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QF launches NDC portal

TRAVEL agencies can now register to access Qantas' dedicated NDC portal, opening up a new way to shop and book Qantas fares, service flights and customise with ancillaries.

The platform, unveiled last year (**TD** 12 Dec 2023), unlocks Qantas NDC content for agents in more than 60 countries, independent of an external technology partner.

Benefits of the platform include discounts of up to 5% on trans-Tasman fares and up to 4% on domestic itineraries, excluding taxes, if booked via the portal.

On longer journeys, agents can also freeze the total airfare price for up to five days under Qantas' recently announced price guarantee (**TD** 27 Feb).

There are no registration or set-up fees, with access granted seven to 10 days after the application process.

The portal also features a range of self-serve user guides and e-learning resources as part of a dedicated knowledge centre.

"The portal is part of the airline's commitment and investment in the capabilities of its NDC program, including lowering domestic and trans-Tasman fares for trade partners, unlocking...industry benefits and modernising how agents service customers," the airline said.

Qantas said the platform is designed primarily for basic return journeys, with traditional GDS channels recommended for more complex itineraries. **ML**

Compass on the road

SMALL group driving adventure operator Compass Expeditions has released a new promotional video to inspire agents.

The video showcases the length Compass Expeditions goes to ensuring each trip is meticulously planned and executed.

Click the **Travel Daily TV** logo to check it out.



Lux safari pioneers

ABERCROMBIE & Kent is one of the world's authorities on delivering luxurious African safari adventures, having first launched six decades ago - more details on **page six** of today's **Travel Daily**.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of industry news including our **Corporate Update**, plus a full page from **Abecrombie & Kent**.

TRAVEL CREW - GENERAL MANAGER

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Qantas cancels the most

QANTAS domestic services (inclusive of QantasLink) fared the worst for cancellations during Feb, with the carrier scrapping 5.9% of its flights for the month.

The latest figures from BITRE showed Qantas was behind the pack of major domestic airlines, with Skytrans the next worst with 4.9%, followed by Virgin Australia (2.8%), Jetstar (2.6%), Bonza (2.5%) and Rex (2.1%).

When it came to on-time arrivals and departures, newcomer Bonza was first off/on the tarmac, managing to keep its schedule 81.7% of the time.

The tardiest performer for Feb was Virgin Australia, which has struggled over the last 12 months to keep its schedules on track.

During Feb, Virgin was only able to keep 72.7% of its services on time, marginally behind competitors Qantas (73.4%), Rex (74.2%) and Jetstar (75.2%).

Overall, Aussie airlines averaged



73% for on-time arrivals and 74.5% for on-schedule departures, well behind the long-term average of 81.2%.

Topping the table of most on-time arrival routes were Adelaide to Gold Coast (89.7%), Gold Coast to Adelaide (87.9%), and Canberra to Adelaide (87.9%), while the best performing departure pairings were Adelaide- to Gold Coast (91.4%), Brisbane to Mount Isa (88.5%), and Townsville to Cairns (88.5%).

Meanwhile the worst performing route was Melbourne-Darwin, recording a dismal on-time arrival rate of just 44.4%, while the Mildura-Melbourne route had the lowest on-time departures at 53.2%. **AB**

Landfall for Emerald

EVERGREEN Tours will next month relaunch under a new brand identity as Emerald Tours, with the change aimed at aligning the touring operation with the already successful cruise division.

The move will also enable travel agents in all Scenic Group markets to access the premium Evergreen land touring product under the Emerald name.

Emerald Cruises and Evergreen Tours Director of Sales, Marketing and Product, Angus Crichton, said the change was about simplifying the brand messaging to leverage the global Emerald Cruises name.

"The rebrand of Evergreen Tours to Emerald Tours offers Australian guests the same excellence and exceptional value land journeys, while opening this premium product to other markets," Crichton said.

The rebranded Emerald Tours product range will be available via the existing Emerald Cruises website from 23 Apr.

Princess trade site

PRINCESS Cruises has revamped its website for Australian and New Zealand travel agents in order to make it easier to access the best deals for their customers.

OneSource now offers simpler navigation and improved features, including a brand-new home page featuring Princess' campaigns and marketing collateral, digital asserts and fare tables, as well as new Princess Plus flyers.

Strike struck down

WHILE the United Firefighters Union of Australia has backed away from a threatened strike on the eve of the Easter holidays (**TD 07 Mar**), members have voted in favour of protected industrial action, which includes an overtime ban, from 05 Apr.

The decision still has the potential to adversely impact Easter holiday traffic around the country via reduced emergency services resources on the ground.

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Sri Lanka is Unique

UNIQUE Tourism Collection will resume sales and marketing activity for The Unique Sri Lanka Collection luxury accommodation portfolio in Australia and NZ.

The marketing specialist will look after Teardrop Hotels, KK Collection, Water Garden Sigiriya and Glenross Living working to drive business to these groups.

Korean adds A350s

CONTRACTS will be signed by Korean Air to obtain 33 Airbus A350 family aircraft to help the airline prepare for the integration of Asiana Airlines once final approvals are obtained.

The US\$13.7 billion dollar deal consists of 27 A350-1000 and six A350-900s, with the order also working to help Korean Air retire older jets in its fleet.

In addition, the carrier will phase in 50 Airbus A321neos and 60 Boeing 787 Dreamliners across a variety of the aircraft's models.

MEANWHILE, Japan Airlines has also placed a sizeable aircraft order, splitting an order for 42 new planes in a variety of models across Boeing and Airbus.

As part of a fleet renewal plan, JAL will buy 21 Airbus A350-900s and 11 A321neos, along with 10 Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners.

It's Disney's Destiny

STORIES about classic Disney heroes and villains will be the major theme guests can enjoy on Disney Cruise Line's newest ship, which has begun construction.

On board the upcoming vessel, guests will encounter beloved characters from stories such as *The Lion King*, *101 Dalmatians*, *Hercules*, and many more.

A keel laying ceremony for the new 4,000-passenger *Disney Destiny* has taken place at the Meyer Werft shipyard in Germany, with the ship expected to set sail in 2025.

Destiny is the third and final ship in Disney Cruise Line's latest expansion strategy.

Britain seeks more screen time



VISITBRITAIN will call on the pop culture power of its film and television industry to boost visitation via its new 2024 global marketing campaign.

Revealed at a media lunch at Nel restaurant in Sydney yesterday, Britain's peak marketing body confirmed the rollout of its screen-inspired marketing push will include Australia, marking the first time a global campaign has been activated Down Under since the pandemic.

VisitBritain Country Manager ANZ, Maria Sykes (**pictured**), said the heart of the soon-to-launch campaign will embrace the theme, 'Starring Great Britain', drawing on major British mega hits like *Harry Potter*, *Peaky Blinders* and sporting doco *Welcome to Wrexham*.

Next TIME webinar

AGENTS eager to develop a stronger online presence are invited to attend an upcoming webinar hosted by the Travel Industry Mentor Experience.

The webinar will cover the importance of compelling website content and marketing tactics across both social media and email channels.

CLICK HERE to register for the session, which will take place on Tue 26 Mar at 1pm.

Sykes also talked up Australian visitation to the Britain, which has surged over the past 12-18 months, with 2024 on track to rise even further.

"Q3 last year smashed all records, moving Australia to the second most valuable nation to the British visitor economy, second only to the United States and ahead of our neighbour France," Sykes enthused.

"While we don't yet have data beyond Q3 2023...the coveted Aussie traveller is becoming even more coveted; they stay twice as long, spend twice as much and we are on track for a very big Q4 2023 and 2024." *AB*

Coral to Melanesia

SMALL-SHIP cruise line Coral Expeditions will explore the remote islands of Papua New Guinea, Melanesia, Micronesia, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands in a new series of voyages scheduled for Jan and Feb 2026.

Coral Adventurer will offer two inaugural voyages among the newly released range - one exploring the Louisiades and another sailing the outer islands of Vanuatu.

Strong guest feedback will also see the line run another itinerary to the islands and atolls of Micronesia after its 2023 debut.



Window Seat

AUSTRALIAN Grand Prix time is upon us again and for once, it's not just hometown hero Daniel Ricciardo starring in every ad under the sun.

Stake F1 Team Sauber driver Valtteri Bottas, who reportedly thinks his new hairstyle resembles that of an Aussie tradie, is fronting an amusing new Uber Carshare campaign where users can reserve Bottas' "second car".

It's not quite a high-speed F1 car, but more a tricked-out Aussie ute with everything one might need, or just want, for a classic Aussie road trip.



Think a meat pie warmer, drinks esky, bicycle rack, thongs storage, surfboard rack, detachable Hills Hoist clothesline, bug repellent dispenser and even a "mullet aeration system".

Uber Carshare said that as Bottas will be busy racing his "other car" this weekend, this jazzed-up ute is available to rent for free on the platform from 22 Mar to 12 Apr.

"This is a beautiful country and Aussies have welcomed me with open arms. I want to repay this love by loaning them my 'second' car - the ultimate road trip car - while I'm busy racing my first car," Bottas said.

Check out the promotional video **HERE** or to go ahead and book the ride, **CLICK HERE**.

Although, Bottas may need this vehicle during the Grand Prix if none of the other drivers can catch runaway leader, Max Verstappen.

CORPORATE UPDATE

SAP simplifies reporting

SAP Concur has announced a new partnership with Mastercard to simplify expense reports for business travellers.

The global tech company will soon offer a new feature which captures purchases made on Mastercard corporate cards and automatically populates them on the Concur Expense platform, with users instantly alerted if extra information is required.

The integration uses real-time spend data to assist businesses in achieving compliance, while making employees' lives easier with a simpler and more efficient



way to create expense reports.

"Our work with Mastercard is a significant milestone in our journey to deliver the expense report that practically manages itself," said Chris Juneau, SAP Concur's Head of Market Strategy.

"As the industry leader in travel and expense management, we are reimagining the expense experience for our SMB and enterprise customers globally."

The new feature will begin rolling out to select customers worldwide from Apr.

As part of the collaboration, SAP Concur said it is also developing a tool to help travel and finance managers set spending controls and restrictions to aid expense policy compliance. *JM*

What's the big idea?

THE Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) has published a new report which looks at how artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming business travel.

According to *The Big Idea* report, organisations are currently using the advanced tech in several key areas, including automation and operational efficiency, customer interaction and support, data analysis, financial operations, and more.

The study also identifies the myriad of benefits AI can deliver when it comes to shaping and enhancing business travel programs, as well as obstacles and concerns, including integrity and ethical considerations.

FCTG on the green

FCTG'S Corporate Traveller has teamed up with World Golf Competition (WGC) to fly amateur golfers around the globe to compete on the world's most exclusive courses next year.

Corporate Traveller anticipates around 5,500 travel bookings for corporate operational staff and players over the course of the contest, from Feb-Nov 2025.

Described as "the world's most luxurious amateur golfing contest", more than 13,000 players will take part in WGC across 216 courses.



Ten wonderful days in Tahiti



TAHITI Tourisme treated its top-selling Tahiti Specialist travel agents from Australia on a trade famil to the Islands of Tahiti last week, in partnership with Windstar Cruises.

The 10 lucky travel sellers were able to explore the destination over 10 days, including the main island Tahiti, as well as sister island Moorea, the lesser-known Huahine, Taha'a, the historic Raiatea and the Bora Bora.

Agents visited some of the best accommodation offerings across the islands, including Le Tahiti by Pearl Resort, locally run guesthouse Pare Lodge, plus the

recently opened Cook's Bay Hotel and Niu Beach Hotel in Moorea.

The DMO also hosted the group on a range of day experiences showcasing the French Polynesian culture, including a visit to a pearl farm, lagoon excursions, and a Tahiti island tour featuring waterfalls and cultural stops.

The highlight of the trip, though, was a six-night Windstar cruise aboard the luxurious *Star Breeze*.

The Aussie agents are **pictured** enjoying picture-perfect weather in Moorea. *JM*

Agent group offer

GATEWAY Travel has launched exclusive worldwide group travel packages, which agents can earn 15% commission on.

Designed for groups of at least 16, each tour package includes premium hotel accommodations, daily breakfast, guided tours led by expert guides, and extra perks to enhance the travel experience.

Travel agents can learn more via info@gatewaytravel.com.au.

Mat guarantees

MAT McLachlan Battlefield Tours has guaranteed departures on all four-day Western Front Explorer tours for 2024, with bookings still available.

Priced from \$2,499pp twin share, the popular itinerary will run all throughout May, Jun, Jul and Aug - further details **HERE**.



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Scot has kicked off a special promotion, which offers airfares from \$159 to over 60 destinations, including Greece, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and more. Valid until midnight of 25 Mar, the Singapore Airlines subsidiary is inviting Aussie travellers to plan their 2024 adventures now - [CLICK HERE](#) for more.

Save up to 25% on select small-group adventures Down Under departing between 21 Mar 2024 and 31 Mar 2025 with **Intrepid Travel's** Australian Sale, such as the four-day 'Uluru & Kings Canyon Adventure' in the Northern Territory from only \$1,110. Most tours include accommodation, transport, dining options and various activities. The offer is available until 30 Apr - call Intrepid on 9473 2673 to book.

Valid until 05 Apr, **Fiji Airways** is offering massive savings on its flight and accommodation packages. Starting from \$1,049 return per person, twin share, travellers can enjoy flights and a five-night stay at the Coral Coast in Fiji, or five nights at Shangri-La Yanuca Island Fiji from only \$1,499ppts. Visit www.fiji Airways.com for more information.

Enjoy a 15-20% discount on **Insight Vacations'** popular worldwide itineraries, as part of its 'The Big Tour Sale'. Travellers can secure savings on adventures such as the 16-day 'Country Roads of France' tour or the 22-day 'Britian & Ireland Discovery' holiday when they book and deposit \$200 by 28 Mar. Call 1800 001 778 to lock in your getaway.

Aurora Expeditions is offering air credit of up to US\$2,000pp, as well as savings of up to 20% off select voyages. Travellers can explore the extraordinary landscape of Antarctica, immerse themselves in Scotland's awe-inspiring scenery, or witness the incredible wildlife of Costa Rica, to name just a few destinations - more details [HERE](#).

Railbookers has announced a flash sale, with discounts of \$800 available on any of its 15-night or longer rail holidays, while travellers looking for a shorter trip can enjoy \$700 savings on 10- to 14-night itineraries, or \$600 off any seven- to nine-night journeys. The offer ends soon - call 1300 938 534 to book.

Cruise Traveller is offering early bird savings of \$10,790 for couples, and up to \$16,575 for solo travellers, on its brand-new, all-inclusive, luxury 'West Australian Wonders' package in 2025, which includes a 10-night sailing between Broome and Perth onboard Ponant's *Le Soleal*. The offer is available for travellers who book by Apr 30 - more details [HERE](#).

Viking's Deal of the Week has returned, with up to \$3,000 flight credit per couple available on its 2025 and 2026 ocean voyages. The offer can be applied to the cruise line's new 10-day 'China Discovery' voyage from Shanghai to Hong Kong, as well as the 20-day 'Iberian & Mediterranean Odyssey' voyage from London to Venice. Priced from \$3,995 and \$17,795 respectively - buzz 138 747 before 28 Mar to secure the deal.

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CLIA goes live in Brisssy



THE first Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) LIVE event for 2024 took place in Brisbane this week, kicking off a sold-out season of training across Australia and New Zealand.

Around 400 of the association's members will learn about the latest developments and innovations in cruising at two-day events in six cities around the country from now until mid-May,

with agents able to hear about important product updates from multiple cruise lines.

"It's a great opportunity to get together with other CLIA travel agents and learn about the latest initiatives in cruising, direct from the cruise lines," CLIA Australasia Director of Membership & Events, Marita Nasic, said. *JM*

Pictured taking it all in at CLIA LIVE Brisbane event this week are Ignite Travel team members Ilina-Rose Kinneer, Jason Stegmann and Tori Lake.

UA pools rewards

UNITED Airlines has added a new pooling option to its loyalty program, MileagePlus, allowing members to combine their miles with family and friends into a joint account.

The carrier claims to be the first and only major American airline to offer the feature, which enables groups of up to five members to share and redeem miles in one linked account.

Each individual member's miles can be collated to purchase flights and offset the cost of ticket prices, making travel easier for families or groups.

Taste of Frankland

FERNGROVE wines in WA's Frankland River wine region has introduced three new tasting experiences at the Cellar Door this month, along with new culinary options including pizzas and charcuterie boards.

Guests can now enjoy a casual, introductory tasting featuring six wines; explore Ferngrove's Museum Cellar of vintage wines from the Orchid range; or indulge in an intimate bespoke tasting with 10 cool-climate wines.

Abercrombie & Kent

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