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ATAC appointment

THE Australian Travel Agents Co-operative (ATAC) has appointed Georgina Randall to the newly created role of Member Services & Development Manager.

Randall will be charged with providing greater efficiencies to members and preferred partners.

Rex flags uncertain future

WHILE Rex has managed to stem most of the bleeding in after-tax profits for the six months to 31 Dec 2023, the carrier declined to provide a profit guidance for FY24 due to an "uncertain economic outlook".

The last 12 months have been a turbulent financial period for the Aussie carrier, with reduced access to crew and parts inhibiting growth and leading to the suspension of a number of routes (**TD** 25 Sep 2023).

In its half-year results published late yesterday, Rex identified a "relentless pillaging of pilots by other major domestic carriers" as a major barrier to restarting several key routes.

The carrier posted statutory loss after tax of \$3.2 million, an 80.6% improvement on the sizable \$16.5 million loss recorded in the same period last year.

Passenger revenue also increased modestly by 6.3% to \$311.4 million, while total group



revenue was also up by 4.6% to \$353.4 million.

The airline pointed to bright spots including its joint venture with Cobham Aviation Services, National Jet Express (NJE), which continued to expand its client base via seven new contracts inked during H2 2023.

Revenue growth for NJE improved by 15% to \$119 million.

Reflecting on the rest of 2024, Rex said it predicts revenue growth to continue, however the carrier also flagged escalating fuel costs would make it difficult to forecast FY profitability. **AB**

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news including our **Corporate Update**.

EY ups India/Turkiye

ETIHAD Airways will commence operating three seasonal flights a week between Abu Dhabi and Antalya in Turkey from 15 Jun.

The carrier has also revealed it will begin flying to Jaipur in India from 16 Jun, operating four weekly services.

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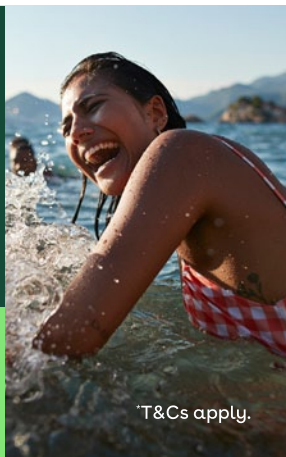
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Texas events set to entice



THE announcement of American Airlines' new direct service between Brisbane and Dallas-Fort Worth (**TD** 02 Feb) couldn't have come at a better time, according to Travel Texas' Tommy Woods.

The marketing specialist said the service, which launches 27 Oct, will give Aussies more travel options to the Lone Star state ahead of an impressive events

SAA fare extension

SOUTH African Airways has extended the travel validity period for its maiden special fare between Perth and Johannesburg (**TD** 09 Jan) to 30 Nov.

The G-Class fare is now available for ticketing until 15 Mar for travel from 29 Apr to 30 Nov, with both Qantas and Virgin Australia able to be used for domestic flights from other Australian cities to connect with SA out of PER.

line-up over the coming years.

Notable events include the FIFA World Cup matches in Dallas and Houston and the centennial anniversary celebration of Route 66, both taking place in 2026.

Woods said, "We're thrilled about the upcoming launch of the Brisbane to Dallas Fort Worth flight on American Airlines which will connect even more Australians with the great state of Texas". *JM*

Pictured: Attendees at the Visit USA expo in Melbourne last week donning Texas cowboy hats.

Topdeck Euro promo

TOPDECK is offering savings of up to \$1,000pp on selected tours of Europe departing between 01 May and 30 Sep.

To take advantage of the promo, bookings must be made by 28 Mar, and can be combined with a range of other discount offers.

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Qantas welcomes A220s

QANTASLINK'S two new Airbus A220 aircraft are taking off today for their first commercial flights, marking the next chapter of the carrier's phasing out of Boeing 717 aircraft.

Qantas has 29 A220s on order, which will steadily replace its long-serving B717s over the next couple of years as part of the much-hyped fleet renewal program at the Flying Kangaroo.

The first A220 took off this morning on its inaugural Melbourne to Canberra service, while the second new plane will commence later today on the Melbourne-Brisbane route.

Part of the A220 appeal for Qantas is the reduced fuel consumption, greater passenger comfort, and almost double the

flight range of the older B717s.

The jets will open up more route expansion opportunities for Qantas, with the planes able to fly between any two points in Australia, as well several international destinations.

"These next-generation aircraft are going to make a real difference for customers travelling across our network so it's great to see it launch commercial flights," QantasLink Chief Executive Officer, Rachel Yangoyan, said. *AB*

Blacker funeral info

THE funeral for well-known travel identity Warwick Blacker will be held next Wed 06 Mar at 11am at the local church in the small town of St Albans in NSW.

Blacker passed away suddenly (**TD** 27 Feb) last month and enjoyed a successful career working across brands such as Jetset Travelworld, Consolidated Travel, Qantas and Thai Airways.

His funeral service will include a procession from the church to the local cemetery.

Rydges Wailoaloa

EVT has been announced as the future operator of a major resort project in Fiji, which will open its doors in late 2026.

Operating under its Rydges brand at Wailoaloa, the property will boast 258 rooms.

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Window Seat

A SMALL creature caused a big delay on a SriLankan Airlines flight last week, with one of the carrier's Airbus A330s grounded in Bandaranaike International Airport, Colombo after an unwelcome passenger snuck on board.

Spotted scurrying around the plane, the stowaway rat prompted a day-long search, as well as a check to ensure the aircraft didn't sustain any damage on account of the rodent's razor-sharp teeth.

The hairy incident wasn't the first time pax have found themselves accompanied on board by objectionable critters, with a smuggled albino rat and an otter causing mid-flight chaos last year on a Vietjet plane - we doubt any of these cute guys had a ticket.

Sabre champions NDC

SABRE Corporation has rolled out two new cloud-based travel management solutions designed to help Asia Pacific agencies to transition to using NDC content.

Created with Hong Kong-based developers Excellent Management Limited, Sabre's new PowerSuite Cloud and PowerSuite Cloud Lite work to help agencies automate repetitive tasks and provide new business insights relating to the complexity of NDC ordering.

As the name suggests, PowerSuite Cloud is an evolution of the XML program that has been in use across Asia Pacific for many years.

The new cloud-based version features a modernised user experience with a full front-to-back office accounting solution, whereas the Lite edition covers front-to-mid office duties and is suited to smaller agencies.

Both programs integrate fully with Sabre Red 360 and Sabre

Content Services for Lodging for agents who book hotels via GDS.

Phil Hoffmann Travel has already adopted PowerSuite Cloud, with CEO, Peter Williams, stating the company was reaping the benefits for staff and clients.

"Since moving to PowerSuite Cloud, we've been able to reduce costs and increase productivity through automation, whilst having easy access to comprehensive real-time insights needed to make informed decisions for revenue growth."

Sabre Travel Solutions VP Agency Sales and Airline Distribution, Asia Pacific, Brett Thorstad, said he was keen to bring the new solutions to agents to help to increase NDC usage.

"We know our travel agents need to make technological transformations of their own if they are to compete effectively in this rapidly-evolving travel industry landscape," he said. ML

Silver Ray floats out

SILVERSEA has marked the float-out of its second Nova-class ship, *Silver Ray*, at the Meyer Werft shipyard in Germany.

The milestone means the vessel is a step closer to completion, and will soon embark on her sea trials before welcoming passengers in Jun for her debut season in the Mediterranean.

Boeing has 90 days

THE Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has given Boeing 90 days to develop a plan to address "systemic quality-control issues" associated with its controversial 737-9 Max jets.

Boeing has been ordered to show "profound" improvements and foundational changes based on a recent FAA audit of its quality control processes.

Interestingly, the FAA statement did not specify what the consequences would be if Boeing failed to meet key criteria.

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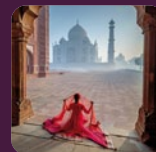
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Amadeus supports

AMADEUS has joined the International LGBTQ+ Travel Association (IGLTA), which works to assist LGBTQ+ travellers and expand LGBTQ+ tourism globally. "Support for the LGBTQ+ community has been front of mind for Amadeus for many years and our membership in IGLTA is further tangible proof of our commitment," said Ana Doval, Amadeus VP People & Culture.

Star delayed already

ROYAL Caribbean International has already cancelled the maiden voyage of its second Icon Class ship - *Star of the Seas* - due to early delays in construction. The maiden voyage, scheduled to depart Port Canaveral on 17 Aug 2025, has been pushed back two weeks to 31 Aug for an unspecified reason, with booked guests to be reaccommodated. "We're truly sorry for the impact that this delay has had on your vacation plans," the line said.

JQ gets dressed for success



JETSTAR has unveiled a new uniform for its pilots, cabin crew and airport team members ahead of its 20th anniversary in May. Designed by co-founder and Creative Director of Ginger & Smart, Genevieve Smart, the updated apparel features a sunset-inspired palette, with

softer oranges complemented by blue, and offers a range of options to cater for individual preferences. Featuring stylish cuts, new epaulettes and the option of a neck scarf, the collection will be worn by more than 5,000 of the airline's frontline team members across Australia, as well as at Jetstar airlines based in New Zealand, Japan and Singapore from late 2024.

Jetstar Group Chief Executive Officer, Stephanie Tully, said the uniform represented the start of a new era for the airline. "We've listened to our people and together wanted to create a uniform that reflects how far we have come as we move into our third decade of operation," she enthused. *JM*

Pictured: Jetstar crew showing off their new threads with Genevieve Smart (centre).

Star revenues tumble

STAR Entertainment's revenue has slipped by almost 15% to \$865.7 million for the six months to Dec 2023, but still earning it a net profit of \$9.1 million. The troubled casino operator, which continues to face inquiries following a string of alleged associations with criminal activity (*TD* 26 Sep 2023), has attributed to the revenue decline to a fall in consumer spending, increased competition in NSW, and new operating restrictions.

Riviera '25 itineraries

RIVIERA Travel River Cruises has introduced seven new itineraries for 2025 on its brand-new ships, *Riviera Rose* and *Riviera Radiance*. The eight-day 'Highlights of the Douro Valley and Salamanca' cruise, which includes a tour of Portugal's Old Town in Porto, will be offered year-round on board *Riviera Rose*. Guests can also choose from six new itineraries, including an eight-day 'Blue Danube' sailing and a 15-day 'Budapest to Black Sea' voyage.



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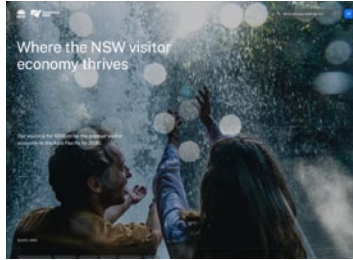
CORPORATE UPDATE

DNSW corporate refresh

COMPREHENSIVE data on visitor markets and insights are now available to stakeholders in NSW tourism via a new corporate website from Destination NSW.

The platform, which went live this week, was designed by tech agency Nightjar, which also played a role in digital projects for Vivid Sydney and EVT Hotels brands Rydges, QT and Atura.

Tourism operators across NSW can access NSW training and educational resources on the new site, along with marketing campaign materials and toolkits.



Information on investments relating to major industry and business events is also easily accessed via the new platform.

The site has been designed to offer an easier user experience, with an improved search engine, navigation and security of user data for newsletter subscriptions.

Destination NSW Chief Executive Steve Cox said digital innovation was paramount to the state's goal of hitting \$65 billion in annual visitor expenditure by 2020.

"The new corporate website, designed to provide an engaging user experience, improved search functionality and mobile responsiveness, positioning Destination NSW to be adaptable and forward-thinking during the momentum phase of the Visitor Economy Strategy 2030, and in turn, ensuring NSW achieves its targets and goals for visit expenditure," Cox said.

"Destination NSW has a steadfast commitment to leveraging technology for seamless government and industry interactions, ensuring quicker and easier access to news, statistics and insights linked to the visitor economy," he added. *ML*

FCTG Corp success

HIGH customer retention rates and new client wins contributed to new corporate sales milestones for Flight Centre Travel Group, according to its interim 1H results.

While Australia/NZ was one of four regions witnessing record overall sales, the company pointed to MITD data showing corporate travel has still only 70% recovered from pre-COVID transaction levels.

As of 31 Jan this year, FCTG said it had secured new accounts with projected cumulative annual spend of \$1.3 billion across its FCM and Corporate Traveller brands.

In particular, the company added FCM had been successful in winning customers from competitors, while the Corporate Traveller brand had secured a range of smaller managed and unmanaged accounts.



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Cebu Pacific burgers

CEBU Pacific has teamed up with two Filipino-owned burger restaurants in Melbourne and Sydney to give away a total of 200 free burgers on 08 Mar in celebration of its 28th birthday.

The Philippines carrier will hand out 100 of Burger Point's Marvin Glaze burgers at its Circular Quay restaurant from 10am, while Melburnians can flock to St Burgs' Caroline Springs location from 11am for a free cheesy bacon mushroom burger.

Back to North Korea

NORTH Korea has welcomed its first international tourists since the COVID-19 pandemic, with a group of 100 Russian nationals permitted to travel to the hermit kingdom earlier this month for the four-day ski trip.

According to a *9News* report, the group travelled via a North Korean-owned Air Koryo plane from Vladivostok, and were given strict instructions to follow, and had Russian-speaking guides and translators with them at all times.

Intrepid prints list

INTREPID Travel will publish a series of hard-cover travel guide books showcasing its most unique and captivating trips and travel experiences around the world.

In partnership with publisher Hardie Grant Explore, the maiden release will be called *The Intrepid List* and will present 100 itineraries designed to inspire explorations globally.

Parrtjima returning

THE Parrtjima Festival in Light in Alice Springs is back again next month, with a program featuring large-scale light installations that celebrate Indigenous art, a giant roving puppet to share Arrente stories, performances by First Nations country artist Troy Cassar-Daley and more.

Kicking off on 12 April, the 10-night festival will also include Parrtjima's famous large-scale installation, the Ranges Light Show, which will illuminate the MacDonnell Ranges.

Another show, Grounded, will project animated Indigenous art onto the red sand accompanied by a soundscape, while a new immersive installation called Honouring will pay tribute to late Arrente leader Dr MK Turner OAM, who was passionate about education and preserving culture within the community.

A speaker program for the event will be released soon.

MSC Canary cruise

MSC Cruises has announced it will base *MSC Opera* in the Canary Islands for the Northern Hemisphere winter 2024-25 winter season, with the ship to offer a brand-new itinerary.

The seven-night cruise, which replaces *MSC Opera's* cancelled Red Sea winter 2024-25 program, will operate between 03 Nov 2024 and 16 Mar 2025, featuring extended stays in ports including Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Las Palmas and Funchal in Madeira.



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Uniworld has extended its two-for-one fares promotion until 08 Mar. Initially scheduled to end yesterday, the boutique river cruise line has extended the offer on select European spring and summer 2024 voyages. Savings of up to 50% on trips such as the eight-day Arles to Lyon voyage or vice versa aboard *S. S. Catherine* from only \$3,449pp are on offer. More getaways are available to view **HERE**.

Valid until 14 Mar, guests who book the 'Have It All' fares for select cruises with **Holland America Line** can score a room upgrade on select categories. Up to 30% off launch fares and a 50% reduced deposit, as well as reduced fares for kids, are also on offer. The promotion is applicable on the line's itineraries from May 2024 through to Apr 2025, excluding Grand Voyages and any cruise lasting five days or less. **CLICK HERE** to learn more about the deal.

Enjoy up to 20% in savings and secure a spot with a deposit from only \$200 with **Insight Vacations'** The Big Tour Sale. Discounts of up to \$2,000 per person are available on select itineraries, such as the 14-day 'Best of Ireland & Scotland' tour, which was originally listed at \$9,595 (now \$7,595). View the tours on offer and book **HERE**.

Cruise Traveller is offering guests the chance to traverse the Arctic Circle's Northwest Passage with savings of US\$16,000 (approx A\$24,634) per couple. Zero single supplement for solo travellers is also on offer when bookings are made by 31 Mar. Travellers can cruise out of the famed Northwest Passage in the Canadian Arctic, renowned for its icebergs, fjords, polar bears and more aboard the eco-friendly vessel, the *Ocean Endeavour*. Call on 1800 507 77 to book.

Today is the last day to action the limited-time offer from **Pan Pacific Hotels Group**, with 30% savings available on stays participating hotels and serviced suites between 01 Mar and 15 Sep. Double Discovery Dollars can also be earned by loyalty members when booking stays as part of the offer. Find out further information on the soon-to-end promotion by **CLICKING HERE**.

Discounts of up to \$800 on **Railbookers'** itineraries are available this week. Savings can be made on the company's 'The Wonders of Peru' and 'The Andean Explorer', as well as the 'Galapagos Islands' journey on board Yacht *Isabella II*. Plenty of other trips are also available via the promotion. See **HERE** for further information or call 1300 938 534.

Fly to Melbourne for less by taking advantage of Jetstar's latest Melbourne Sale, which will end in just three days. The sale promotion includes flights, plus discounts on stays in various participating hotels. Examples of some of the value on offer include a two-night stay at the Jasper Boutique Hotel and flights from Launceston, priced from \$274 per person. Travellers can explore the full suite of Melbourne flight deals available and find out the full terms and conditions **HERE**.

ATAS spotlights members

AUSTRALIAN Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) members are reaping the benefits from ongoing mainstream media profiling, the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has spruiked this week (**TD** 27 Feb).

On a weekly basis, ATIA pitches to major Australian print, radio, and online media, in addition to sharing media opportunities with members who are signed up to the Association's media roster.

"Through our mainstream media profiling, we are not just highlighting the best of the Australian travel industry but also underscoring the importance of professional advice and personalised service that our members provide," ATIA Chief Executive Officer Dean Long said.

"It's about showcasing their expertise on a national stage and ensuring that ATIA continues to be a driving force in championing the success of our members."

ATIA member and Principal of cruise agency Main Beach Travel, Mike Dwyer, has sung the initiative's praises, stating it has proven to be "very effective".



"The media have confidence that if they want to run a travel piece, ATIA can connect them to industry 'experts' for comment.

"Being part of this roster has resulted in me becoming a regular commentator on local ABC radio for all things travel-related," Dwyer shared, and added he is now encouraging more travel agents to take advantage of the opportunity.

Fellow ATIA member, Donna Meads-Barlow of Donna Barlow Travel, said the media roster is helping to "shape the future of travel where every journey we report on shares our professional, enriching experiences and enduring connections". *JM*

NT hooks a big one

THE Northern Territory's mega fishing competition, Million Dollar Fish, has already attracted more registrations this year, reeling in more than 50,000 keen anglers from all around Australia.

Eight participants have already caught a \$10k fish, and throughout Mar - the final month of the comp - there will be 42 barra with million-dollar tags up for grabs in the NT's five fishing regions, including Darwin.

Last year's comp delivered a total tourism expenditure of \$70.8 million, with 47,949 people registered, NT Minister for Major Events, Brent Potter said.

Disney Resort death

WALT Disney Parks and Resorts and Raglan Road Irish Pub & Restaurant is facing a lawsuit after a New York-based doctor died suddenly shortly after eating at the restaurant in Oct 2023.

The 42-year-old woman's husband is seeking damages in excess of US\$50,000, alleging that the wait staff were negligent toward his wife's severe food allergies, ultimately leading to her death from anaphylaxis.