





Visit USA expo dates

VISIT USA Organisation has set the dates for its 2014 roadshow up the east-coast of Australia.

More than 2,000 travel agents are expected to attend the threecity show which will include 55 travel & tourism representatives from across the country.

The Visit USA Expo 2014 will be held from 5pm in Melbourne on Thu 20 Feb at the Regent Theatre, in Sydney on 24 Feb at The Star Centre and Brisbane on 25 Feb at Pullman Brisbane.

To resister for the expo, go to www.visitusa.org.au/events.

The announcement comes as the US Commerce Department forecast the Australian travel market to the States to increase by 33% over the next five years.

It projected that over 365,000 more Aussies will visit the USA that the current figure.

Across all markets, the authority predicted approx 84 million pax would arrive in the USA - a rise of 17 million more than in 2012.

Govt seeks input on WoAG

AN INDUSTRY consultation paper for the future provision of travel management services has been issued by the Federal Government ahead of an upcoming tender process.

The Whole of Australian Government arrangements came into force several years ago, initially for travel management services in 2010 with a panel of five TMCs, and then for credit cards (Diners Club), car rental (Thrifty and Europcar) and accommodation (AOT) in Jul 2012.

"Both phases of the travel arrangements have provided bottom line savings to the budget, improved contractual efficiencies, increased transparency and provided greater value for money," the consultation document says. However "there is scope for further improvements" with the

further improvements," with the potential travel management services strategy to include



integration with the Phase 2 supplier content.

This would mean that travellers and travel bookers could directly access the inventory of the accommodation program manager and the car rental service providers, use the travel card arrangement for all expenses and provide comprehensive data for all charges incurred.

The Department of Finance intends to approach the market in the second quarter of 2014 to establish new travel management service contracts, with objectives including maximising value for money for the government, increasing the use of technology, providing accurate and timely travel data and "creating a sustainable business model for the travel industry".

The plan is described as a "strategic partnership" between the government and a panel of "one or more" providers with the capacity to process about 700,000 domestic and 65,000 international bookings annually, managing about 100,000 official government traveller profiles.

The dept is seeking feedback on the arrangements, including ways of increasing the online adoption rate and expanding the use of online booking tools to international travel.

Also under consideration is the incorporation of a pre-trip approval requirement. To view the consultation document, **CLICK HERE**. Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news & photos, including a page of photos from MTA plus a full page from: (*click*)

• AA Appointments jobs

QH cries foul for RWC

QANTAS Holidays is warning trade partners of non-official Rugby World Cup 2015 agents promoting packages to the event breaching contract guidelines.

The wholesaler was named among four official Australianbased Overseas Travel Agents by VisitEngland for the RWC five weeks ago (**TD** 11 Nov), which included Gullivers Sport Travel, Sportsnet Holidays & Flight Centre.

Yesterday, QH issued a trade memo advising it had become aware of "a small number of agents" who had released, or were considering offering digital and print collateral aligning themselves with the Rugby World Cup 2015 logo.

QH cautioned agents that those found to have breached the terms & conditions of the RWC contract would be liable for significant fines and possible legal action.

"In the event they [RWC] decide to take formal action against unauthorised use, we will be unable to assist and as such we ask that you be formally warned regarding these risks," QH said.

Agencies wishing to promote the RWC should contact Qantas Holidays to assist with planning & abiding by correct approvals.

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Walshe parent GST victory



Aircalin

McCallum promotion

RAIL Plus has announced the promotion of national sales & marketing manager Greg McCallum to the newly created role of general manager, sales & marketing for Australia and NZ. Based in Melbourne.

McCallum's responsibilities cover all Rail Plus sales & marketing activities in the ANZ region.

Rex approach CASA

REGIONAL Express has moved forward with plans to serve routes previously operated by Brindabella Airlines (TD Tue), vesterday confirming it is seeking approval from the Civil Aviation & Safety Authority to expand its Air Operators Certificate (AOC).

Rex currently has access to fly to Newcastle, Orange, Cobar and Mudgee, and will initially seek CASA approval to operate services to Moree and Narrabri. Services to Cooma could also be

added in time for winter 2015. Rex general manager for

network strategy and sales Warrick Lodge said urgent consultations with affected local councils over the next two weeks were in planning with a goal of drawing up partnership arrangements.

Ecruising niche boost

ONLINE cruising retailer Ecruising.travel has responded to requests by Australians seeking more unique vessels & itineraries, unveiling a newly expanded range.

The new offerings include a 10-night Olympic Wilderness and San Juan Islands voyage aboard the 88-pax Wilderness Adventurer priced from \$4,449ppts.

SOUTHERN Travel, the parent company of the Walshe Group, has received a GST refund of more than \$350,000 after a successful case submitted to the Australian Taxation Office.

Chairman John King wrote in the Southern Travel annual report that during the year the Board had decided to prepare the case after a court ruling which had "questioned the legality of the ATO charging GST on the margins of inbound tour operators in certain circumstances".

The application was successful due to the "particular circumstances of the group's operations," and the refund net of associated costs came to a total of NZ\$366,000 which added to the firm's profitability.

The Southern Travel report also reveals a strong year of trading for both the inbound and outbound (Walshe Group) divisions, with overall net profit after tax of NZ\$545,000 showing

SYD domestic decline

PASSENGER traffic through Sydney Airport remained flat for the month of Nov, according to its official statistics, posting an overall 0.1% decline in visitors. International arrivals grew 3.7%, again seeing over one million

arrivals, while domestic fell 1.7%. Sydney Airport will later today welcome the inaugural direct NSW service by Sichuan Airlines.

MEANWHILE, Melbourne Airport posted a 4% jump in int'l arrivals, reaching 602,766 pax for Nov, while like SYD, domestic arrivals also fell, down 1.9% year-on-year.

"a marked improvement over recent years".

The Walshe Group turned over \$8.7 million in 2012/13 and contributed \$691.000 in profit, with a particularly strong performance in New Zealand and the addition of new accounts in Asia including Air Seychelles and Etihad in the Hong Kong and southern China market.

Walshe's Australian operations "experienced genuine challenge," during the year according to md Jacqui Walshe, due to changes in the remuneration model for two major accounts, with necessary restructuring now completed to position the business for the new financial year.

"New sales initiatives are planned for the upcoming year within the inbound division and we continue to seek new accounts to further expand our outbound operations," she said.

The inbound division saw increased visitor flow and market share, with \$19.7m in revenue and a \$494,000 profit contribution.

Walshe Group recently added a significant new account in the form of its new GSA deal with Lufthansa and Austrian Airlines (TD 21 Nov) which will be managed along with Swiss Int'l Airlines by Anil Rodricks.

QF 1m Points winner

CONGRATULATIONS to Kuy Thurnam from Stage & Screen, Melbourne who has been named by Qantas as the winner of its Unmissable Sale 1 Million Qantas Points travel agent incentive.

DAILY FROM

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Goldman acquistion

HELLOWORLD for Business associate Goldman Travel Corp has acquired Double Bay-based boutique agency Travel Phase.

The long established Sydney agency's founder Fay Cohen said she was "thrilled" to align with the Goldman Group.

"Being a part of a larger agency with the similar work culture and systems will be great benefit to both our customers and our team," Cohen said.

Travel Phase, like Goldman, is a Virtuoso member, and joins its Melbourne-based Travelcall agency also in the group.

"High-end leisure travel is a growing area for our business & our commitment to Virtuoso and its wonderful offerings for our customers ensure we continue to offer the best of the best," said GTC exec chairman Tom Goldman.

EY/A3 codeshare

ETIHAD Airways has signed a new codeshare deal with Aegean Airlines which will see the Greek carrier launch new four weekly services between Athens & Abu Dhabi, effective 30 Mar.

Huge Accor Asia deal

ACCOR will introduce three new brands to the Korean market in a colossal joint venture development with Seobu T&D.

Grand Mercure, Suite Novotel & Ibis Styles will be three of four new hotels to be developed in one complex, located in Yongsan, in the southern suburbs of Seoul, with the fourth being a Novotel.

The completed development will comprise approx 2,000 rooms and will begin opening in 2017.

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Royal



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BRUNEI







A re-energising Reho retreat



THE team from Reho Travel in both Sydney and Melbourne met for a re-energising & reinvigorating retreat in Byron Bay recently, which also allowed the group to enjoy a range of local activities.

Staying at The Byron at Byron, attendees immersed themselves in activities including mountain biking, paddle-boarding and snorkelling, while those seeking a more serene activity participated in a food walking tour or went shopping at the local markets.

Official sessions included an activity requiring all team members to demonstrate their own personal contributions to the organisation in a fun and creative way using only their imaginations.

Company management showed off a self-made film entitled #difference, to help boost the team's social media skills and encourage the team to continue thinking outside the square to maintain client satisfaction.

An opportunity to road-test the retreat's spa was also wildly popular, with each guest allowed to select a treatment of their choice from the available options. The team are **pictured** above at

the Byron Bay retreat.

Footy tipping guns ready to travel



EMIRATES regional manager Vic/Tas Dean Cleaver recently presented the winners of the 2013 *Travel Daily* NRL and AFL footy tipping comps with their prizes.

The Dubai-based carrier again generously sponsored both competitions this season, with the Sydney Roosters & Hawthorn taking out the respective titles. Cleaver is **pictured** with Brenda Houston, Pan Australian Travel (NRL winner) and Peter Watson, Travel Solutions (AFL winner), who will both travel to Dubai courtesy of Emirates and enjoy a four-night stay at the magnificent

Holiday Inn Dubai - Al Barsha.

Triumph was "unseaworthy"

CARNIVAL Corporation in the US has slammed a lawsuit filed by a Houston attorney alleging the *Carnival Triumph* was not fit for service ahead of the engine fire which disabled it for days in the Gulf of Mexico earlier this year.

The suit infers that Carnival neglected to address a fire risk ahead of the voyage and is on behalf of several dozen passengers who were on the ship.

No Vacancy line-up

TOGA Hospitality ceo Rachel Argaman and HotelClub president Nicholas Chu will be among a number of hotel industry leaders presenting at next year's No Vacancy Australia conference.

The one-day industry event will take place at the Sheraton on the Park in Sydney on 26 Mar 2014.

In addition, a special panel discussing competition & growth in the online world will feature Booking.com md Adrian Currie, HotelsCombined coo Hichame Assi and Wotif ceo Scott Blume.

Summer temptation

EMIRATES Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa has released a two-night Summer Temptation package priced from \$740pp per night.

The offer is valid for travel from 06 Jan to 31 Mar and includes two nights in a Heritage Suite, all meals, two activities daily & more. Phone (02) 9290 9733 to book.

GA loyalty changes

MEMBERS of Garuda Indonesia's GFF Frequent Flyer scheme can now purchase miles, lengthen validity of miles and maintain status tiers under expansions made to the program.

"These new options allow for greater freedom for our passengers, and they are the first part of our GFF revamp," Garude Indonesia vice president Australia, New Zealand and South West Pacific Uun Setiawan said. Responding to reports of the lawsuit on CNN, Carnival said in a statement that *Triumph* not only met, but exceeded regulatory requirements on engines and all onboard equipment.

"The accident in this situation was just that - an accident," the company said, adding that "to claim otherwise is simply unfounded and inconsistent with the facts".

Carnival added the US Coast Guard had inspected the ship days before the affected sailing and found it in full compliance.

The fire, which knocked out all hotel and operational services including electricity, plumbing and air-conditioning, was caused by a leak in a flexible fuel hose.

"The lawsuit is nothing more than an attempt to craft a story that is unsupported by the facts and evidence," the statement from Carnival added.



THOSE six character PNR reloc codes, as randomly generated as they are, were bound to create something potentially offensive sooner or later, and this month, it finally happened.

A US man has lodged a complaint with Delta Air Lines after noticing the reference code "H8GAYS" on his pass (**pictured below**).

Delta apologised to the man, stressing the letter & number combinations were entirely random and that it will take steps to ensure a similar combo doesn't happen again.

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MTA hits the road with National Member updates

MTA – Mobile Travel Agents senior management has hit the national road hard over the last two weeks, visiting more than 200 MTA Members in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Darwin as part of the annual Member Update Meetings programme and Christmas functions.

The MTA team included co-managing directors Roy and Karen Merricks; director and operations manager Sara Merricks; CEO Don Beattie and IT support manager Nik Donovan.

Mr Merricks said the whistle-stop tour had more than achieved its purpose, giving MTA senior management a very real opportunity to

touch base with 200-plus Members around the country, a number of whom had been unable to attend the recent national conference in Canberra.

Formal presentations included the soon-to-be-introduced MTA Member fee structures, the new Member rewards and recognition incentive and ongoing high tech IT developments.

The forthcoming ATAS scheme was also discussed at length at each event.

Mr Merricks said the annual programme was important as it allowed senior management to get back to grass roots and go face to face with the Members, to discuss the big issues and also disseminate key information with the Members during the formal presentations and afterwards at the Christmas functions.

RIGHT: MTA Members Maxine Adams, Ally Kilpin, IT support manager Nik Donovan and John Adams relaxing at the post-Sydney MTA Member Update Christmas function.

BELOW: MTA Members Justin Poor, Nathan Johnstone, Craig Thomas and Tina Dinardo at the event in Perth.



RIGHT: At the Melbourne event. MTA Members Jeanine French and Katy Shane with MTA co-managing director Karen Merricks.

BELOW: MTA CEO Don Beattie presenting to MTA Members at the event in Brisbane





LEFT: MTA co-managing director Roy Merricks and MTA Member David Uglesic catching up after the company's recent Adelaide Member Update Meeting.



ABOVE: MTA Members Julianne Zinni, co-managing director Karen Merricks and Shena Barrett at the Brisbane event.

BELOW: Adelaide based MTA members enjoying getting together at the post-update meeting Christmas function at the Cellar Door, Pertaringa.







RIGHT: At the Perth event from

LEFT: At the Sydney post-event function from left are MTA Members Alysha White, CEO Don Beattie, Janet Clacher and Sue Barton.



AOT appointment

DIETMAR P Schultz will join AOT Group's Inbound Division based in Munich from 01 Feb. Schultz will cover all Germanic speaking markets & other regions.



BEIJING and Guangzhou were on the menu for this group of six CT Partners agents, who recently jetted off to explore both.

The five-night experience came courtesy of China Southern Airlines, with the group enjoying the luxury of First and Business Class CZ's newly deployed Airbus A380 superjumbo flights between the two cities.

Shangri-La Hotels provided accommodation for the group in both cities, with China a la Carte providing land transportation.

Stopping first in Guangzhou, the group spent two days enjoying

Topdeck Africa sale

TOPDECK has slashed the trip price of all Africa tours departing between 01 Jan-30 Apr by 30% when deposited by today.

Its 24-day South East Adventure is now \$1,453pp (plus local payments) - a saving of \$622. See www.topdeck.travel.

New VN email details

VIETNAM Airlines is advising of changes to local email addresses from @vietnamair.com.au format to @vietnamairlines.com, which has taken effect immediately. traditional Yum Cha cuisine and participating in a city tour. The Forbidden City, Olympic

Village, Tiananmen Square and the Great Wall of China were the sights experienced by the group during their stay in the capital.

Pictured at the Forbidden City from left is Nicholas Newtown, Egencia; Beanca Daluz, China Southern Airlines; Rachael Keller, Globetrotter Corporate Travel; Kaycee Lim, Shangri-La Hotels; Janice Leung, MP Travel; Jodi O'Sullivan, TravelManagers, Sandra Kuhn, Traveledge and Jessica Millar, CT Connections.

ANA/GA partnership

ALL Nippon Airways and Garuda Indonesia have announced plans to begin codesharing between Japan & Indonesia and allow pax to earn and burn frequent flyer miles on each other's services.

The move comes ahead of ANA's launch of new services between Tokyo Haneda & Jakarta planned for 30 Mar, and GA's introduction of the same route in the first semester of 2014.

The codeshare also covers up to 10 beyond points in Indonesia and 11 in Japan, operated by GA and ANA respectively.

Scan football flights

TRAVELLERS heading to Brazil for next year's FIFA World Cup can instantly search for flight prices to the country under a new tool launched by Skyscanner.

The Football Flight Finder tool calculates the price of long-haul and internal flights to inform pax of the true cost of following the team throughout the tournament.

Searches can also show the cost depending on which Group their team is drawn, with Australia's Group B up to \$327 more affordable to follow than Group C.

First-hand hotel pics

STARWOOD Hotels and Resorts Worldwide has announced it has launched Instagram integration on all of its websites globally, allowing guests to upload firsthand photos of resorts visited.

The feature aims to capitalise on the more than 40,000 images uploaded to Instagram by guests who tag a Starwood property.

Guest galleries will now be able to view at each brand's website showing pre-verified first-hand photos uploaded by travellers of rooms, resort facilities and more.



Travel Daily's popular Christmas photo competition is back! **Fraser Suites Perth** want to celebrate the festive season with the travel industry, and are asking you to send in your work Christmas party photos throughout December.

At the end of the month, the judges will select the most creative photo and the person who submitted this will win two nights accommodation for two

guests at Fraser Suites Perth, including daily breakfast and complimentary Wi-Fi.



Pictured: 52 staff celebrated at

the Spencer Group of Companies Christmas party, held at LAqua Cockle Bay Wharf .



For your chance to be featured in **Travel Daily**, email your festive photos (including names of the people pictured) to: **xmasphotos@traveldaily.com.au**.

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