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SABAH Tourism is promoting return Economy fares with Royal Brunei Airlines to Kota Kinabalu ex Melbourne priced from \$500.

The 'Sabah Super Sale' is valid when booking two pax travelling between now and 30 Nov, on sale until 30 Sep - details on **page 8**.

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Free ATAS for TCF agents

MEMBERSHIP of the proposed AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) will be free for current Travel Compensation Fund participants for the first year under plans outlined at industry consultation workshops which have been taking place around the country this month.

There was standing room only at the Sydney seminar yesterday, reflecting keen interest from across the industry in the shape of the sector under the Travel Industry Transition Plan.

Accreditation scheme gm Gary O'Riordan laid out the evolving criteria for membership of ATAS before fielding questions from attendees for over an hour.

He wasn't able to say at this stage what the ongoing fees for participation after the first year would be, with the costs expected to be based on turnover.

However comparing to the current \$1,000-odd cost of the TCF and licensing regime, he said that at the lower end of the scale it would be "half that cost or less," with no requirement for an audit which will also save agencies money.

The draft ATAS membership criteria is expected to be finalised after the consultation sessions, and will be put to the next AFTA board meeting on 18 Sep.

ATAS aims to encompass any "travel intermediary" operating in Australia, and although it's hoped that ATAS participants are part of AFTA, this will not be mandatory.

It will cover traditional agents as well as OTAs, inbound operators, TMCs and wholesalers, with a code of conduct, requirements to comply with consumer laws, and "certified accounts" showing that entities are trading solvently.

More details of ATAS membership categories and the pricing structure will be released in the coming months, with "transitional workshops" for the industry planned in Nov-Dec.

Applications for participation are expected to open in Feb-Mar next year in the lead up to the scheme's kick off, on 01 Jul 2014.

O'Riordan also laid out the latest developments in branding and in the development of new insurance products - more details on **page three** of today's **TD**.

Qantas EBA 10 ballot

AUSTRALIAN Services Union members at Qantas have voted to endorse the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement '10' negotiated by the QF National Negotiating Team.

Documents outlining the formal process of consideration & voting is expected to be sent out to QF staff ahead of the 31 Aug ballot, the ASU advised this week.

The EBA 10 calls for an annual 3% pay rise until 30 Jun 2016, job security for airports in relation to Next Gen Check-in, telephone sales staff & "much, much more."

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news & photos, plus full pages from: (**click**)

- AA Appointments jobs
- Royal Brunei/Sabah

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Topdeck pre-release

TOPDECK is offering a 10% discount off 2013 tour prices for departures in 2014 when booking & paying in full from its pre-release European program by 30 Sep.

The 62-page brochure features 22 itineraries between 10-49 days.

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QF commission changes

QANTAS has outraged agents around the country by confirming it will zero out commission on air tickets sold in Australia which commence overseas.

The surprise move was revealed in an email update "in relation

to Qantas' IATA base commission policy" sent by the Australian-flag carrier to the trade yesterday.

"The policy update provides that the IATA base commission payable to Travel Agents for all Qantas public fares ticketed in Australia with travel originating overseas is zero percent," QF said.

Currently agents earn a standard 5% commission on all ticketed QF flights issued in Australia which have their first leg departing from a foreign city, excluding transTasman services.

Under the change, travel agents will need to manually amend the commission payable back to 0% in their BSP for all tickets validated on Qantas (QF-081) paper and issued on or after 01 Nov, to avoid Agency Debit Memo (ADM) charges.

A number of agents forwarded the email to **Travel Daily**, venting their frustration at the new policy, which brings QF in-line with alliance partner Emirates.

Crown cash in profit

NON-GAMING revenues at Crown Australian resorts jumped 8.1% year-on-year to \$607.4 million, the firm today reported.

The group's overall net profit fell 22.9% to \$395.8m, primarily blamed on the disposal of shares in its rival, Echo Entertainment.

MEANWHILE, in order to better reflect growing investments in its tourism portfolio, Crown's Board will recommend shareholders adopt a proposal to change the company's name from Crown Limited to Crown Resorts Limited at the Group's upcoming AGM.

Last minute insurance

TRAVELLERS heading abroad from Sydney International Airport who have forgotten to purchase travel insurance can now do so before they board their flight.

ACE Insurance Limited's new 'Ace Trip Protect' product can be issued on the spot from a new kiosk found beyond duty free.

The policy covers overseas emergency medical, hospital & dental expenses, loss and delay of luggage, travel delay, rental vehicle access & 24/7 assistance.

Webjet margin up 12%

WEBJET managing director John Guscic says the online travel agent has exceeded annual domestic passenger growth by 0.5%, to 4.4%, for the 2013 FY.

"In conjunction with our increased lead over all OTAs as measured by Hitwise, Webjet's continued market share growth in the last twelve months has exceeded the general passenger growth number," Guscic stated.

Yield has "substantially" been increased over the same period last year with an improvement in margin by 12.2%, he said today.

Beachcomber moving

BRISBANE-BASED wholesaler Beachcomber Tours is advising of possible disruptions to phone connections next Mon as the firm relocates to a new Aspley office.

Agents are advised to use the 1800 624 268 phone number which will be diverted to mobiles.

Royal Rendezvous

SYDNEY Harbour will play host for its first Royal Rendezvous of *Queen Victoria & Queen Mary 2* on 12 Mar 2015 as part of the Cunard Line's 2015 World Voyage Program, on sale from 06 Sep.

The new program encompasses 83 destinations including *Queen Elizabeth's* maiden port of call to Yorkey's Knob, off Cairns, on 09 Mar - see www.cunard.com.

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More Avalon ships

AVALON Waterways md Patrick Clark says the ongoing growth in European river cruising will see the firm build at least two more ships to launch in 2015.

In Sydney this week to announce Avalon's *Illumination* launch in Vienna with Deborah Hutton (**TD** Tue), Clark also told attendees at a function yesterday that Australia was the company's second biggest global market.

"We wouldn't get the volume or occupancy levels we need without Australian cruisers," he said, with the Australian market up 25% this year.

The most popular itinerary continues to be Amsterdam-Budapest, but there's growing interest from repeat cruisers in river voyages in France and also from Vienna to Istanbul, he said.

Insurance key to new scheme

NEW insurance products under development as part of the Travel Industry Transition Plan may produce a new revenue stream for travel agents, according to Gary O'Riordan, gm of AFTA's Accreditation Scheme.

At a seminar in Sydney yesterday (**see p1**) O'Riordan gave an overview of the consumer protection insurance landscape in the UK.

London-based IPP has conducted talks with AFTA, looked at the industry here and is in the process of developing new products for Australia, with "more clarity on the cost of premiums expected in the coming weeks," according to O'Riordan.

He said it was expected that agents participating in the

accreditation scheme would have access to "travel intermediary insolvency insurance" which would be based on a risk assessment of the suppliers that agencies are dealing with.

Branding for ATAS

AFTA'S Accreditation Scheme has engaged an agency to work on a brand identity, with the aim of ensuring that consumers are well aware of the benefits of dealing with an accredited travel agents and have confidence in the program.

Accreditation general manager Gary O'Riordan said that the current 'AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme' (ATAS) working title may change in the light of feedback from focus groups.

He said the outcome would be a new visual identity, logo and tag line, which will be able to be used by participants in the scheme once it comes into effect.

TCF guarantees

THE phasing out of the Travel Compensation Fund will see existing bank guarantees held by the TCF returned by the end of next month, according to Accreditation Scheme gm Gary O'Riordan.

He said that the changes mean there is also no need to renew insurance bonds which were previously necessary for agents to comply with TCF fiduciary requirements.



Window Seat

SYDNEY is today turning a little bit Danish in honour of the 100th birthday of the unveiling of Copenhagen's famous statue of The Little Mermaid in 1913.

Organised by VisitDenmark, celebrations of the milestone are taking place over a 37-hour period at 14 locations around the world, starting in Sydney today and ending in New York.

In front of the Sydney Museum of Contemporary Art on the harbour side, body-painted models wearing sea-shell tops & fish tails will appear until 2pm.

In conjunction with Singapore Airlines and Radisson Blu, VisitDenmark are giving away a Danish holiday to the winner of a smartphone photo contest.

To enter, visit, take a photo of the human Little Mermaid and upload it to Instagram or Twitter along with the hashtag #littlmermaid100.

RENEGADE pollie Bob Katter has joined forces with the Australian Licensed Engineers Association to register and endorse seven candidates in four NSW and three Qld seats in the upcoming Federal election.

The candidates, representing Katter's Australian Party, are standing for an aviation heavy mandate to reward employers who prioritise Aussie workers and to keep Qantas Australian.

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Snow conditions

WELCOME to TD's regular snow conditions update, providing info on the latest snow falls, depths and lifts in operation across key Australian and New Zealand ski-fields.

Here's the latest snow reports:

- Falls Creek - 163cm / 13 lifts
- Perisher - 169.9cm / 39 lifts
- Thredbo - 169.9cm / 12 lifts
- Charlotte Pass - 169.9cm / 6 lifts
- Mt Hotham - 143cm / 8 lifts
- Mt Buller - 83cm / 19 lifts
- Coronet Peak - 42cm / 7 lifts
- The Remarkables - 70cm / 7 lifts
- Mt Hutt - 235cm / 3 lifts
- Cardrona - 45cm / 6 lifts

Geckos discounts

A RANGE of Geckos tour to Latin America, Africa, South East Asia, Japan, China, the Middle East and Nepal departing between now & 20 Dec have been discounted by 20% when booked by 30 Sep.

Agents inspect US military might

FRESH from completing complex training manoeuvres in the Coral Sea, Sydney was graced with a visit from one of the US Navy's 40,000-tonne warships.

The USS *Bonhomme*

Richard - named in honour of the first US Ambassador to France - and its human cargo of 3,000 American sailors spent a couple of days in Sydney enjoying the fine winter weather at the harbour forefront.

During its berthing at Garden Island, the Visit USA Organisation and a number of local partners were welcomed onboard for a private viewing of the vessel.

It truly was a once-in-a-lifetime



experience, with the group able to check out the crew quarters, battle stations and the massive arsenal of military weaponry, which included this impressive navy service helicopter.

Pictured above wondering where the sign-up sheet to fly the chopper could be found is Chris Petty, United Airlines; Monique Roos, US Commercial Service and Sherilyn Robinson, LJ Commercial Travel Services.

Travel Massive in Aus

THE online travel industry community is joining together over coming weeks to participate in a series of Travel Massive conferences around the country.

Travel Massive is a global initiative that connects travel brands, travel startups, travel bloggers and travel professionals.

The first of three local events is being held tonight in Brisbane, with other conferences planned for Melbourne on 04 Sep and Sydney on 11 Sep - full details at www.travelmassive.com/events.

TripAdvisor Insights

TRIPADVISOR has this week launched a new online marketing resource for the trade featuring news, tips, travel trends, industry research and statistics to travel businesses on a daily basis.

The *TripAdvisor Insights* resource also offers an archive of searchable content, and is available in many languages.

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TASCo showcases Kruger NP



STAYS in six different game lodges within the Kruger National Park in South Africa gave this group of agents a thorough knowledge base of the visitor offerings to impart to their clients.

It was not just the lodges within Kruger's boundaries that were inspected, with a number of accom offerings in neighbouring private reserves also visited.

The group were hosted by The Africa Safari Co, who ensured participants left South Africa with plenty of first-hand knowledge &

information to share with clients.

Among the highlights enjoyed was witnessing a pack of 20 wild dogs playing around the safari vehicle, as well as seeing a mother leopard and her cub playing with a camera case they had found.

The group joked they weren't sure exactly what had happened to the owner of the camera case and how the item came to be in the leopard's possession.

Taking in another of South Africa's picturesque sights, the famil group is **pictured** above, including Janet, from Travelscene; Kris, Harvey World Travel; Emma, The Africa Safari Co; Rose, Aeon Travel; Lynne, Travelwize; Kristi-Anne, Complete Travel Solutions and Gretta, MTA Travel.

MEL laud MAS boost

MELBOURNE Airport ceo Chris Woodruff has applauded Malaysia Airlines for its decision to add a new third daily service from 21 Nov (*TD* yesterday).

Woodruff said the additional frequency would provide greater opportunities to build tourism, business and education ties with Malaysia.

The Victorian capital is the country's largest market for travel to/from Malaysia, accounting for nearly one-third of movements between the two nations.

Dreamtime agency

TOURISM Australia's business events showcase *Dreamtime 2013* - running over five days from 09-13 Dec - has appointed Peter Jones Special Events as its event management company.

Hong Kong visit drop

AUSTRALIAN visitor numbers to Hong Kong have fallen 5% year-on-year for the six months to 30 Jun, latest Hong Kong Tourism Board statistics indicate.

While the overall visitor count soared by nearly 9% - to a shade under 12m - Australian overnight arrivals dropped to 234,520.

As a whole, long-haul major markets (US, Canada, UK, France, Germany and 'others') were down 4.1%.

Mainland China arrivals fuelled growth to Hong Kong, up 16% to over 7.8 million, while Russia and Thai overnights were up 24.6% and 15% respectively.

Express tour Excellence Centre



QANTAS recently welcomed this group of members from Express Ticketing's Independent Travel Group and Select Travel Group to check out its \$10m Centre of Excellence in Sydney.

Flying in from all corners of the country for the event, attendees enjoyed a full tour of the state-of-the-art facility, also being briefed on the ways in which Qantas is always working to improve its customer service offerings.

The group took turns sampling Qantas' cabin training facilities, which are exact replicas of all four of the carrier's inflight products

and used for new crew members to learn the skills needed to deliver the Qantas inflight service.

Additionally, the group enjoyed a number of 'hands on' behind the scenes activities & concluded the day with an in-depth lesson on wine and cheese tasting.

Express Ticketing's attending members are **pictured** above at the Qantas Centre of Excellence.

APT guide to outback

SEVERAL new itineraries, hotels and Signatures Experiences highlight the newly released Outback Wilderness Adventures brochure from APT.

The guide contains 10 itineraries ranging in length from 9-23 days.

Complementing the launch is a new DVD distributed to agents showcasing destination footage supplied by Tourism WA, Tourism Queensland & Tourism Australia.

Dockside China focus

SYDNEY restaurant and venue operator Dockside Group will aim to boost its Chinese profile by attending the CIBTM Business Travel Expo in Beijing next month.

At the event, the group will showcase its seven Sydney venues and Chinese translated menus.

WIN TICKETS TO SEE STOMP



Every day this week, we are giving readers the chance to win a double pass to **STOMP** at Theatre Royal at 8pm on Wed 11th Sep.

The Broadway, West End and international sensation STOMP is back, and it's better than ever!

Following their acclaimed performance at the Closing Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics, STOMP returns to Sydney from 10 to 15 September, with new routines, new choreography and new music. Tickets available through www.ticketmaster.com.au.

To win, simply be the first person to send through the correct answer to the question below to:

stompcomp@traveldaily.com.au.

What props are used in STOMP?

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Jenni Davis** from **Davis & James Travel Associates**.

Travel Daily

First with the news

Friday 23rd Aug 2013

Sapphire China home

PRINCESS Cruises will make its official launch into the Chinese market next year, Carnival Corporation has announced.

The company will home-port its *Sapphire Princess* vessel in the city of Shanghai for a four-month season from next May, in which it is expected to carry 70,000 pax.

China has been a priority market for Princess Cruises, with the latest deployment complemented by recent office openings in five burgeoning Chinese cities - Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Guangzhou and Chengdu.

Sapphire Princess will offer four itineraries ranging from 3-7 days, visiting ports including Seoul, Jeju, Busan and Incheon.

Minor Africa move

MINOR Hotel Group has formed a new partnership with Rani Investment LCC to develop hotels and resorts in Africa.

The pact will see Minor's Anantara brand debut on the African continent later this year, when Bazaruto Island's Indigo Bay Resort & Spa in Mozambique is re-badged as Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort & Spa.

JAL 787s to Bangkok

JAPAN Airlines has announced it will deploy 787-8 *Dreamliners* on 4 of its 7 weekly Tokyo Narita-Bangkok services, from 02 Dec - one day after JAL's launch of 787 flights to Sydney.



Travel Specials

WELCOME to Travel Specials, **Travel Daily's** Fri feature. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of, send the details to specials@traveldaily.com.au.

Apollo Motorhome Holidays has launched special pricing for four-berth Euro Camper and six-berth Euro Deluxe motorhome rentals in Australia and NZ, priced from \$145pn and \$179pn respectively. Valid for bookings until 31 Oct for rentals from 14 Oct - 15 Dec 2013 - phone 1800 777 779.

September school holidays are just around the corner, and the **Wyndham Hotel Group** is offering special rates at its wide range of properties around Australia and NZ. Info at www.wyndhamap.com/hotels/deals/schoolsout.

The world's best golfers will soon converge on WA for the 2013 Perth Int'l golf tournament from 17-20 Oct, and **Events Worldwide Travel** has released a range of travel packages to the event. Deals include course transfers and entry, starting from \$198pp - ph 1300 788 666 for details.

Technology Update

Today's Technology Update is brought to you by Tramada Systems Pty Ltd.

Winning From Big Data...



US commentator Michael S. Malone said: Big Data is truly revolutionary because it fundamentally

changes mankind's relationship with information. Travel companies have access to so much information, the trick is finding an efficient way to use it meaningfully.

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Jo O'Brien, Chief Executive Officer, Tramada – your technology partner



Peach's new products

LUXURY Escorted touring firm Bill Peach Journeys has released its 2014 Luxury World Journeys collection of itineraries, with the organisation now a preferred partner of JTG & Travel Associates.

In its new brochure, highlighted destinations being visited in 2014 include Sri Lanka, Kenya & Alaska, Iceland, Greenland and SE Asia.

The firm is offering a free pearl to agents booking an itinerary for the first time - ph 1800 252 053.

Corporate taxi app

TAXI booking smartphone app goCatch has partnered with American Express and BlackBerry to launch a new real-time taxi booking and payment process for BlackBerry BB10 phone users.

Aimed at corporate travellers, the app allows BB10 users to pay for taxi fares using corporate American Express credit cards.

The app utilises GPS signals to track taxis, with customers even able to incentivise drivers for faster pick-up by offering a tip.

Credit card details can be added to the app after downloading and registering, and payment is processed after inputting a four-digit PIN number upon arriving and a receipt then sent via email.

Mini start party for Variety Bash



PENELOPE Pitstop, Dick Dastardly & Muttley, also known as Gena Signorini from Amadeus and airline pilots Daniel Gray and Richard Loder crammed into their 1972 Mini Cooper and set off yesterday at the start of the 2013 Variety Bash fundraising drive.

This year sees over 100 vehicles and 400 participants, with the trio's 4,425km drive sponsored by QBT, AADX+ and Amadeus.

During the trek, participants make stops at rural communities and schools to say hello, the cause being to raise money to support sick and disadvantaged kids with educational equipment and to improve quality of life.

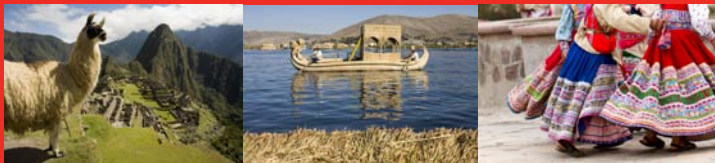
The journey started well

enough, with the team heading west over the Blue Mountains.

But, an attempt at crossing the 1ft depths of the Bogan River outside of Nyngan nearly derailed the effort, with the car becoming stuck, starting to fill with icy water and have to be pushed out by a helpful fellow competitor.

Gena, Daniel and Richard are pictured above in full regalia at the start of the event.

WIN A HOLIDAY TO PERU



Throughout August *Travel Daily* is giving readers the chance to win a holiday for two people to Peru, courtesy of Aerolíneas Argentinas and Peregrine Adventures.

The prize includes two return economy airfares on Aerolíneas Argentinas between Sydney and Lima via Buenos Aires and Peregrine Amazon & Inca Heartland tour for two people.

Each day *Travel Daily* will ask a Peru-related question - just read the issue and email us your answer. At the end of the month the subscriber with the most correct entries and the most creative response to the final question will win this amazing holiday to Peru.

Email your answers to: perucomp@traveldaily.com.au.



Q.17: What colour are the Amazon River dolphins you might encounter in Peru?

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Boxing a holiday deal

WORLD champion Australian boxer Danny Green has partnered with the Ignite Travel Group in a newly launched travel operation known as Champion Holidays.

Green will serve as the public face for the operation, which will promote packaged holidays to destinations including Thailand, Bali, Hawaii, Fiji and Queensland, aimed at the families market.

UN interlines with VX

RUSSIAN carrier Transaero Airlines has signed an interline pact with Virgin America allowing one-ticket through fares on US domestic flights via LAX and JFK.

Scenic Latin earlybird

A LITTLE over a week remains to take advantage of Scenic Tours earlybird deals on South American tours, including free flights for companion travellers.

Highlights of the recently released program include a 34-day South American Discovery itinerary, which is packed with opportunities for wildlife viewing. For details, phone 1300 723 642.

Marshall's new site

EFFORTS to boost inbound int'l tourism to The Marshall Islands has been bolstered following the launch of a brand new website promoting the destination.

The new interactive platform commissioned by the Marshall Islands Visitors Authority profiles the range of tourism attractions in the country and allows visitors to view real-time hotel availability & offers online booking functions. See visitmarshallislands.com.

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