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Air NZ suspends ORD

ONGOING challenges with Rolls-Royce Trent 1000 engines have forced Air New Zealand to pause its nonstop Auckland to Chicago service from 31 Mar.

The carrier said the service will resume by Nov when there were more serviceable engines for its fleet of B787 aircraft.

Impacted pax will be placed on alternative services, or can choose to receive a refund/credit.

Air NZ said the move will not impact its full-year guidance.

Skill shortages drag on

ONLY a third of travel businesses were able to fill all vacancies for travel consultant roles in 2023, the results of a recent study conducted by the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has shown.

The bleak finding was contained in the industry group's recently conducted *Skills and Workforce* survey, with respondents also indicating suitably skilled workers were lacking "across the board".

Close to 85% reported an "undersupply" of suitably skilled workers for travel consultants, and that number jumped to 100% in relation to the recruitment of travel agency managers.

Two-thirds also said there was an undersupply of tour guides, while 45% relayed there was only a shallow pool of skilled candidates for sales, marketing

and business development roles.

The troubling findings have informed ATIA's submission to the Federal Government's 'Skills Priority List' for 2024, a critical process that guides funding support and projects for in-demand occupations.

"ATIA's ongoing efforts at a policy level, as well as our comprehensive advocacy program, reflect our dedication to not only navigate these challenges on behalf of members, but to ensure the sustainable growth and resilience of the travel industry," ATIA Chief Executive, Dean Long, said.

For more views on the topic, see Ingrid Fraser's column on p5.

No plans for Bonza to sniff out VA's lead

BONZA has become the latest Australian carrier to confirm it will not be following Virgin Australia's policy and allowing pets to board its planes.

When contacted by **TD**, a spokesperson for Bonza said that while "we love all creatures great and small", the airline will not accept animals on board or as cargo with the exception of approved assistance dogs.

VA drops mega sale

VIRGIN Australia has made more than 900,000 sale fares available from \$49 as part of its End Of Summer Sale, which features int'l destinations such as Samoa, Fiji and Bali.

Travellers can also nab discounted tickets to domestic hotspots including Hamilton Island, Gold Coast, Perth and Launceston, to name a few.

The sale ends midnight AEST 18 Mar, for travel dates between 25 Mar-12 Dec 2024 - book **HERE**.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of the latest news including a cover wrap from **Tourism New Zealand**, our **Sustainability** page, a photo page for **A Force for Good** plus full pages from:

- Silversea
- Inspiring Vacations

Tackle NZ your way

DISCOUNTS at hundreds of New Zealand's best hotels, attractions and restaurants awaits agents planning their own self-famil with Tourism New Zealand.

More details on the **front page** of today's **Travel Daily**.

LATAM incident

A **LATAM** flight from Sydney to Auckland that experienced a "technical fault" with the Boeing 787-9 aircraft has caused injuries to at least 10 pax and three crew - including four Australians.

Despite mainstream reporting suggesting the injury toll was more than 50 people, a statement from the South American carrier insisted the toll was much lower and nobody was seriously injured.



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Agents enjoy cool voyage



PONANT recently treated a group of travel agents to an Antarctica voyage on board its elegant vessel, *Le Lyréal*.

The group enjoyed exciting sea days, multiple Zodiac landings, great weather and an abundance of wildlife sightings, including humpback whales, seals, gentoo and chinstrap penguins.

The advisors also witnessed colourful sunsets and were able to learn from an expert team of naturalists, all with a passion for Antarctica. *JM*

Pictured on the bridge of *Le Lyréal*: Mark Spurway, MTA;

Sandra Cahill, Ponant; Captain Julien Duroussy, Ponant; Libby Orrock, Savenio; Sue Kuti, Travel Managers; Jacqui Keating, SmartFlyer; and Vineet Nankani, Migratory Wings.

Vivid '24 program

A 40-KILOMETRE rainbow laser shining from Sydney Tower is one of the major highlights to feature in the 2024 edition of Vivid Sydney, organisers have revealed.

Launching the official program for Vivid yesterday, the major annual festival of light, music, ideas and food will feature 3D installations across the city.

The popular Vivid Food program will return in 2024, with the Vivid Fire Kitchen relocated to a new space at The Goods Line and a new activation celebrating leading women in gastronomy.

Vivid Sydney 2024 will run from 24 May through to 15 Jun.

A380 delay for SA

QANTAS has confirmed it will delay the deployment of A380s on its Sydney-Johannesburg route, telling *Travel Daily* this morning that the larger planes will now be activated from late Sep this year, instead of Jul.



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Travel Daily
ON LOCATION

BANGKOK

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you in collaboration with **Virtuoso**, who are hosting *Travel Daily* in Bangkok for the Virtuoso Forum.

TRAVEL Daily has landed in Bangkok and checked into the Four Seasons Hotel Bangkok at Chao Phraya River, where the Virtuoso Forum for 2024 will be held over two days.

More than 200 attendees will come together for the forum under the theme of 'Together for Tomorrow', where they will hear from Virtuoso leaders and outside experts, learn the latest on Virtuoso products and initiatives, and much more.

Day one features a range of professional development sessions followed by media networking, before attendees let their hair down for networking drinks hosted by Capella Hotel Group.

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Sabre Launchpad

SABRE has developed a new booking solution called Sabre Red Launchpad, designed to help new and independent travel agents.

The latest solution reduces the training needed for new advisors and also provides a “light-weight” way for independent agents to access Sabre content who are not using an aggregator or GDS.

LHR strike warning

TRAVELLERS flying to London Heathrow over Easter could be in for some serious disruption, with more than 600 customs officials threatening to walk off the job over a working conditions issue.

A ballot among members has been launched by the Public and Commercial Services Union, with 05 Apr the earliest potential date staff could walk out.

The dispute centres around Border Force looking to impose a new fixed roster and amending flexible working arrangements.

VARA to phase out Fokkers

PERTH-BASED Virgin Australia Regional Airlines (VARA) will look to replace its ageing Fokker 100 aircraft with either Embraer E190-E2s or Airbus A220-100s.

An internal memo seen by **Travel Daily** shows Virgin Australia’s regional division has identified an opportunity for at least four new aircraft based in Perth, commencing from 2025.

The flagged new aircraft will predominately operate charter activity, along with some regular commercial flights when charter demand is low.

“This will be the first time that the WA 100-seat charter market has had new aircraft since the days of Ansett, which would be great for our business and great for our clients,” the memo stated.

“As VARA has grown...we have earned the right to consider whether there is a better solution for the remaining lines of flying which really require a

100-seat aircraft, and the WA charter market is the biggest in Australia, with the most vigorous competition being in the 100-seat segment,” VARA added.

In 2021, a VARA review to replace its older F100 aircraft found B737-700s to be the most suitable replacement, however some airports were unable to accept the planes due to aerodrome compatibility issues, forcing the need for the company to find alternative options. **AB**

QF adds to grants

THE Qantas Regional Grants program has allocated another \$2 million in grants this year to support Australian not-for-profit community groups and projects that benefit regional areas.

Qantas’ latest funding will take its total value of grants to \$10 million over the next five years.

Regional groups can apply **HERE**.



Window Seat

WEDDINGS can often be described as a “moving service”, however for one British couple, the phrase was taken to a new level as they got hitched on a rail service from Paddington to Reading.

Railway tragics Vince Smith and Leah Anderson met eight years ago on a Great Western Railway service, turning that encounter into a first date which also led to a first kiss.

After getting her hair and make-up done at the Queen Victoria Lounge at Paddington, the pair boarded the train for the wedding ceremony, reception and a three-course meal, all at 125mph.

The moment was extra special for Anderson, with her father Teddy working as a GWR signalman for 51 years.

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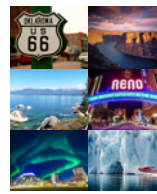
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*Only valid on bookings made via our call centre. Prices shown in the portal are exclusive of the 10% discount which will be applied by our call centre. Online bookings are exempt from the discount. Subject to availability. Prices are per person based on two people sharing, subject to availability and in Australian Dollars. May fluctuate due to surcharges, fees, taxes, or currency exchange. Single supplements apply. Flights not included. ARBN 668 148 392. 016307 (03.24)



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Funds for women in the air

CAREERS in aviation for young women will receive government funding following a competitive 'Women in Aviation Industry' initiative conducted by Federal Transport Minister, Catherine King.

Launched to mark International Women's Day and Women in Aviation Week, the government will invest \$1.3 million to make aviation more attractive to young women as a career pathway.

Four specialised suppliers will receive funding through the initiative, including a program for flight instructor leadership programs for high school students.

The Women in Aviation Industry Initiative also aims to encourage long-term cultural change among men in the sector to improve inclusion for women pursuing aviation as a career pathway.

To this end, a program by ThinkPlace Australia will receive funding for a program designed to foster behavioural changes.

In addition to \$1.3 million in funds already available, a further \$2.9 million has been allocated to the initiative through to 2026.

Minister King said she was looking forward "to seeing these programs come to life", and make a real difference for women. *ML*

Qld airport sell-off

THE North Queensland Airports Group, which comprises Cairns Airport, Mackay Airport and Mackay Airport Hotel, could soon be partially listed for sale.

Owner, The Infrastructure Fund, is expected to sell off its 27% stake, according to a report in *The Australian*, as it looks to downsize its airport assets, including a 7.19% stake in Perth Airport.

Additionally, a sale process for Queensland Airports Limited is expected to kick off soon, with 74% of the asset set to be on offer through Barrenjoey.

Princess swans into the SCG



PRINCESS Cruises hosted a number of key trade partners to watch the opening round of the Sydney Swans at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) last week.

The SCG banner featured Princess Cruises and 'Cruising to Victory', which was very fitting given the Swans won in round one against the Melbourne Demons.

The Carnival Corporation brand is the official cruise line partner of the Sydney Swans for the next two years (*TD* 15 Dec 2023).

Pictured: The group of well-known trade executives enjoying the night out at the footy. *JM*

Urban Rest into NZ

CORPORATE extended stay accommodation brand Urban Rest has expanded into New Zealand with the opening of its maiden property in Auckland.

Urban Rest Sylvia Park in Auckland features 34 one- and two-bedroom apartments.

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G Adventures goes Gold class



WHO said you can't embark on a meaningful, socially positive adventure and stay in style at the same time?

That's the rationale behind the new 'Geluxe' range of premium active itineraries by G Adventures, which was formally launched at an event in Sydney last week.

The gathering was hosted and attended by G Adventures Founder, Bruce Poon Tip, who said the Geluxe range was aimed at travellers eager to make a conscious difference in the world but with a budget that allowed a chance to treat themselves.

'Geluxe' itineraries seek to open the eyes, minds and hearts of travellers to the stories of the world while still enjoying a taste of luxury at the same time through upscale accommodation, a higher dining standard, and specially curated community interactions designed to showcase a destination's story.

Geluxe destinations include Portugal, Iceland, India, Tanzania, Ecuador, Morocco and more - in total offering 45 trips in 26 destinations around the world.

Itineraries are designed to be intimate and immersive, with an average expected group size of between 10-12, and capped at no more than 16 guests.

The first Geluxe itineraries depart in May, with strong early demand leading the company

to explore additional departure dates on various tours.

In addition, each departure features as least one 'Your OMG Stay' and 'Your OMG Day', with an overnight stay in a stand-out accommodation style and the option of personalising trips by choosing two activities. **ML**

Pictured: The G Adventures team on the night included Sean Martin, Adelle Clements, Bruce Poon Tip, Casey Mead, Ben Goschnick and Sophia Cogan.

New Tauck journeys

TAUCK will expand its touring range into two new countries in 2025, with Colombia and Japan joining the selection.

The nine-day 'South America's Eternal Spring' tour begins with a two-night stay in Bogota, before heading north-west for three nights in Medellin and concluding with another three nights in the coastal city of Cartagena.

In Japan, the new 10-day 'Journey through Japan' itinerary has been designed specifically for families and begins with a three-night exploration in Tokyo.

Travellers then board the Shinkansen bullet train bound for Hakone, where guests partake in a pirate boat cruise on Lake Ashi.

The Japanese adventure wraps up with a visit to Hiroshima and a visit to the island of Miyajima.

The Chat

with Jenny



Travel Daily

A conversation with Jennifer Gaskin

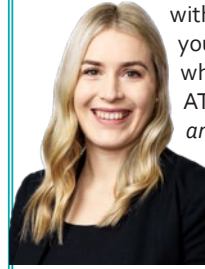
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ATIA UPDATE

from Ingrid Fraser, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy



I'D LIKE to start with a big thank you to all of you who completed ATIA's *Skills and Workforce* survey.

This is a vital piece of work that provides the evidence we need to demonstrate to government that occupations in the travel industry continue to be in demand and should be prioritised for support.

Recruitment challenges remain, with only a third reporting that almost all vacancies were able to be filled for travel consultant roles during 2023.

The level of suitably skilled workers was found to be lacking across the board, with 84% reporting an undersupply of skilled travel consultants.

That number jumped to 100% in relation to travel agency managers, 67% for tour guides and 45% reporting an undersupply of suitably skilled workers for sales, marketing and business development roles.

ATIA's survey results informed our recent submission about which occupations should be on the Federal Government's Skills Priority List for 2024 - this is used

to inform which occupations the government focuses on in terms of funding support and projects, so it's important to make sure the demand for travel industry occupations is understood.

Today, I am representing ATIA member interests at a Roundtable by the Jobs and Skills Council for the Travel and Tourism Industry, Service and Creative Skills Australia (SaCSA).

I have also been appointed as one of five industry experts on the Travel & Tourism Strategic Workforce Advisory Group.

What does this mean for ATIA members? You will have a direct voice through ATIA as we represent your interests in working with SaCSA as it determines project priorities to support the travel workforce.

Outside of the skills and training space, we have been participating in consultations about the suitability of the legislation that governs the Passport Office.

With Australia now having the second-highest passport application fee in the world, we provided feedback that the method of increasing passport application fees needs to be reviewed to ensure cost is not a barrier to obtaining a passport - ensuring Australians can continue to travel easily.

Drones handle ATC

AIRSERVICES Australia has appointed Frequentis Australasia to develop a world-leading digital air traffic control system to handle a massive surge in drone flights over the next 20 years.

The system will be designed to allow the air traffic regulator to easily integrate uncrewed aircraft into Australian airspace, with annual drone traffic expected to skyrocket from 1.5 million flights to more than 60 million by 2043.

Amora to Brisbane

THAILAND'S Amora Group has opened its second Australian property, with Amora Brisbane welcoming guests from last week.

Formerly the Novotel Brisbane, the property was purchased by Amora Group in 2020 before undergoing a \$30 million renovation and remodelling.

Amora Brisbane features 296 rooms and suites, a fitness centre, an outdoor pool, a restaurant and bar and 11 conference spaces.



EV rental boost

EUROPCAR Mobility Group is preparing to install 256 chargers around Australia, including airports, metropolitan hubs, and regional locations, to support the deployment of around 3,100 electric rental vehicles over the next three years.

The 'Electric Rental Vehicle and Charging Infrastructure Rollout' project is supported with \$4.76 million of Federal Government funding from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency's Driving the Nation Program.

A 'paradigm shift'

CONSUMER demand is driving a 'paradigm shift' towards regenerative tourism, according to John Pagano, Chief Executive of multi-project sustainable developer, Red Sea Global.

He pointed out a global trend highlighted by Booking.com's 2023 *Sustainable Travel Report*, which showed 76% of international travellers are eager to embrace more sustainable travel this year, despite economic pressures.

The study also revealed that 500,000 destinations worldwide have earned the 'Travel Sustainable' badge on Booking.com, including many in the wider Red Sea region.

WTTC LAUNCHES READINESS ROADMAP

THE World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), in collaboration with management consultancy firm Oliver Wyman, has introduced a new roadmap to simplify sustainability reporting in the travel and tourism sector.

Launched during ITB Berlin last week, the *Sustainability Reporting Readiness Roadmap* aims to guide businesses through sustainability frameworks, compliance timelines and readiness assessments.

"Sustainability reporting is no longer negotiable for travel and tourism businesses," WTTC CEO, Julia Simpson, said.

"It is a challenge we must confront head-on".

"Our roadmap serves as the trusted navigator through the intricacies of sustainability



reporting, acting as a guide and providing clarity.

"It is not merely about meeting regulatory requirements; it is about propelling businesses toward sustainable growth and resilience," she concluded.

At the same time, WTTC and Oliver Wyman also released *Navigating the Sustainability Journey: The Impact of Mandatory Reporting on Travel & Tourism*, a new report designed to address the sector's unique sustainability challenges.

The paper delves into the three key sustainability reporting frameworks affecting the industry, and offers suggestions on how to effectively navigate the changing regulatory landscape.

Additionally, the report highlights the urgent action travel and tourism businesses must take to prepare for upcoming sustainability compliance standards, particularly when it comes to complex supply chains and Scope 3 emissions reporting.

Read the report in full **HERE**. JM

App for Antarctica

AURORA Expeditions has partnered with Eyesea, a global maritime pollution mapping initiative, to test the performance of the Eyesea app in remote locations.

The duo successfully recorded Eyesea's first in-app marine pollution data reports from Antarctica, during an expedition led by the crew of Aurora's vessel, *Sylvia Earle*.

The info will be used to inform conservation efforts and future environmental policy decisions.

Tesla backs out

TESLA has pulled out of Australia's Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) due to what it says are the body's "demonstrably false" claims that the New Vehicle Efficiency Scheme (NVES) will drive up car prices.

The EV maker said FCAI's "misleading" comments about how car brands may raise their prices in response to the govt's planned CO2 scheme for the industry would lead to consumers avoiding buying EVs.

MH's corp push

MALAYSIA Airlines has launched a new program to empower corporate customers by providing a platform to estimate and manage their carbon footprints more accurately.

Powered by CHOOSE, the airline's Corporate Carbon Programme also offers business travellers the opportunity to actively contribute to sustainable aviation practices via certified climate projects, and SAF credits.

PONANT GRAND VOYAGES

DISCOVER



A Force for Good sweeps Aus and NZ

IN HONOUR of International Women’s Day, female powerhouse leaders in the Australian and New Zealand travel industry (and their male allies) took to the stage at A Force for Good in both Sydney and Auckland.

The events showcased impressive women in the industry, including Debra Fox, MD at Abercrombie & Kent & Crystal; Animal Asia founder Dr Jill Robinson; Aunty Margaret Campbell from Dreamtime SouthernX; Deb Corbett, GM of Sales and Marketing at Ponant; Lesa Bain, VP of Sales at Lindblad Expeditions; Danielle Galloway, Global MD of Luxury and Independent Brands at Flight Centre Travel Group, and many more.

“Events like A Force for Good provide an invaluable platform to inspire and empower women through continuous learning, development and sharing of knowledge,” A Force for Good founder Helene Taylor told *Travel Daily*, which was a media sponsor. “Let’s seize this opportunity to drive meaningful change and create a more inclusive and equitable workplace for all.”



A FORCE for Good founder, Helene Taylor (centre), with speakers from Mon’s Auckland event.



AUNTY Margaret Campbell from Dreamtime SouthernX shone a light on sustainability.



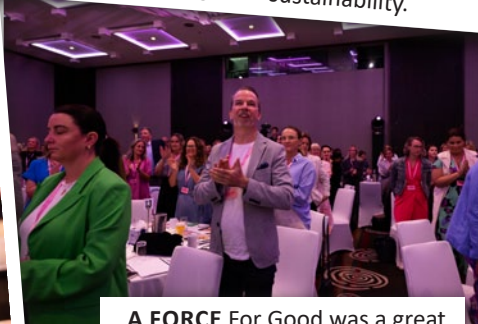
HELENE Taylor with G Adventures’ Bruce Poon Tip.



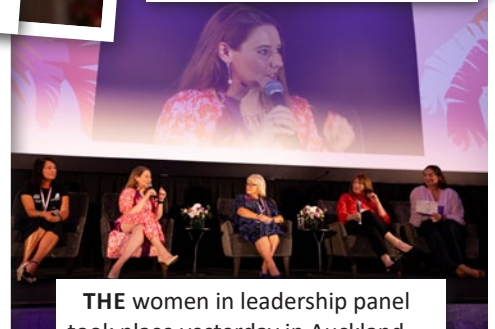
HELENE Taylor with Hurtigruten CEO Hedda Felin, who travelled from Norway to speak at the Sydney event.



HURTIGRUTEN’S Joel Victoria with SLAK Flowers’ Simla Sooboodoo.



A FORCE For Good was a great celebration of women in travel.



THE women in leadership panel took place yesterday in Auckland.



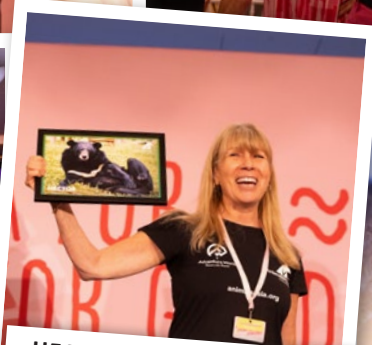
PONANT’S Deb Corbett on the sustainability panel.



MSC Cruises’ MD Lisa Teiotu travelled to Auckland to present yesterday.



THE Sydney event continued with an afterparty aboard *The Jackson*.



HEADLINE speaker, Dr Jill Robinson, shared the important work of Animals Asia.



MONEY

WELCOME to Money, *TD's* Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US\$0.662

AFTER a stellar end to last week, the Aussie trended down yesterday against the rebounding greenback, which has been lifted ahead of the US inflation release tonight.

Meanwhile, travellers to Japan can still garner a good exchange rate, as the Australian dollar is currently sitting relatively high against the Japanese yen, exchanging at ¥97.20 for each Aussie dollar. *Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.662
UK	£0.516
NZ	\$1.072
Euro	€0.605
Japan	¥97.20
Thailand	฿23.44
China	¥4.751
South Africa	12.36
Canada	\$0.892
Crude oil	US\$82.08

Contiki expands Asia

CONTIKI has officially launched its first-ever tour to the Philippines, with nine- or 13-day itineraries now on offer (*TD* 04 Mar) following a 64% increase in Aussie travellers booking tours to Asia over the last 12 months.

Highlights include an island-hopping day trip in Port Barton, a jeepney (minibus) ride to Napcan Beach, snorkelling through a shipwreck site, a 'Make Travel Matter' experience on Daracotan Island, and much more.

Thredbo coaster raring to go



THRILL seekers visiting Thredbo for the upcoming ski season will be among the first to enjoy a new luge-style rollercoaster being developed by EVT Limited.

Construction is near completion on the Thredbo Alpine Coaster, which allows riders to control their own speeds of up to 40km/h over the 1.5km journey.

Riders encounter a mix of uphill and downhill tracks during the ride, including tunnels, bridges and circles.

Thredbo General Manager, Stuart Diver, said the Alpine Coaster will add a new dimension to every guest's visit.

"It will be a hugely exciting on-snow experience in winter, and it will build upon our wide range of

outdoor adventures in summer as a drawcard for new tourists to the village in the shoulder seasons," Diver said.

"This new development is a testament to Thredbo's commitment to provide a premium experience for our guests 365 days a year." *ML*

Escape Deals is live

NEWS Corp's travel media brand Escape has launched a dedicated commerce content destination, Escape Deals, where travellers can research, plan and book a holiday.

News Corp Australia's Director, E-Commerce, Adam Kron, said the new offering "is designed to provide a seamless experience, from inspiration through to booking, for Australians looking for their next travel adventure".

Powered by booking platform Travlr, Escape Deals will also feature exclusive offers from a marketplace of travel providers across tours, packages, hotels and experiences, with a focus on popular destinations.

BBN ready to takeoff

BBN Airlines Indonesia has recently obtained an additional Air Operator Certificate (AOC) for commercial passenger flights from the Indonesia DGCA, reaffirming its readiness to operate air travel services in the Asia-Pacific region.

Boeing worker dead

FORMER Boeing employee John Barnett has been found dead from a "self-inflicted" wound in the US just days after giving evidence in a whistleblower lawsuit against the plane maker.

Barnett worked for Boeing as a quality manager for 32 years, and pursued long-running legal action against the company following his retirement in 2017.

Work from the sea

VIRGIN Voyages has introduced its Scarlet Summer Season Pass, which invites travellers to take a break from their remote working set-up, and instead work on board *Scarlet Lady* for a month as it sails to nine destinations.

The deal starts at \$9,990 per cabin in a Central Sea Terrace cabin, and includes premium wi-fi, a \$10 daily coffee credit per cabin, wash and fold laundry services, early access to dining bookings, a complimentary bottle of bubbly, and more.

There are a limited number of passes available from Jun through to Sep - learn more **HERE**.

P&O injects \$33m

P&O CRUISES Australia is expected to deliver \$33 million into the South Australia economy this year, with *Pacific Explorer* expected to welcome a total of over 26,000 guests across Feb and Mar and again in Dec.

The ship will operate seven-night cruises visiting Kangaroo Island, Hobart and Melbourne, four-night Southern getaway sailings visiting Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln, four-night '90s themed cruises and three-night '80s themed cruises this year.



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For some, it's seeing the authentic beauty of the world. For others, it's indulging in unparalleled luxury on board. There are thousands of reasons for sailing with Silversea. From now until the end of February your clients will enjoy **\$6,000 savings on Door-to-Door All-Inclusive fares, or \$3,000 per guest**, with a **15% refundable reduced deposit** best of all. With this in mind, we invite your clients to explore with us on a global collection of voyages from April 2024 through April 2026.

To take advantage of this limited-time offer, **book your client's suite with our Door-to-Door All-Inclusive fares by 15 March 2024.**

OUR ALL-INCLUSIVE DOOR-TO-DOOR FARES INCLUDE:

- Private executive transfers (between home and airport)
- Economy Class Air/Business Class upgrades at reduced rates or Air Credit
- Shore excursions (one per port, per day)
- Butler service in every suite category
- Premium beverages in-suite and throughout the ship
- Multiple restaurants serving diverse cuisine and an in-suite 24-hour dining service
- Unlimited Wi-Fi
- Onboard gratuities



Learn more about this offer



Place your camera in front of the QR Code and follow the link.
For some smartphones a QR Reader would be needed.

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