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Travel Daily First with the news

Thursday 13th Jun 2024



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest news including **Business Events** News, a cover wrap from Tourism New Zealand, a photo page from MTA plus a full page from Infinity Holidays.



Qantas takes TripADeal

QANTAS will spend \$211 million acquiring the remaining 49% stake in TripADeal, cementing its presence in the packaged holiday market and boosting access for Qantas Frequent Flyer members (TD breaking news).

Following closure of the deal, expected by the end of Jun, TripADeal Co-Founders Norm Black and Richard Johnston will depart the business, with Matt Wolfenden elevated to CEO.

The full acquisition builds on Qantas' purchase of 51% in the online travel business in 2022 (TD 24 May 2022), from which time billions of Qantas Frequent Flyer points have been earned and used on TripADeal packaged holidays.

Among these redemptions was one member who redeemed 3.9 million points to book a 35-day around-the-world tour.

Qantas' investment in TripADeal and exposure to its loyalty base has help spur package bookings

past \$450 million in the past year.

Qantas says combined cost and revenue synergies from the acquisition are expected to build to at least \$50 million per year for the Qantas Group over time.

Post-acquisition, the Byron Baybsed TripADeal will continue to operate as a standalone business, delivering ready-made packages featuring airfares from Qantas and Jetstar among other airlines.

Qantas Loyalty CEO, Andrew Glance, said the success of TripADeal and its 12-month booking growth rate of 70% has been turbocharged by its partnership with Qantas." ML

Taste New Zealand

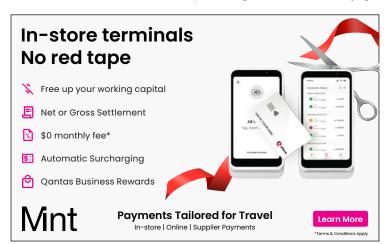
ENJOY some of the world's best produce in New Zealand during a self-curated famil, with many of the country's food and beverage brands eager to welcome visiting travel agents - see the cover page.

Minor's fourth Oaks

MINOR Hotels has announced Oaks Melbourne on William Suites as its fourth franchised hotel, marking a milestone in its international expansion strategy.

The 220-key hotel is the third Oaks property to operate under Minor's franchise model.







SPEAK TO OUR TEAM OF RAIL SPECIALISTS TODAY.





To Infinity & beyond

SELL the magic with exclusive Disney packages with Infinity Holidays, which is celebrating a new three-day ticket offer.

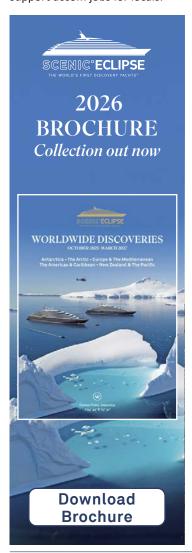
The new "one park per day" Disneyland Resort ticket offer is at the centre of six new Infinity packages which are set to give travellers a magical experience.

Head to **page eight** for more information on the packages.

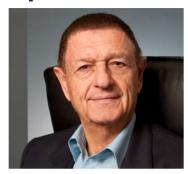
Intrepid accom lead

INTREPID Travel has announced the appointment of French hotel veteran Celine Hurelle to lead its strategic expansion into hotels and accommodation.

Hurelle will direct Intrepid's strategy, which will see it work with local communities and support accom jobs for locals.



Spiro-ver and out, ATIA



SPIROS Alysandratos (**pictured**) is stepping down from the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) board after 16 years as a Director, the organisation confirmed this morning (**TD** breaking news).

Alysandratos will be stepping down on Wed from the board he commenced his role with in Jul 2008, during which he "helped shepherd the organisation and its members through times of tremendous change", ATIA said.

He was made a Life Member of the Association in 2019 to acknowledge the impact of his long-standing commitment to the Australian travel industry.

"I'm incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to serve on the board and advocate for a united voice for travel to advance the interests of our

Swan snags an icon

STAR television personality and fashion designer Carson Kressley will join Swan Hellenic's upcoming 'Secrets of Sicily' cruise to personally host a series of events and excursions.

Departing 20 Aug from Palermo, the eight-day cruise will feature a unique excursion led by Kressley to Noto and Syracuse, including an afternoon shopping visit to the opulent Sicilia Outlet Village.

Guests will also enjoy a White Lotus Cabaret Show, a White Party Dance evening with DJ, and an authentic Sicilian shore dining experience hosted by celebrity chef Anne Burrell - see more itinerary details **HERE**. member businesses for 16 years," Alysandratos said.

"It's always been important that Director changes are strategic, and after 16 years of service, it is now time to enable the next generation of industry leaders to contribute their ideas to ATIA's board," he added.

"As I reflect on challenges we have met, how we innovated, and what we've achieved, having a peak industry body to represent the Australian travel industry is still as important now as it was in 2008," he enthused.

Alysandratos is the Chief Executive Officer of Consolidated Travel Group, which he founded in Melbourne in 1967, and has developed into one of the largest companies in Australia's travel industry today.

He also recently became one of just two billionaires listed on the *Australian Financial Review's* Rich List for 2024 (*TD* 31 May), with a net worth of \$1.1 billion. *MS*

Neonyx ship seized

THE only vessel of new Mediterranean cruise line, Neonyx Cruises, was seized in Italy yesterday after complaints about poor conditions aboard.

Goddess of the Night, which the Italian Government had rented to host more than 2,000 police officers at this week's G7 Summit, was impounded due to "significant hygienicsanitary criticalities and serious accommodation deficiencies".

According to Reuters, guests on board the ship were forced to relocate to hotels and another ship due to water leaks, unusable toilets and broken air conditioning.

The shocking development comes ahead of Neonyx's debut next month, and just a week after the brand appointed an Australian sales rep (*TD* 05 Jun).

Police said they are considering taking legal action against the owners of the ship.

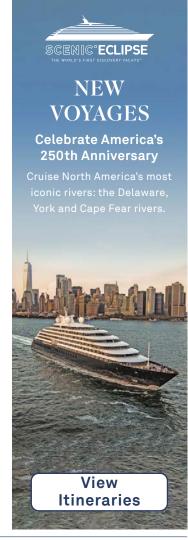
Globetrotters shines

TOOWOOMBA travel agency Globetrotters Travel and Cruise has unveiled a fresh brand and colour scheme to its shopfront at 172 Margaret Street in the CBD.

One of Queensland's longest continually operating travel brands, the new Globetrotters branding is also now live on the agency's website and newsletter.

"Our new look is fun, contemporary and dynamic - just like our team of travel experts," said Globetrotters Travel Manager, Ben Apsey.









A FEMALE flier has strutted naked through airport security in protest over a fee - all of which was caught on camera.

The shocking video shows a Vietnamese tourist down to her birthday suit in protest over a visa overstay fee demanded from her by police at Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

The flier angrily disputed the fee, before disappearing into the women's bathrooms, only to emerge without any clothes, and calmly passing through the security gate.

The footage shows baffled ground staff following the woman, unsure of how to stop her, before she was given food and drink - and fortunately, clothes - view the video **HERE**.

New Lindblad ships

LINDBLAD Expeditions has expanded its operations in the Galpagos Islands with the addition of two new vessels, for which bookings will open later this month.

The two ships, Celebrity Cruises' *Celebrity Xpedition* and *Celebrity Xploration*, are set to switch to Lindblad next year.

The ships will be rebadged with new names, which will also be revealed later this month, before they undergo multi-milliondollar revitalisations when the transaction closes in Jan - see today's *CW* for more details.

HX appoints CEO

GEBHARD Rainer has been appointed the new Chief Executive Officer of HX.

He will take over from Daniel Skjeldam, who will transition to a board role with Hurtigruten Group - for more appointments, see page seven.



Modest growth in arrivals

SHORT-TERM visitor arrivals to Australia continued to perform well in Apr with a modest 8.8% growth rate recorded for the month compared to a year earlier.

However, according to the latest *Overseas Arrivals and Departures* figures from the ABS, total short-term arrivals were down 15.3% from more than 700,000 recorded prior to the pandemic.

In all, Australia welcomed 593,090 tourists for the month, with Queensland proving popular among visitors for the month, posting a 16.5% jump and nearly 20,000 more visitors compared to a year earlier.

While China recovered slightly from its fall outside the top three source markets to reclaim second place, accounting for 58,020 arrivals, it was still dwarfed by New Zealand with nearly 116,000 visitors coming across the Tasman.

Over on the departures side,

Aussies continued to travel in big numbers, with 964,310 departures noted for the month, up 5.2% on pre-pandemic levels.

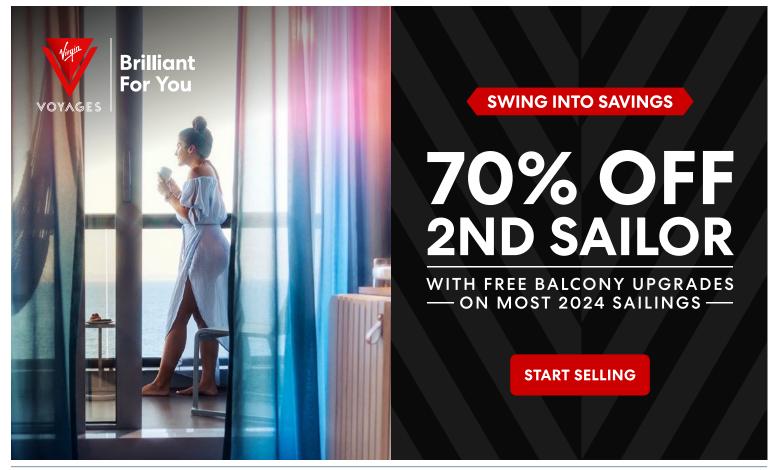
Indonesia was once again the most popular destination for Aussie travellers, accounting for 14% or 133,160 of all returning citizens, followed closely by New Zealand and Japan. *ML*

Tauck groups shrink

TAUCK will introduce a range of 'Smaller Group' tours averaging 15 guests per departure, having seen great success from its 'Small Group' range of itineraries.

The new Smaller Group range will consists of 26 departures of existing scheduled tours in North America and Europe, while more than 120 departures have been scheduled for next year.

Small groups now account for more than half of Tauck's non-cruise business, the company said.





Unlimited fun in the Philippines



REPS Unlimited recently hosted a group of agents on a famil tour in the Philippines, in collaboration with Crimson Hotels & Resorts and Philippine Airlines.

The group began their journey at Crimson Hotel Alabang in Manila, where they soaked in the city's vibrant scenery, before heading to Crimson Boracay Resort to enjoy a range of activities, from art classes to beachfront dinners.

Cebu was the next stop on the itinerary, where the cohort immersed themselves in the local culture through tours and culinary experiences.

Famil guests, which included members from Flight Centre, TravelManagers, Kreative Travel and The Travel Agent at Caloundra, walked away with unforgettable memories of

Pure Health Travel

AUSTRALIAN tourism figure Lindy Andrews has announced the launch of Pure Health Travel, an online marketplace offering a curated selection of global wellness retreats.

The platform focuses on evidence-based, holistic health programs that promote the mind-body-soul connection, featuring retreats across Thailand, Indonesia, Costa Rica, Spain, Portugal, Cambodia, and more. Check out the platform HERE.

Philippines' top destinations and luxurious accommodations. *JM*

Pictured: Agents showing off their creations during an art class at Crimson Boracay, and **pictured** below, enjoying dinner at Crimson Mactan.



Golden solo savings

GOLDEN Eagle Luxury Trains is offering savings for solo travellers on its 11-day Uzbekistan journey, which departs 16 Sep 2024.

Guests on the 'Treasures of Uzbekistan' voyage will explore the fascinating cities of Khiva and Bukhara, peruse bazaars, engage in a cooking class and silk-making workshop, and hear from special guest speaker and Uzbekistan Tourism Ambassador for the UK, Sophie Ibbotson.

Solo travellers can book a Silver Class cabin for US\$17,595, but spaces are limited.

The price includes a personal cabin attendant, all porterage and gratuities, and all off train excursions, along with meals and a generous drinks allowance - CLICK HERE to learn more.



A fresh look at the next 24 months in travel. Get your tickets now! Earlybird offer ends soon.



Be a part of WA's dream

TOURISM Western Australia and Tourism Council WA have launched The Dream Collective Western Australia, a new industry recognition program to showcase the state's best tourism products.

Tourism operators who join the collective will benefit from additional Tourism WA marketing, including social media and placements on the DMO's website, along with an official program logo for their own promotional use.

Businesses will also receive a tailored report highlighting areas for improvement.

To qualify for the program, operators must meet strict eligibility requirements and undergo annual evaluations across several criteria, including customer reviews and sustainable and inclusive visitor experiences.

"The Dream Collective supports ... sustainability and inclusivity by promoting the development of environmentally-conscious and inclusive tourism experiences and acknowledging the efforts

Brissy Airbnb rules

BRISBANE has introduced a new permit system and raised the rates for Airbnbs and other short-term rentals, *9News* reports, as the city attempts to increase its housing availability.

The city's Mayor Adrian Schrinner accepted the report's recommendations, including the introduction of a permit system, from a task force examining the effects of Brisbane's booming short-term rental market, which it is believed boasts almost 4,500 active listings.

Owners will need to seek planning approvals and a 24/7 property manager for the permit, while any short-term rental listed without an allowance will be met with penalties.

Dwellings not approved for a permit will be forced back into the mainstream rental market.



of those leading in these areas," Tourism WA Acting Managing Director Steph Underwood said.

The Dream Collective will run on an annual basis and operators will be required to apply for evaluation each year.

Applications for the program closed yesterday, with successful businesses to be assessed and notified by 31 Aug. *JM*



Travel Daily e info@traveldaily.com.au



MTA's national conference shines in Fiji

GATHERED against a backdrop of Fiji's stunning landscapes, 325 travel professionals gathered at MTA-Mobile Travel Agent's national conference - the first time it has taken place overseas.

Two days of pre-conference training kicked off the event and included several engaging peer-to-peer sessions, which proved to be very popular among attendees.



An impressive line-up of speakers included Joanne Orlando - AI Specialist, Michael Londregan of Virtuoso and Brent Hill of Tourism Fiji.

The Supplier Showcase demonstrated the fantastic vibe that was evident throughout the conference, with over 5,000 'speed-dating' meetings facilitated by new technology, allowing suppliers and travel advisors to connect and learn.

Showcasing the spirit of the MTA community, a visit to Sabeto District School to donate books and sporting equipment brought smiles to children's faces and made a positive impact beyond conference walls.

The conference concluded with a celebration under the stars at the Gala Dinner held at the Sofitel Fiji, where it was announced the next conference would be in the vibrant city of Adelaide in 2025.







MTA founders, Karen and Roy Merricks, sharing a moment with Villiame Gavoka, Deputy Prime Minister of Fiji.

DINING under the stars at the Sofitel Fiji as 325 guests gather for an unforgettable gala dinner.



JOANNE Orlando, renowned AI specialist, sharing her insights and expertise.



THE enchanting children's choir from Newaka Village performing at the Welcome Dinner.



TTC'S Ki Williams presents Bernice Cox with her prize.



CLAIRE Simon, AAT Kings and Anne Bain, MTA share a laugh with Andrew Eddy, TTC.



Fijian shirts.





businesseventsnews.com.au

Vivid's close call

VIVID organisers have been told they need to "do better" by NSW Premier Chris Minns, after a "near-miss incident" during the first drone show of the annual Sydney festival.

Thousands of visitors were left feeling trapped and panicked after bottlenecks formed at the exits on Sat night, creating the potential for a crowd crush.

Police were called in to help manage the massive crowd, which Minns said went beyond the size of what organisers had anticipated.

Authorities rearranged the barricades, helping to ease the crush, while people were told to avoid Circular Quay and the Rocks.

Minns conceded that organisers "worked quickly to learn from the mistakes".

DONAGHY TO DEPART ICC SYDNEY

GEOFF Donaghy has announced his resignation from International Convention Centre (ICC) Sydney, after leading the venue for three decades as its CEO.

Donaghy, who is also the Group Director, Convention Centres of ASM Global (APAC) - ICC Sydney's parent company - will step down from the top job on 30 Aug, but will remain on board as an advisor until the end of 2024.

Harvey Lister, ASM Global (APAC)'s Executive Chairman, thanked Donaghy (pictured) for his "outstanding leadership and dedication to the company and our people".

"Geoff Donaghy is one of ASM Global's longest-serving executives, having contributed greatly to the establishment of key venues in our portfolio, including Cairns Convention Centre, Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane, numerous venue



management bids globally, and, of course, 10 years of extraordinary success at ICC Sydney.

"His inspiring leadership is renowned for living up to the promise of ICC Sydney's mission to make a difference."

During Donaghy's time at the helm, the Centre delivered events that generated almost \$4 billion in economic impact for NSW, received 95 industry awards, and attracted an average delegate satisfaction rating of 97.4% and a 98.2% client satisfaction rating.

Lister also praised Donaghy for successfully steering ICC Sydney through the pandemic.

"It is with great pride that I reflect on the milestones of the past three decades...serving our teams, clients and community has been an absolute privilege," the outgoing leader shared.

"The team here at ICC Sydney has achieved many accolades, but I am most immensely proud of our investment in the strength of our people, and our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion." JM

Art for Cairns

THE Cairns Convention Centre has engaged a local artist to create an artwork for the venue, as part of its Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Elverina Johnson, a First Nations artist, has been commissioned to create a dedicated piece of artwork to be displayed in the Centre's foyer.

Practising in the fields of visual arts and music, Johnson is known for her bright and bold painting style, which often depicts Yarrabah's land and sea.

Maximum Occupancy speakers revealed

THE initial line-up of speakers for Australia's accommodation industry conference, Maximum Occupancy Australia, have been announced.

Taking place 22-23 Jul at The Fullerton Sydney hotel, the conference will see experts share their insights into the current state of the hotel and accommodation industry.

Among those taking to the stage include Google's Industry Manager Travel, Liz Freeman; Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia CEO, Matt Cameron-Smith; BIG4 Holiday Parks CEO, Sean Jenner, and many more.

More than 400 attendees are expected to attend the twoday event, which will include keynote speeches, panel sessions, workshops, and a huge tradeshow.

Early bird tickets are on sale now, HERE.

Te Pae raises bar

SHORTLY after attaining Toitu net carbon zero status, Te Pae Christchurch has raised its standards again, achieving ISO certifications in quality management and food safety.

The two new international certifications highlight the centre's commitment to "operating to industryleading quality standards", according to GM Ross Steele.



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How to relaunch a pineapple



ARGUABLY Australia's most famous 'big thing' attraction, the Big Pineapple on the Sunshine Coast has been relaunched after a major refurbishment.

The first stage of the project included a new cafe and refreshed children's playground along with a new viewing platform and a fully restored tourist train, which has been fully restored and brought up to current safety and certification standards.

For the pineapple itself, work involved a major sandblasting and hundreds of litres of paint to make the structure look as good

HKTB getting arty

HONG Kong Tourism Board has become the first tourism body to partner with Art Basel in a deal which will showcase the city's art and culture at upcoming shows.

The three-year partnership will see HKTB act as Show Partner in three Art Basel events in Paris, Miami, Basel and Hong Kong itself, presenting different themed experiences and activations.

as new and ensure it stays bright and gleaming for years to come.

Stage two of the refurbishment will see improvements completed to the pineapple's interior, with tour operations expected to resume in the coming months. ML

Pictured above in front of the icon is Peter Kendall, Big Pineapple owner; Rosanna Natoli, Sunshine Coast Mayor and Matt Stoeckel, Visit Sunshine Coast.

French hotels boost

MARRIOTT International has identified France as a key growth opportunity for the organisation, announcing plans to add 1,000 new rooms across 10 new properties by the end of 2025.

Expected additions to the French market include three more Moxy hotels in Annecy, Paris and Nice, building on the nine already open nationwide.

The company also plans to add a Residence Inn in Lille, Courtyard by Marriott Lyon East, Aloft Dijon and a new Luxury Collection Hotel in Nice.



APPOINTMENTS

Send your new appointments to: appointments@traveldaily.com.au

Bicton Travel has announced the appointment of Alison Haley as its new Product Manager, tasked with overseeing the company's strategic direction. Haley joins the award-winning agency with more than 35 years in travel across both wholesalers and retail agencies. Prior to joining Bicton, Haley occupied a similar role at Fiesta Holidays for more than 12 years and boasts similar experience at Asia Escape Holidays, Hunter Travel Group and more prior to joining the WA-based agency.

Zoe Gentle is set to depart Air Canada after two years as its Sales Account Manager to take on the role of National Account Manager - Flight Centre at Europ Assistance. The appointment will see her relocate back home to Brisbane after being based in Sydney since 2022. Gentle is a highly experienced travel and tourism professional, having previously worked for organisations such as Club Med and Contiki.

Kelsian will soon welcome highly experienced business professional Caroline Elliott to its Board as a new non-executive Director. Starting from 17 Jun, Elliott brings more than 25 years in various C-Suite and managerial roles across ASX-listed corporations, govt departments, not-for-profit businesses and private enterprises. Elliott will retain her existing roles as Chair of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia and as a non-executive Director of St John's Ambulance.

Nicole Stojic has extended her tenure at Royal Caribbean Group, moving into the role of Head of Retail Sales position. Stojic, who was previously Senior Manager, Sales - Australia and New Zealand, has been with the cruise line for more than five years in total . She also spent more than two years as Strategic Sales Manager at Celebrity Cruises.

As the company celebrates its 20th anniversary, FCM Travel has promoted Renos Rologas to the position of General Manager Australia and New Zealand as part of its 'Brightness of Future' advancement program. Rologas has been with FCM for more than 10 years, with FCM Global Chief Operating Officer, Melissa Elf, saying Rologas' promotion was testament to his unwavering commitment and contribution to the business and the company's desire to reward top-performing talent.

Ghadi Ahmed has been named the new Director of Marketing & Communications at The Ned Doha in Doha, Qatar. Ahmed is a seasoned professional with over seven years of experience in Mondrian Doha from its pre-opening period, and was instrumental in contributing the launches of other Ennismore properties like SLS Dubai and Hyde Dubai.

Suzanne Pentecost has become the General Manager of the 164-key Adina Apartment Hotel Auckland Britomart. She was most recently the cluster manager of Swiss-Belhotel International, and prior to that the hotel manager of Ramada by Wyndham in Wellington. Outside of New Zealand, Suzanne has worked for The Dorchester Hotel in London.



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Publisher - Damian Francis Associate Publisher - Jo-Anne Hui-Miller

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan Advertising - Laura Aghajanian & Dante Muranty

advertising@traveldaily.com.au

Head of Operations & Contributing Editor - Anna Piper

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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Pharmacy



Sell the magic with exclusive packages

In celebration of the new 3-Day 1-Park Per Day *Disneyland* Resort ticket offer, Infinity Holidays is launching 6 incredible packages, giving travellers a magical experience, and a great way to save to enjoy three days to explore the wonder of The Happiest Place on Earth.

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