's chosen time.

Travelex said the service marks another milestone in the recovery of Australia's retail FX industry and builds on research showing demand for cash remains strong.

Bunnik Tours

Discover EUROPE

MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE
20

VIEW THE TOURS!

Blame Gold Coast

BONZA has pointed the figure at delays in receiving regulatory approval for its new Gold Coast base as the reason behind its abysmal cancellation rates in the latest BITRE figures (**TD** yest).

The carrier's CEO Tim Jordan told **TD** it was working to get back to cancellation rates as low as the 0% recorded in Sep last year to "give our customers the kind of service they deserve".

New Year, Great Fares 2024

Choose Economy Flex or Business Flex for extra baggage and flexibility.

Enjoy 45x weekly flights from Australia to Kuala Lumpur with easy connections to your desired destination.

Kuala Lumpur from	\$669
Bali from	\$669
Phuket from	\$669
Ho Chi Minh from	\$669
Manila from	\$679
Kota Kinabalu from	\$719

More destinations on offer

Book by 5 Feb 2024

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Selected Departures

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THE PLACE TO BE IN OSAKA

CENTARA HOTELS & RESORTS

Centara Grand Hotel Osaka



Window Seat

COURTROOMS are no place for singing and dancing, although you might have been mistaken in the judgement handed down recently by US Federal Judge William Young blocking Jetblue's merger with Spirit Airlines (*TD* 17 Jan).

Clearly a fan of French poet Victor Hugo, Judge Young's full written judgement included lines from Les Miserables' *Master of the House*.

"Reasonable charges, plus some little extras on the side!" Young declared.

"Charge 'em for the lice, extra for the mice, two percent for looking in the mirror twice," he wrote.

TD is certain Monsieur and Madame Thenardier were also not fans of airline junk fees.

Strong Dec for SYD

SYDNEY Airport (SYD) ended 2023 with a new record for its strongest passenger volumes since 2019, with 3.58 million travellers passing through in Dec.

The rush helped SYD chalk up its first month where the number of travellers on Australian passports surpassed pre-pandemic levels, up 1.3% compared to Dec 2019.

For the full year, Sydney Airport welcomed more than 38 million travellers, only 13% off its all-time record of 44.4m set in 2019.

Domestic and regional traffic also performed well, up 7.6% year-on-year for a total of 2.08m across the T2 and T3 terminals.

Operationally, SYD catered well to the holiday rushes, with 100% of domestic travellers and 99.3% of international flyers clearing security in 10 minutes or less.

"Australian passenger volumes moving beyond 2019 levels is a fantastic way to close out 2023 and draw a line under the COVID era," said SYD CEO Scott Charlton.

Southern Africa Express

12 days Cape Town to Victoria Falls & Johannesburg from only \$6,299*

mwTours

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CruiseHQ sparkles on Crystal



MANAGEMENT from Abercrombie & Kent and its luxury cruise brand Crystal Cruises welcomed senior leaders from Cruiseabout and its wholesale arm CruiseHQ on board this past weekend in Sydney.

Leadership teams from the soon-to-relaunch Flight Centre retail brand enjoyed a ship tour under perfect sunny skies aboard *Crystal Symphony* followed by a delectable lunch.

There would have been much camaraderie enjoyed on the day, not least of which was due to both Crystal Cruises and Cruiseabout riding waves of momentum as both brands enjoy resurgences with travellers and the trade.

ML Pictured in *Symphony's* atrium: Susan Haberle, A&K; Debra Fox, A&K; Carina Mullen, CruiseHQ; Caroline Hitchen, CruiseHQ; Caitlyn Paris, CruiseHQ and Tony Archbold, Crystal Cruises.

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Will it be you?

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“Take 3 for the Sea” with NCL and FC

AGENTS in the Flight Centre (FC) Accreditation Program across Australia took time out from their respective stores on Mon to participate in five clean up events in Victoria, NSW, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia, collecting a whopping 134kg of rubbish in total.

Formerly known as ‘Clean Up Australia’ Day within FC, the event is now known as ‘Take 3 for the Sea’ Day after FC aligned with Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) through their partnership with the non-for-profit organisation.

One of the benefits offered by FC for students is a volunteer day and as part of the onboarding journey, students are encouraged to engage in campaigns that create awareness of issues affecting the travel industry that will in turn provide them with vital knowledge and hands-on skills.

NCL has been a partner with Take 3 for the Sea since Sep 2022, supporting the organisation’s vital work in reducing plastic pollution in Australian waterways and oceans, where it inspires and encourages NCL staff, travel partners and guests to be part of the change.

The premise of the program is simple - pick up three pieces of rubbish each time you visit a park, beach or waterway, and you’ve done your bit to help prevent plastic pollution from entering the oceans.



LED by Craig McLaurin, NCL BDM NT/Qld, Guy Watson, Anna Watts, and Sarah Turner, FCTA; Molly Beazley, FC Morayfield; Isabelle Quayle, FC Runaway Bay; and Matt Neale, FC Queen St Mall at Kangaroo Point in Queensland, collecting 9.5kg worth of rubbish.



OVER 30kg and 1,100 pieces of rubbish in St Kilda were picked up by the volunteers.



EM MARSHALL and Michelle McInerney from Flight Centre Travel Academy with Flight Centre consultants Tori Van Der Viezen, Belle Smith, Micaely Goncalves, Paige Alternetti, and Jamie Kovacs, hosted by NCL’s Chris Catanzariti in SA.



LED by Sheena Smith, NCL’s Business Development Specialist Vic, Mel Berenger & Aly Andrews FCTA with FC consultants at St Kilda, Vic.



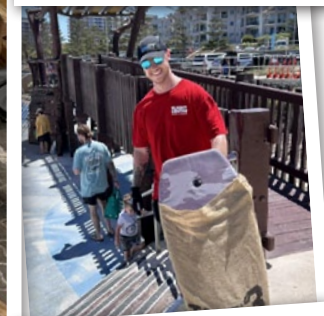
TAKE 3 clean up at the famous Bondi Beach led by Sam Morgan, NCL’s Business Development Specialist NSW, ACT & WA, Erin Buscombe and Kat Percival, FCTA with FC consultants.



A BEACH clean-up in SA, hosted by Chris Catanzariti NCL Business Development Manager, NSW, ACT & SA.



LED by Damian Borg, DOS NCL AUNZ (not pictured) in Scarborough, WA are Reece Ash, Janaka Perera, Kate Luderick, Christine Meacham, and Izabel Conte.



REECE Ash from FC Joondalup lending a helping hand in Scarborough in WA.

LTC WELCOMES TWO NEW MEMBERS

THE Luxury Travel Collection (LTC) has announced Emma Whiting Travel & Cruise, along with Robyn and Murray Sinfield's Home Travel Company, as its newest members.

The global portfolio of luxury travel brands, which is owned by Flight Centre Travel Group, will officially welcome the two esteemed businesses into the fold from 01 Feb.

"We are very fortunate indeed to celebrate the arrival of these fantastic members," said Nikki Glading, General Manager of LTC's member portfolio.

"The passion, professionalism and networks of both Emma Whiting and the Sinfields are well-known to anyone in luxury travel," she shared.

Based in Victoria, Emma Whiting and her team craft tailored trips for clients using their



combined knowledge, firsthand experiences, and passion.

Glading described Whiting as "a strong addition to our exceptional community...her business acumen, successful history and her confidence in her team to continue to service her clients so impressively is second-to-none".

Well-known within the industry, Tassie-based duo Robyn and Murray Sinfield (**pictured**) bring 40

years of experience to the table.

"This incredible team are icons in the industry with Home Travel Company known as one of the very finest agencies in Australia," Glading enthused.

The new members join several other reputable luxury brands within LTC's invite-only network, including Carole and Phil Smethurst of Bicton Travel and Claremont Travel & Cruise. *JM*

Four Seasons poised for strong growth

FOUR Seasons is preparing for a period of accelerated growth, with the luxury hospitality company revealing strategic plans to expand its global footprint.

The brand boasts a current development pipeline of more than 50 hotels and resorts, including its first property in Melbourne, which is expected to begin construction this year.

A one-of-a-kind private island getaway on Caye Chapel in Belize with over-water bungalows is also in the works, as well as a 16th-century hotel revitalisation on Colombia's Caribbean coast in the city of Cartagena.

Upcoming portfolio additions also include a resort in Mexico's Cabo San Lucas, two hotels in China, and its fourth property in Morocco, just to name a few.

Four Seasons said it will also invest in its luxury experience offerings, including Four Seasons Yachts, which is moving closer to its inaugural voyage in late 2025.



Aussie agents experience *Seven Seas Explorer*

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) recently hosted a group of travel advisors, media and members of the Australian Ballet Philanthropic executive team, as well as private donors, onboard *Seven Seas Explorer* in Port Melbourne.

The special guests were able to experience the luxurious offerings of the Explorer-class cruise ship first-hand, as well as having the opportunity to



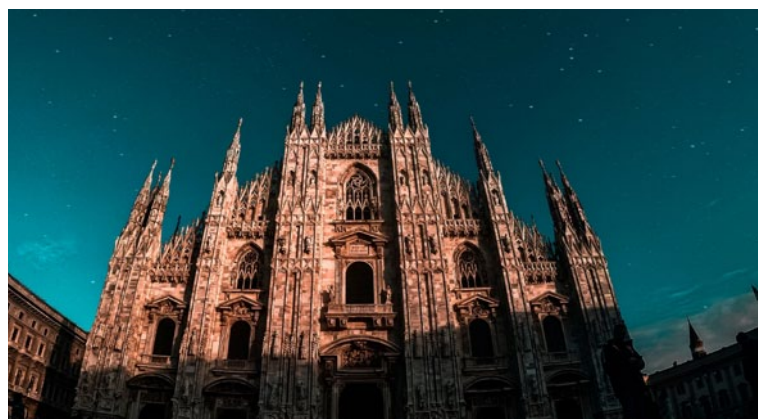
connect with one another and strengthen partnerships while indulging in a four-course, fine-dining extravaganza.

Pandaw India sailing

PANDAW Cruises has unveiled its new itinerary, 'The Full Brahmaputra', a 10-night sailing in India between Guwahati and the northern city of Dibrugarh.

Departing Oct 2024, the members-only voyage includes visits to the lesser-known Dibru Saikhowa National Park, and the world's largest river island of Majuli.

More info and book **HERE**.



#TRAVELINSPO

Check out which destinations are trending **HERE**

Travel & Cruise
Weekly

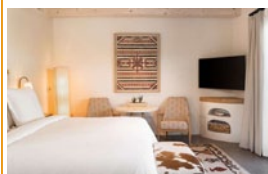
NOTES:

- Culture & history
- Lavender, vineyards
- Beautiful scenery



ACCOMMODATION

Send your accommodation updates to:
accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au



Four Season Resort Rancho Encantado Santa Fe has announced a multi-million dollar makeover, which is set to be delivered in three phases so as not to impact guest experience. The first renovation in the resort's history will see all of its guestrooms receive new aesthetics focusing on sustainability, including custom-made furniture, the latest tech, enhanced lighting, refreshed colour palettes, window adjustments, and more.



Al Faisaliah Hotel in Saudi Arabia has been rebranded as **Mandarin Oriental Al Faisaliah, Riyadh**, marking the hotel group's debut in the Kingdom. The urban getaway comprises 325 rooms and features refreshed interiors, advanced spa and wellness treatments, new dining outlets offering a range of different culinary experiences, and redesigns of its guestrooms, as well as a new ground-floor oasis, The Mandarin Lounge.



Union Market Hotel in Washington, DC, has reopened after transforming all of its guestrooms and amenities. Initially established in the 1930s, the hotel has been completely revitalised into a contemporary property with an emphasis on modern comfort. Also new is the rooftop restaurant, dubbed the Treehouse Rooftop Lounge, where guests can enjoy the indoor/outdoor Tulum-inspired jungle decor with panoramic views of the city.



Azerbaijan has welcomed its first Mercure hotel by Accor with the opening of **Mercure Baku City**. The 140-room property is located on Ismayil Bey Gutgahinli Street, near the iconic Old City of Baku, as well as other key attractions. The onsite Fuego restaurant offers a range of international and local cuisines, while guests can also enjoy cocktail beverages at the all-day lobby bar.



Cardiff by the Sea Lodge has reopened after a thorough makeover to refresh its exterior, rooftop deck, public spaces and its 17 guestrooms. Located in San Diego, California, the property now offers exquisitely decorated rooms with new furnishings, offering guests ocean or courtyard views. Some of the rooms also include a fireplace for extra cosiness.

PCO agents try The Brooklet



BYRON Bay lodge operator The Brooklet recently welcomed this group of PCO and incentive agents for a curated food and wine experience surrounded by the local hinterland.

Positioned as a luxury incentive accommodation offering or for full corporate buyouts, the agents were welcomed by The Brooklet's founder, Greta Smith.

The property accommodates 24 guests across its lodge offerings, which consists of three one-bedroom villas, three two-

bedroom villas and the three-bedroom The Bails option. **ML Pictured:** Kerry Luxford, TAG; Sam Jennings, The Brooklet; Jay Matthews, Stage and Screen Travel; Svetlana Jovanovic, The Unique Tourism Collection; Greta Smith, The Brooklet; Peter Hatzidimitriou, Stage and Screen Travel; Vera Ellett, Destination Group of Companies, Holly Goder, Events Beyond and Darren Crichton-Brown, DCB Events.

Virgin's MAX rollout

VIRGIN Australia has published dates for which its growing fleet of new Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft will begin on various routes.

According to GDS displays, VA's newest jet will fly from Brisbane to Denpasar from 19 Feb; Nadi from 11 Mar and the Samoan capital of Apia from 13 Mar.

Sydney to Nadi will begin from 18 Mar, followed a day later by Adelaide-DPS, with Melbourne to DPS next up from 25 Mar.

Capella goes Lunar

CAPELLA Sydney has announced a new package as part of its inaugural Lunar New Year celebrations next month.

From \$1,390, guests can enjoy overnight accommodation at the luxury hotel, along with free Lunar New Year resort programming, breakfast for two, US\$100 hotel credit per day, and more.

Capella Sydney will offer several celebratory events, including lion dancing, a tea and calligraphy experience, a Chinese banquet, and more - see the program **HERE**.

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Australia is on sale!

We've kicked off the year with dozens of deals on domestic travel.

From coast to country, city to surf and all the wide red land in between, we have accommodation offers for families, couples and solo escapes across the country.

[Learn more](#)

Gift card giveaway

Christmas isn't the only time for giving – we've got a \$250 gift card to be won every week this month.


Plus - the top-selling agent in the month of January will win a \$1,000 Infinity Holidays travel voucher to book your own getaway.

[I want to win!](#)

 @infinity_holidays_au

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Don't forget! We are **doubling points** this month for our 2024 EPIC TRIP

\$1 booked = 2 points on your tally!

[Find out more](#)

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