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Travel Daily

First with the news

Tuesday 23rd April 2013

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Foster to step down

LONG-TIME Air Canada gm Australia/NZ Jeannie Foster has resigned, and will step down from the role effective 31 May.

Foster said she was looking forward to "some new challenges in my life" after a stellar career with the carrier and its predecessor Canadian Airlines.

Foster's many roles have included being president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and also being chair of the local Star Alliance committee.

Virgin set for 60% of Tiger

THE ACCC decision not to oppose the acquisition of 60% of Tiger Airways Australia by Virgin Australia (**TD** breaking news) will enable VA to expedite Tiger's growth and offer a competitive low-cost travel alternative, according to ceo John Borghetti.

Today's ACCC clearance follows months of deliberation over "substantial competition concerns" (**TD** 07 Feb) raised by the proposed deal.

ACCC chairman Rod Sims said

the Commission had decided Tiger Australia was extremely unlikely to survive without the Virgin Australia deal.

"The ACCC would always prefer to see a greater number of independent airlines competing in the domestic market...however our investigations showed that Tiger Australia had been unable to establish itself as a viable competitor despite substantial investment and numerous changes of management and strategy over the years," he said.

"We concluded that it was highly likely that Tiger Australia would leave the market if this acquisition didn't go ahead, and accordingly blocking the acquisition would not serve to protect competition," Sims added.

Virgin Australia and Tiger Airways have committed to collectively invest up to \$62.5 million in the business.

"There is a real opportunity to provide strong competition in the budget travel segment and bring further benefits to consumers," Borghetti said.

He added that by partnering with Tiger Airways "we can use our local expertise to build a sustainable budget carrier, which will offer great value airfares and benefit jobs and tourism".

The transaction still remains subject to approval by the Foreign Investment Review Board.

Travellers Choice WIN

TRAVELLERS Choice has announced an expanded shareholding in the Worldwide Independent Travel Network, with the group to become a 25% partner by the end of 2014/15.

Travellers Choice joined WIN in 2002 and became a minority shareholder in the global group in 2010, joining other independent retail groups in the UK, Canada, Germany and South Africa.

The recent sale of the Canadian shareholder means it's now ineligible for membership, with Travellers Choice ceo Christian Hunter saying this gives TC "a rare and valuable opportunity" to grow its stake.

"As an equal partner we will have more influence over the development of WIN's products, including its successful hotel program...to which Travellers Choice members enjoy exclusive access in the Australian market".

He said that WIN had performed well in recent years, with the strong financial return also allowing for a greater benefit for Travellers Choice members.



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FJ new A330 to BNE

AIR Pacific last night landed its new A330 aircraft in Brisbane, giving Australian travellers a first "sneak peek" at the plane and its Fiji Airways livery.

The carrier's second and third A330s will arrive in May and Nov this year, with the rollout seeing the replacement of FJ's ageing fleet of 747-400s.

The new aircraft commenced commercial operations to Hong Kong and Auckland earlier this month.



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18 A350-1000s for BA

INTERNATIONAL Airlines Group has confirmed a firm order with Airbus for 18 A350-1000 aircraft plus an additional 18 options, designated for British Airways.

Coupled with the recent order for 18 Boeing 787 Dreamliner options (**TD** 04 Apr), the new fleet will be introduced between 2017 and 2023, used mainly to replace 30 Boeing 747-400s.

British Airways' A350-1000s will be powered by Rolls-Royce Trent XWB engines.

Avalon Filipino air access

PHILIPPINE carrier Cebu Pacific is looking likely to become the first international carrier to launch services to Melbourne's second airport, Avalon Airport.

The revelation comes days after Australia and the Philippines inked a memorandum of understanding on Fri, enabling carriers from the Philippines to fly to Avalon as an alternative to Tullamarine Airport.

The new MoU permits a daily service between the Philippines - most likely from the nation's capital Manila - to Avalon Airport.

Fourteen-months ago, low-cost carrier Cebu Pacific earmarked a launch of services to Australia from as early as Q3 2013, using leased A330-300s (**TD** 01 Feb 12).

The Filipino airline now plans to debut long-haul flights between Manila and Dubai from 07 Oct.

Late last year Avalon was given a green light by the Federal Govt to reclassify as an international airport, receiving \$15 million to

construct a new terminal and improve facilities (**TD** 15 Oct).

Federal Minister for Transport & Infrastructure Anthony Albanese said the Gillard government had been committed to converting Avalon to an international status.

"This is a huge win for trade and tourism and for Geelong and Victoria.

"A second international airport will bring more visitors, jobs and economic growth to the region," Albanese said yesterday.

STA/TNZ partnership

TOURISM New Zealand and STA Travel have announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for a multi-year partnership to target long-haul youth working holiday makers to come to New Zealand.

The agreement was announced at TRENZ this morning & will see both sides contribute \$1.2m each year, with markets being targeted including the UK, Europe & USA.

Promotional material will be launched on online and trade platforms, as well as direct marketing via social media, while a mobile app will also be developed featuring trade offers.

Travellers from these markets already in Australia will also see the destination promoted through channels as the next stop on their travels.

TNZ gm western and long-haul markets Gregg Anderson said the pact gave TNZ a chance to tap into "a high percentage" of long-haul youth travellers domiciled already on Australia's east coast.

For further coverage from TRENZ, see **pages four and six**.

Golfmax Hols debut

SKI/SNOWBOARD specialists Skimax Holidays has expanded its operation, with a new golfing division unveiled.

Golfmax Holidays offers a range of golf packages abroad including Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, New Zealand, Dubai & Abu Dhabi.

Options include self-drive golf tours and 'Stay & Play' packages.

The inaugural 2013-2014 brochure is now available to order through TIFS.

Heading up the new division is former Momento Travel Services and Adventure World product manager, Richard Davis - more at www.golfmaxholidays.com.au.

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*Some conditions apply.

QF name resonates

A **TRIPADVISOR** survey of 1,800 Aussies has determined Qantas' brand name as the most popular airline name when it comes to making a booking decision.

One in four polled deemed QF as their favourite, followed by Singapore Airlines (23%), while Emirates was third (13%).

The poll also found 33% felt air travel hadn't improved compared to 5 years ago, and the biggest pax peeve was uncomfortable seats or limited legroom.

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Hotel reviews gain importance

AN Amadeus survey on hotel distribution released yesterday has highlighted the increasing propensity of travellers to check online reviews before confirming a hotel booking.

The survey looked at travel agent and traveller perspectives

on the hotel selection and booking process, and canvassed the views of almost 1050 agents across the Asia-Pacific region.

Key findings were that agents consider ease of booking and commission guarantees as the most important criteria when selecting a channel to book hotels - as well as post-sales support on changes to bookings.

70% of travellers said they checked online reviews, while travel agent influence was also lower than the previous survey in 2010, with 62% of agents saying their clients conduct price checks against online sites, compared to 48% three years ago.

Amadeus IT Pacific md Tony Carter said the study helped the firm get a better view on developing the right products and content, with Amadeus' upcoming release of "Hotels Plus Multisource" in Australia-NZ will "offer agents the best access to hotel content in this market".

AirAsia Perth boost

"EXCEPTIONALLY strong" demand for flights between Perth and Denpasar (Bali) has resulted in AirAsia Indonesia cranking up flight frequencies from three to four weekly, effective 01 Jul.

The extra flight will be operated using a new Airbus A320 aircraft.

AirAsia Indonesia commercial director Bernard Francis said the new service, along with QZ's return of four weekly flights to Darwin (**TD** yesterday) underlines the LCC's commitment here.

"Australia has always been an important market to AirAsia Indonesia," Francis commented.

New Myanmar cruise

ORIENT-EXPRESS has announced an expansion of its cruise operations in Myanmar, with the addition of the 25-cabin *Orcaella* which will debut 22 Jul.

It will operate Jan-Apr and Jul-Dec on the Ayeyarwady and Chindwin Rivers - for details see www.orient-express.com.



Window Seat

FLIGHT Centre founder and ceo Graham Turner has given a unique insight into his management style in an interview published in today's *Australian Financial Review*.

When asked for advice by shop managers and team leaders about what he would do in a given situation, he said "generally I must admit I say 'just don't f**k it up'".

Similar vernacular is employed when he goes into a meeting, with Turner's opening gambit generally to ask "what the f**k's going on?"

YESTERDAY'S landmark \$30m cooperative marketing deal between Qantas and the NSW government was announced with a fanfare at Sydney Airport's Hangar 96, with NSW state premier Barry O'Farrell hardly able to contain himself.

O'Farrell, standing alongside that other well known Irishman Alan Joyce, referred to state tourism minister George Souris as "George O'Souris - the third Irishman on the stage".

And O'Farrell said that he would have much rather been at last Thu's QF big bash with John Travolta and Miranda Kerr than at the Lodge with PM Julia Gillard and other state premiers.

The deal "far eclipses anything achieved at COAG," he said.

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AVALON WATERWAYS | **10TH ANNIVERSARY**

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Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from the 2013 TRENZ tourism showcase, courtesy of Tourism New Zealand.

ALMOST 1 in 10 New Zealanders are directly/indirectly employed by the tourism industry, and the true scope of the industry and how valuable it is to the nation was never more evident than at the opening day of TRENZ 2013.

The Cloud, at Auckland's Queens Wharf, was a buzzing hive of activity all day yesterday as buyers busily moved between booths and appointments with NZ-based suppliers.

In 2013, 290 buyers from around the world will interact with 252 suppliers across NZ.

Some more numbers for you; tourism contributed 15.4% of New Zealand's total foreign exchange earnings in the year ending Mar 2012, and translates to a NZ\$64m per day industry.

Following a busy opening day, *TD* ventured to Stardome - one of only three planetariums in the country - to view a truly breathtaking presentation on the clarity of the night sky, stars and constellations high above.

More TRENZ info on **page six**.

Tuesday 23rd Apr 2013

AKL partners Weibo

AUCKLAND Airport has reached out to the Chinese market after forming a partnership with Chinese social networking giant Weibo in what it describes as a "world first".

The facility has launched a trip planning app available to up to 500 million Weibo users.

Through the app, users are able to design and share their ideal New Zealand holiday itineraries, with direct links to offers by product and experience suppliers.

No delay for NZ B787s

AIR New Zealand has not been informed of any potential delays to receiving its order of Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft, NZ ceo Christopher Luxon told *TD*.

"We're very confident we have no issues," Luxon added.

Production of NZ's Dreamliners was on schedule, with delivery of ten of the carbon-composite jet due to begin from late this year.

The Star Alliance member carrier is expecting to receive its first 787 in mid-2014.

Accor to reopen 2nd in Christchurch

ACCOR will reopen its second hotel in Christchurch on 18 Aug, with the city's Novotel following the Ibis last year, which was the first city centre hotel to reopen following earthquakes.

At the time of the second major earthquake in Feb 2011, the Novotel Christchurch Cathedral Square was the newest hotel in the city and although suffering considerable interior damage, was left largely structurally sound.

Novotel's reopening adds 160 rooms to the city's inventory, with further reopenings scheduled for the remainder of the year.

"The Ibis reopening gave international travel organisers the confidence to book tour groups into the centre of the city for the first time since the quake, Novotel Christchurch general manager Carl Braddock said.

"With the Novotel re-opening later this year, it sends a very clear signal that the city is not only reopen, but more than capable of accommodating visitors in style and comfort".

MEANWHILE, 34 Accor hotels across New Zealand will gradually see the company's Chinese Optimum Service Standards program implemented (*TD* yest.).

Chinese visitor numbers to New Zealand jumped 24.7% in 2012,

while Accor hotels saw a 59% increase in bookings by Chinese guests during the year compared to the year prior.

Addressing TRENZ delegates, Accor vp for New Zealand & Fiji Garth Simmons said the push by NZ Prime Minister John Key for the upgrading of services for Chinese tourists to be such a priority was encouraging.

"There has been talk of building 'Chinese hotels' in New Zealand, but that is not what the Chinese market wants," Simmons said.

"They want a genuine Kiwi experience, but with services that make their clients feel comfortable, well-informed and welcome when they visit New Zealand," he commented.

Maori Tourism on rise

DEMAND for Maori experiences and cultural activities is on the rise and this segment of the market needs to "dream big," Associate Tourism Minister Chris Tremain said this morning.

"Maori Tourism need to place its focus on value-add - uniqueness, authenticity and connection to strengthen the appeal of Maori Tourism internationally," Ngati Whatua Orakei Whai Maia CEO Tupara Morrison said.



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QF/EK joint training sessions



QANTAS and Emirates have embarked on the biggest training session of its kind to bring more than 1,500 of its trade partners around the country up to speed on the QF/EK Alliance.

It kicked off the first of three, 2-hr sessions in Sydney yesterday, and will hold similar briefings in all the major capital cities, as well as Canberra this week.

TD sat in on a session to listen as the two carrier's provided partners with a complete overall product awareness from experts who've been living and breathing the pact right from the beginning.

Speaking to the groups, QF Karen Tsolakis, Head of Industry & Corporate Sales said the key messages were that the alliance

is now able to offer one of the biggest networks and best travel experiences in the world.

"Flying QF/EK will offer you & your customers the best lounges, the best FF proposition, the best and most awesome destinations and the biggest fleet of A380s, all of which will make long-haul travel seamless and faster for millions of Australians," she said.

"Customers will now be able to choose from almost 100 flights a week between Australia and the global hub of Dubai and beyond."

Tsolakis is **pictured** (second from left) with Chrissy McDiarmid and Ros Hakim, World Travel Professionals; David Turner, HRG and Bryan Banston, Emirates National Accounts Manager.

Victoria targets bikies

MINISTER for Tourism & Major Events Louise Asher has jointly launched Victoria's Motorcycle Tourism Strategy 2013-2016 which aims to grow the largely untapped niche market.

Announced in conjunction with Minister for Roads Terry Mulder, the strategy will primarily target intrastate motorcycle enthusiasts who take weekends to explore regional areas of the state.

Interstate markets visiting major events such as the MotoGP and World Superbikes at Philip Island, will also be a key focus.

The strategy includes increasing marketing activities pitched at motorcycle riders; encouraging Regional Tourism Boards to engage with motorcycle groups and events; as well as better leveraging major events.

Triumph delays grow

CARNIVAL Cruise Lines has cancelled a further two voyages aboard *Carnival Triumph*, both in Jun, as work to repair damage to the stricken ship continues.

The 10-day extension allows for structural damage to the ship caused by a windstorm in Mobile (**TD** 04 Apr) to be mended.

Passengers on the latest five-day axed itineraries are being refunded and compensated.

CZ Premium check-in

CHINA Southern Airlines has opened a brand new VIP check-in area for premium passengers at Guangzhou Baiyun Int'l Airport.

Aimed at providing "quicker, smoother and more comfortable service" for International First and Business Class guests, the new check-in area provides a means "to spoil our premium passengers," said CZ regional gm Australia/New Zealand Henry He.

It's introduction also follows a 30% uptick in front-end traffic for the carrier from 2011 to 2012, driven primarily by a spike in pax on its A380 flights to Los Angeles.

AEH up destinations

ASIA Escape Holidays has added two new destinations to its product range in Mauritius and The Maldives, taking the wholesaler's total range to ten destinations worldwide.

In an inaugural brochure promoting both Indian Ocean and initially available online, the range consists of 22 hotels in Mauritius and 16 in the Maldives.



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Auckland sky dazzles delegates



ACCORDING to recent research, over 50% of the world has lost its touch with the night sky, largely through light pollution and man-made industrial irritants.

These and other amazing facts about astronomy and the universe above are imparted as part of a visit to Stardome in Auckland, enjoyed by a select few TRENZ delegates last night as an Astro-Tourism experience.

The facility offers an immersive theatre experience where visitors recline and gaze into an interactive display about the stars and constellations via a giant dome screen above.

Stardome is one of only three planetariums in New Zealand, the other two being the Carter Observatory in Wellington and the Observatory in Mount Cook, while an official research facility is accessible to the public at Mount John University in Lake Tekapo.

Visitors to New Zealand can take part in star-gazing activities at the Observatories by booking through Earth & Sky, who promote and operate the planetarium experience to the trade.

"It's a case of mixing science with tourism," Mount John Earth and Sky Observatory's Graeme Murray told *Travel Daily*.

Approximately 25,000 visitors take part in night-time stargazing tours with the firm annually, and a further 45,000 join daytime tours that can operate with the use of powerful telescopes.

Preservation efforts of the night sky in Lake Tekapo are underway, with the long term goal of gaining UNESCO World Heritage Status - making it the only heritage site featuring a park in the sky

Murray is pictured centre inside the planetarium with TRENZ delegates Margaret Munro, Earth & Sky; Kelly Stock, Annabelle Bray and Rowan Townsend, Canterbury & Christchurch Tourism.

Korea goes backward

TOURIST arrival numbers from Korea plummeted 52% in the decade ending 2012, according to Auckland Airport chief executive Adrian Littlewood, growing 3% to Australia in the same period.

In that time, air capacity was withdrawn and marketing investment decreased, with Littlewood saying "The market turned off and New Zealand didn't respond," adding that the industry must work together to rectify the situation.



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LAX transit clearance

UNITED States Customs has approved a new system for Air New Zealand passengers of any nationality transiting through Los Angeles going to or from London.

Passengers not stopping over in the US will receive a token which allows access to gate waiting areas or lounges before their next flight without needing to pass through security again, however US visa requirements will still need to be met.

Further enhancements to assist transiting passengers will be rolled out from mid 2014 when the carrier moves in and opens the new NZ-designed & managed Star Alliance lounge in Terminal 2 of a renovated LAX Int'l Airport.

The new lounge will be triple the size of the current facility and will offer an open-air terrace overlooking the runway.

Additionally, the upcoming Northern Winter period from mid-Dec to the end of Jan will see NZ boost its AKL-LAX frequencies to three on Thu & Sun and double daily the rest of the week.

Key NZ success pillars

DEVELOPING economic growth and the quality of the visitor experience were two major pillars identified by Tourism Industry Association New Zealand CEO Martin Snedden as being key to the success of the industry.

The year 2025 has been set as a target to have achieved a number of key goals as part of a National Tourism Industry Plan, similar to Australia's Tourism 2020 strategy.

Snedden said essential elements of the two pillars included finding people willing to invest in the development of tourism by creating a good rate of return.

Additionally, the TIA boss called on the entire industry to try to improve the quality of their individual experiences for visitors, saying "the whole game has to shift and it has to shift upwards".

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Competencies Required:

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AGENTS in the southern coastal town of Warrnambool in Victoria were recently treated to a special night function hosted by a number of key domestic suppliers.

The function saw attendees briefed on all of the latest updates relating to their most popular domestic products, with numerous games and interactive demonstrations on show to keep the crowd entertained.

Suppliers hosting the function are **pictured** above at the special Warrnambool function consisted of Matt Dommenz, Great Southern Rail; Kristy-Ann Berry,

Delaware North Resorts; Hannah Tabak, Sunlover Holidays; Kate Dancaaster, Territory Discoveries; Emma Mace, Voyages; Scott Wallace, THL - Britz/Maui; Patricia Ricciuti, Driveaway Holidays and Mary Has, Cable Beach Resort.

3m BridgeClimbers

ONE of Australia's most popular tourist attractions, BridgeClimb Sydney yesterday celebrated its three millionth climber since opening 14 years ago.

BridgeClimb Sydney currently offers four climbing experiences.



Public Relations & Marketing Executive

The Walshe Group, appointed representative for the Sultanate of Oman Tourism in Australia is looking to fill the above role.

Key responsibilities will include;

- To write press releases and by-line articles;
- Develop and implement communication & marketing strategies;
- Build strong relations with media in the travel & tourism sector.

Applicants must possess the following;

- Previous experience working in a PR and/or marketing role preferably in the travel industry;
- An established rapport with Australian media primarily travel focused;
- Exceptional written and verbal communications skills;
- Demonstrate a creative flair and a strong understanding of social media;
- Demonstrate a passion for the destination of Oman and an understanding of the cultural; sensitivities required in representing the destination to the Australian market;
- A formal qualification in PR/Marketing and/or Communications.

Applications including a cover letter and CV should be forwarded via email to applications@walshegroup.com

Applications close Monday 29 April 2013.

THE WALSH GROUP



Tuesday 23rd Apr 2013

DoubleTree excited

THE global head of DoubleTree by Hilton John Greenleaf says the group is poised for an "exciting expansion" of the brand in Australia following the signing of four properties in the Northern Territory (**TD** 13 Feb).

Greenleaf said in a statement released in the US yesterday that he was "thrilled" to launch the DoubleTree brand to this market - becoming the 30th country & 6th continent on its portfolio.

The DoubleTree by Hilton Darwin, DoubleTree by Hilton Esplanade Darwin, DoubleTree by Hilton Alice Springs and Hilton Darwin will all open on 01 May.

Members of Hilton's HHonors guest loyalty scheme will be able to earn and burn points for stays at all four NT-based properties.

Clicquot in the snow

THE Australian ski season is ramping up with NSW ski-field Thredbo announcing the return of the 'Clicquot in the Snow' week-long winter festival.

Held from 29 Jul to 04 Aug, the festival will this year feature two new attractions - Clicquot High Tea Sessions at Eagles Nest and Clicquot Snow Croquet - all the details at www.thredbo.com.au.



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

\$1AUD = US1.024

THE Australian dollar hit a six week low against the US greenback overnight, but still remains above parity.

It's also slightly lower against the British pound Sterling and the Euro, but has dropped slightly from recent highs against the Japanese yen.

Wholesale rates this morning:

US	\$1.024
UK	£0.669
NZ	\$1.210
Euro	€0.784
Japan	¥101.70
Singapore	\$1.264
China	¥6.129
South Africa	R9.36
Canada	\$1.046
Crude oil	US\$89.31

CCC Lau cruise a hit

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises Fiji has put on a second departure for its 11-night Lau cruise after selling out the first departure in Oct.

The sailing visits the northern region of the Lau Islands, a region touted by Captain Cook Cruises as "never seen by tourists before."

Priced from \$3,430 per adult twin share, the second Lau departure is scheduled to sail on 22 Apr 2014, operating return from Port Denarau, near Nadi.



Customer Sales Executive

Air Vanuatu has a vacancy for a Customer Sales Executive, based in our Alexandria, NSW office.

This is a full time position with the occasional requirement to work weekends or Public Holidays.

Your primary role will be to sell Air Vanuatu services to clients, including Travel Agents, and to process reservations and issue tickets.

Applicants must have completed recognised Fares & Ticketing courses and be competent in using a computerised reservations system such as Amadeus. Experience working for an international airline would be an advantage.

Applications (CV and covering letter) will be treated in confidence and should be emailed by COB Tuesday 7th May to: mpryor@airvanuatu.com.au

Ethihad Mall in Dubai

ETIHAD has unveiled a flagship "one-stop travel retail and check-in facility" in Dubai - the Ethihad Travel Mall which replaces its previous Chelsea Tower facility.

Insight sales at pre-GFC level

BOOKING volumes have topped pre-Global Financial Crisis levels, with passengers taking advantage of unparalleled exchange rates & product confidence, says Insight Vacations ceo John Boulding.

Speaking exclusively with *Travel Daily* today, Boulding confirmed Insight's sales figures to Europe were "just up" on previous benchmarks set five years ago.

"This is now our best ever year," Boulding said, "we've seen tremendous numbers this year."

Sales to the US are also strong, on par with those set in 2008.

"2008 was the best year ever out of Australia and we are beating it, so that's pretty healthy given the current global economic environment," he commented.

He suggested Insight's "right mix of product innovations and

destinations" was helping to grow the company's business.

The past 12 months has seen significant growth from Australia, with European sales up 30% and the USA bookings rising 20%.

Australia remains Insight's top market source at 40%, followed by the US (31%), then Canada and the rest of the world.

In fact, Australia's dominance of market share is so key to Insight a large portion of tours are tailored specifically to our taste, he said.

"If we are putting a product out it's got to work for Australia, and that's one of the key successes for us - we've got the volume out of Australia, so we develop the product and it feeds itself."

The tour operator has just released its latest Winter program featuring two brand new tours - a nine-day Alpine Christmas Markets trip priced from \$1,899, and a 10-day Journey from Rome itinerary, leading in at \$3,099.

The 15-day Treasures of Turkey tour has also been revamped.

Boulding told *TD* travelling in winter not only appeals to Aussies wanting to experience a European winter, but affords them a price advantage of as much as 28% on summer prices.

The 2013/14 Winter program also sees hotels upgraded with no price gains passed on to guests due to the value of the AUD\$.

"Australians are long overdue this good run of currency and if you look back not that long ago it wasn't like this," he said.

Insight has also adopted the Early Payment Discount for its 2013/2014 Winter program, offering savings of up to 7.5% if paying in full by 20 Jul 2013.

explora birthday deal

ECO-ADVENTURE operator explora is offering a free night's accom when booking a four-night program at select properties.

It's valid 14 Apr- 14 Oct at Hotel Salto Chico in Patagonia, Chile; Hotel de Larache in the Atacama Desert or Posade de Mike Rapu on Easter Island - explora.com.



AFTA UPDATE

The latest updates from AFTA's Chief Executive, Jayson Westbury

SO a week on from the Boston bombings and I think you have to feel much better about life in the knowledge that the US police forces managed to track the two culprits down.

This at least for now ensures that they [the culprits] don't continue with whatever evil plans they may have had.

Furthermore the fact that the London marathon went off without incident gives the world a level of confidence that some new global evil is not at play in 2013.

For the travelling public and the travel industry both here in Australia and across the world this is most pleasing. Astonishing reports over the last week as we have all watched almost by the hour the events that led to the capture of suspect #2 in the end.

Boston appears very capable as a city and a community to recover from this quickly and life will go on. For the families directly impacted there can only be some comfort come out of this last week, but their loss will always be with them and remembered.

A very tragic event but with a swift and precise outcome. From all reports it does appear that travel is back to normal for most and this is always a good outcome for the industry as so often with global events happen travel agents do have to pick up a load of extra work, often with no reward. So once again well done to the industry for minimising the impacts of this event in Boston.

On to the NTIA for 2013. Voting has closed and it is a testament to the industry and the National Travel Industry Awards that this year has set a new level of interest with an incredible record of votes cast.

Finalists will be advised over the coming weeks with the official public announcement of finalists set for mid-May. Although we have taken the gala awards night to a much bigger venue, for some reason this year tickets have been running out of the door, so I hope that those who are yet to book will still be able to take advantage of being a part of the industry night of nights in July.

Thank you to everyone in the industry once again for your wonderful support of the NTIA. 2013 is set to be another big event and if the voting interest is any sign of things to come, who knows what the results will bring.



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Name one of the participating hotel partners for the **YourSingaporeXperience** DIY famil portal

PS. Register for free at the site in order to view the deals. Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner of Suboo's Singapore-inspired sandals, Della Rickey from Travelworld Ballarat.

Tauck about a great trip

TAUCK and its local representative Travel the World hosted a number of Aussie travel agents on a recent Tauck river cruise in Europe.

The group travelled aboard *Swiss Emerald* on the French Waterways itinerary between Lyon and Arles, which starts with a fast train from Paris and takes in Avignon, Roussillon and much more including culinary delights and authentic experiences of the ports visited.

Pictured from left are Ingrid Hay, Harvey World Travel New Farm; Lori Kirk, HWT Hornsby and Castle Hill; Julie-Anne Larkey, HWT Coffs Harbour; and Lina Stefanovski, HWT Lower Templestowe.



QIC closure on Thu

THE Qantas Industry Centre will be closed this Thu 25 Apr due to the Anzac Day public holiday.

In addition, all divisions in Qantas Finance will also be closed on Fri 26 Apr, with email enquiries responded to on Mon.

MEL Aquarium refurb

MERLIN Entertainments Group will plough \$8 million into a five-month long refurbishment of the iconic Melbourne Aquarium.

Work has already commenced, and will see 12 new zones created at its completion, but will remain open throughout the refit.

The project will see the popular attraction re-badged as SEA LIFE Melbourne Aquarium when work concludes in Sep.

GBTA regos open

THE Global Business Travel Association is now accepting registrations for its 2013 Energy and Resources travel symposium.

This year's event will take place at the Duxton Hotel Perth from 28-29 Oct, with delegates encouraged to register as soon as possible by **CLICKING HERE**.

Qld tick for Segways

THE Queensland Government has approved the use of Segways on bikepaths and footpaths across the state, to be introduced from later this year.

Users are required to wear an approved helmet.

Strong growth for Tramada

TRAMADA ceo Jo O'Brien yesterday announced a number of strategic appointments, as a result of "significant growth" at the pioneering Australian travel technology company.

The changes will see Maree Young take over as Tramada's new head of sales and account management, replacing industry stalwart Leith Mills who will continue her association with Tramada in a non-executive role.

Jane Parkomenko, ex Orbitz Worldwide, is now leading the firm's Business Analysis team,

which also includes Andy Greves who moves from Sabre Pacific.

And Krystal Davidson has been promoted to the Tramada Product Management team.

O'Brien said the moves signalled the "next growth phase" for the company, which has a strong tradition of ongoing investment in research, innovation, expertise and people.

"What doesn't change is our objective and determination to provide superior products, service and staff to our customers and partners," she said.

WIN A TRIP TO GREATER PALM SPRINGS WITH UNITED

This month we're giving *Travel Daily* readers the chance to win a trip to Greater Palm Springs which includes:

- 2 United Airlines round-trip economy flights to LAX
- 3 nights at Westin Mission Hills Golf Resort & Spa, one round of golf and one spa treatment
- 2 nights at Hyatt Regency Indian Wells Resort & Spa
- 2 tickets on the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway

Greater Palm Springs, California is the perfect getaway for travellers seeking outdoor adventure, luxurious resorts, boutique hotels,

pampering spas, championship golf courses, and a modern artist community with local designers and brand name shopping.

Belinda Duggan of Jetset Travel Belmont has sent us a picture of herself at Coachella 2011 (left).

For your chance to win

a trip to Greater Palm Springs with United, **SEND US YOUR BEST PALM SPRINGS DESTINATION-INSPIRED PHOTO.**

Send your entry by COB on 30th April via email to: palmsprings@traveldaily.com.au.

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Send your entry by COB on 30th April via email to: palmsprings@traveldaily.com.au.



Spectacular NZ South Island



ABOVE: APT hosted this group of agents on a stunning New Zealand south island famill to honour its VIP Domestic Top Achievers.

In conjunction with Virgin Australia, the top performing consultants were treated to the very best of the destination, with highlights including the Trans Alpine rail journey, a Shotover jet boat ride and two nights staying at Mount Cook, including helicopter rides and Freedom of Choice touring options to explore Queenstown.

They're **pictured** overlooking Lake Hawea, **back row** from left: Jodie Collins, Virgin Australia; Andrew Guillaume, Jetset Brandon Park; Luke Batchelor,

Austravel; Bettiann Gain, MTA; Jasmine Drew, Jetset Albany; Tash Steed, Benalla Travel; Claire Korner, Phil Hoffman Travel Norwood; Angela Dron, Phil Hoffman Travel Hyde Park; Justone Beekmans, Travelworld Lara; Rupert Henley, Travel2; Kym Ryan, Our Vacation Centre; Susan Singh, Travelworld Revesby; and Simon Jackson, Travelbag.

Front row: Makyla Brown, Travel By Wyndham; Kellee Gilmour, APT WA; Susan Haberle, APT National Sales Manager; Riz Callisto, Phil Hoffman Travel Sterling; Cara Buhagier, HWT Lower Templestowe; Meg O'Callaghan, Travelscene @ Frank Ford; Sandra Scoop, RAA Adelaide; and Saijiya Sayar, APT Reservations.

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