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World Youth Day tour operator wanted

THE Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is calling for expressions of interest for a tour operator to organise travel for approximately 2,000 Australians to World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland in 2016. For details see **page five**.

EY to lift Manchester

ETIHAD is set to expand capacity on its flights between Abu Dhabi and Manchester in the UK, replacing the existing 262-seat A330-200 aircraft with a two class 777-300ER. The change is effective from 01 Jun 2014, with the new planes having capacity for 380 passengers each.

Princess performance

PRINCESS Cruises has been hailed by an Aussie travel agent for exceptional service to the family of a client who tragically died shortly after returning home from a cruise. Jennie Dicker from Helloworld Stockland Nowra in NSW told **TD** that her clients were returning home after their holiday and en route stayed overnight with family. The woman mentioned to her daughter that a photo had been taken at the "pirate night" on board the cruise, and she had regretted not purchasing it. Unfortunately she was killed in an accident the next day, and in the aftermath her daughter contacted the Helloworld office to find out what happens to leftover pictures on board. Dicker contacted Princess, and with just the cruise and cabin number and a photo of the woman the cruise line's staff "went above and beyond" and searched through the boxes of prints left over after the voyage. They found four pictures of her and forwarded them to the agent, with Dicker praising Princess' "outstanding customer service."

Antarctic cruise rescue

ABOUT fifty passengers and 20 crew are stranded aboard expedition ship *MV Akademik Shokalskiy* which is trapped in heavy ice about 3km from the open ocean during an Antarctic voyage.



The vessel, which was operated last season by Aurora Expeditions, sent out a Christmas Day request for assistance after being immobilised when a blizzard hit. However a spokesman reassured that "there's no danger at all. "It's just stuck in ice," he said. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority is coordinating a rescue, with three icebreakers currently en route to the vessel. The first is not expected to arrive until tonight at the earliest. The current voyage departed from New Zealand on 08 Dec, with the vessel now about 1500

nautical miles south of Hobart. The voyage, which was retracing Sir Douglas Mawson's Antarctic expedition more than a century ago, is expected to continue after the ship is freed from the ice. The "Spirit of Mawson" expedition, which comprises 22 of the scientists on board, is a private venture led by Chris Turney (who took the **picture above** this morning) and Chris Fogwill from the University of NSW, along with Aurora Expeditions founder and now Adventure Associates owner (**TD** 01 Jul) Greg Mortimer.

Boxing Day sales

AIRLINES yesterday got into the traditional Boxing Day shopping frenzy, with Qantas, Jetstar, Virgin Australia and Tigerair all launching sales. Tiger's "boxing day madness" sale offered deals on 21 routes across Australia, with \$1 "return" airfares offered when purchasing a round trip outbound ticket. The TT deals are on sale until midday on 31 Dec, for travel 29 Apr-26 Jun 2014. Jetstar is offering "Boxing Day Bargains" on sale until midnight tomorrow 28 Dec, on a range of domestic and international routes. Virgin Australia's "End of Year Sale" ends at midnight on 30 Dec, with deals across its domestic network and a \$100 saving for travellers who spend \$1000 or more with Virgin Australia Holidays before 28 Dec. And the Qantas Boxing Day Sale is on until midnight 28 Sep, with domestic deals available for departures 22 Jul-11 Sep 2014.

New EK Qld manager

FORMER long-time Travelscene American Express state mgr Kim Tomlinson has been appointed as Emirates' new Regional Manager for Queensland. Tomlinson, whose most recent role was with the Independent Travel Group, replaces Tim Shepherd who recently took up the role of EK National Accounts Manager based in Sydney. In his new position Tomlinson will oversee EK's three daily Brisbane flights, including the daily A380 connection to Auckland. More industry appointments on **page three** of today's **TD**.

United Croatia pact

UNITED Airlines has launched new codeshare cooperation with its Star Alliance sister carrier Croatia Airlines, with the UA code now appearing on Croatia Airlines flights from Zagreb to Amsterdam, Brussels, Frankfurt, London Heathrow, Munich, Paris and Zurich.

China Southern to Gold Coast

CHINA Southern Airlines is set to add the Gold Coast to its Australian portfolio of destinations - but it's just a one-off flight for the upcoming Chinese New Year period. The one-time Gold Coast charter will utilise an A330-300 aircraft, flying non-stop from Guangzhou on 26 Jan 2014 and returning to China the following day.

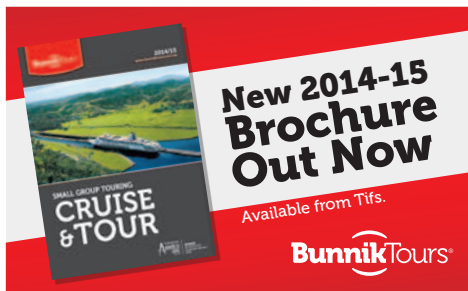
Harbin Ice Festival

RUSSIAN Gateway Tours is offering commission on a series of upcoming departures for China's Harbin Ice Festival. The six day/five night tours will take place between 05 Jan and 05 Feb 2014 with deals including accommodation, meals, a private English-speaking guide and driver in an air conditioned vehicle. Admission fees and government taxes are also covered, with prices from \$2682 ppts in the 5 star Sofitel Wanda Harbin or similar, or \$1869ppts in the four star Harbin International Hotel. More info 02 9745 3333.

MH JAL codeshare

MALAYSIA Airlines has launched codeshare services in partnership with Japan Airlines, with the MH code added to JAL services between Narita and Vancouver in Canada. The codeshares are on JL017/18 which will also be designated as MH9769/9770, with MH group ceo Ahma Jauhari saing the move is part of "enhancing air connectivity with key priority markets overseas for increased tourist arrivals into Malaysia and in conjunction with the Visit Malaysia Year 2014".

Today's issue of TD
Travel Daily today has four pages of news & photos plus a full page seeking **World Youth Day Tour Operator Expressions of Interest**.



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Travel Daily

First with the news

Friday 27th December 2013



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Heron Is evacuation

ABOUT 300 guests staying on Heron Island off the Qld coast near Gladstone were evacuated on Christmas Day after the resort was forced to close due to a fire in an electricity generator.

The incident left the resort without power or running water, with the guests and about 110 staff taken by boat to Gladstone.

There were no injuries or damage to public spaces, with guests booked to stay this week currently being contacted to discuss alternative arrangements.

Sabah safety

A TAIWANESE tourist who was kidnapped in eastern Sabah more than a month ago (**TD** 28 Nov) has been safely rescued by authorities in the Philippines.

The Eastern Sabah Security Command has outlined a range of initiatives to improve safety including "weeding out" illegal workers, more police stations and an elite tactical response squad.

Aussie hotels performing

AUSTRALIA is currently one of the strongest markets in the Asia-Pacific region for hotels, according to recent data from research firm STR Global.

The most recent report showed Australian hotel occupancy up 1.1% to 79.9% overall during Nov, with a strong 3.1% rise in average daily rate to US\$186.60.

That compares with a region-

wide occupancy of 72.4% and a 4.9% year-on-year drop in average daily rate to US\$123.13.

In terms of other markets, Singapore had a strong 84.3% occupancy rate during the month but that was down 2.4 points.

Average daily rates surged in Jakarta (up 14.4%), Bali (11.3% higher) and Tokyo (also up 11.3%) while China saw an overall occupancy of 68% with an average rate of US\$101.74.

Europe storm chaos

CHRISTMAS travel plans have been disrupted across parts of western Europe this week due to a massive winter storm.

Passengers were stranded at airports in London and Paris, while train services have also been severely impacted in some areas due to fallen trees.

There were reduced frequencies on the Heathrow Express train services from Paddington to LHR, while the heavy weather also hit cross-channel ferry services.

EK A380s to Gatwick

EMIRATES will become the first scheduled operator of the Airbus A380 to London Gatwick Airport, with the carrier confirming that the superjumbo will replace 777-300ERs on flight EK09/10 effective from 30 Mar 2014.

Emirates operates three daily flights to Gatwick from Dubai, and when the double decker aircraft debuts at LGW it will be the airline's 27th A380 destination.

Amex settlements

AMERICAN Express will pay almost US\$80 million in fines and customer settlements as part of agreements with several US regulatory agencies, in order to resolve issues relating to marketing and billing practices for some discontinued products.

The companies involved include American Express Travel Related Services Company Inc, American Express Centurion Bank and American Express Bank, FSB.

Agreements have been signed with the US Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Office of Comptroller of the Currency, and will see Amex pay \$16.2 million in fines and about US\$60m in "customer remediation".

Products cited include 'Identity Protect/Identity Protect Premium,' 'Account Protector' and 'Lost Wallet Protector,' with marketing of all these products discontinued over a year ago.

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Daily	EK 172	22:05	04:45 (next day)

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Travel Daily

First with the news

Friday 27th December 2013

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Lovely Lucerne with Trafalgar



CREATIVE Holidays recently teamed up with Trafalgar to take this group of 25 lucky agents on a *Sun, Snow and Shopping* educational in Europe and Asia.

The trip started with an eight-day Trafalgar guided holiday through Switzerland and Austria, visiting the Christmas markets.

They also visited Lucerne, where the **picture** above was taken in front of the famous lion monument.

On the way home they warmed up in Bangkok where they were hosted for three days with Creative Holidays.

Celebrity spa switch

CELEBRITY Cruises will not be renewing the contract of Steiner Leisure to provide spa services aboard its vessels, with a new operator of its AquaSpas to be announced in the near future.

MEANWHILE Celebrity has also rejigged some 2015 *Celebrity Century* itineraries, to allow the ship to reposition to Europe.

Three previously planned Asian sailings will be replaced with a 14-night Singapore-Dubai cruise departing 22 Mar 2015, and a 15 night Dubai-Rome trip via the Suez Canal on 05 Apr 2015.

Industry Appointments

WELCOME to Industry Appointments, *Travel Daily's* Thursday feature which has the latest job appointments from across the industry. If you have just appointed someone to a new position and would like to update the industry, send us an email at appointments@traveldaily.com.au.

Wotif Group has appointed **Amanda Behre** to the newly created role of Head of Partnerships and Advertising Sales. She moves to Wotif with more than ten years experience in partner marketing, with her most recent role being Head of Consumer and Trade Marketing for Jetset Travelworld Group's Qantas Holidays and Viva! Holidays. Prior to that she worked for Stella Travel Services in the US, covering marketing for brands including Qantas Vacations and Newmans Vacations.

Dietmar P. Schulz will join the **AOT Group** inbound team in Germany, working to promote the company's local product range in all Germanic speaking markets of Germany, Austria and Switzerland as well as the Netherlands, Belgium and Eastern Europe. He'll be based in Munich, and is well known across the industry after almost 30 years representing companies such as Great Southern Rail and Jetabout Qantas Holidays.

NZ Prime Minister John Key has announced three new members of the **New Zealand Tourism Board**. The appointees include outgoing Air NZ deputy ceo **Norm Thompson**; **Jacqui Spice**, who's founder of NZ luxury travel firm Touch of Spice; and **Chris Parkin**, chairman of Wellington Venues. **Jennie Langley** and **Henry van Asch** are departing the board in Apr 2014 following completion of their second terms.

Delta to retire DC-9s

DELTA Air Lines has revised the date of the final commercial flights of its venerable Douglas DC-9 aircraft (**TD 08 Oct**), which will see the last operations of the type by a major US carrier.

The historic final service by the classic aircraft will depart from Minneapolis St Paul Airport heading to Atlanta at 4.20pm on Mon 06 Jan 2014.

"The DC-9 has been a workhorse in our domestic fleet while providing a reliable customer experience," said DL vice president of fleet strategy, Nat Pieper.

"The aircraft's retirement paves the way for newer, more efficient aircraft," he added.

Over the last five years Delta has removed or retired more than 350 aircraft from its fleet including CRJ-200s, Saab 340s and DC9s, at the same time adding newer planes including Boeing 777-200LRs, 737s and 717s as well as smaller regional jets.

DL was the launch customer for the original 65-seat version of the DC-9 in 1965 and removed it from the fleet in 1993; however DC-9s again became part of its operations when it merged with Northwest airlines.

To acknowledge the DC-9's retirement the final flight has been tagged as DL2014 to note its last year of service, while the preceding sector from Detroit to Minneapolis will be flight DL1965, its initial year of operation.

UK changes UAE visas

AUTHORITIES in the United Kingdom have changed their visa requirements for travellers from some Middle Eastern countries.

Effective from early 2014 citizens from the UAE, Qatar and Oman will be able to obtain a free electronic visa waiver two days prior to their planned departure.

The initiative changes the current visa application process, with the scheme expected to be expanded to Kuwaiti nationals later in the year.



Window Seat

INDONESIAN airline Merpati Nusantara encountered some operational difficulties last weekend after an overbooked flight led to a local official unable to find a seat.

Marianus Sae, who's the head of the Ngada district on the eastern Indonesian island of Flores, tried to buy a ticket for a flight early on Sat morning but there were no seats available and the airline refused to bump passengers who had already made confirmed bookings.

The official was so upset that he ordered his local staff to drive cars onto the runway at his local airport and stop the plane from landing.

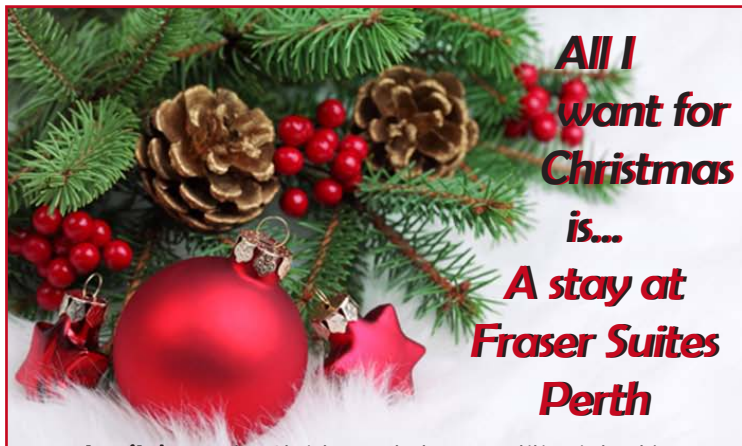
Staff at the airport were unable to stop the blockade, and the plane was forced to turn back to its origin.

A spokesman for Indonesia's transport ministry said the incident had "tarnished the reputation of the aviation industry," but added that there were limited options for the ministry to sanction the official.

NORAD isn't the only US government agency which tracked Santa Claus (**TD Tue**), with the US Department of Agriculture also issuing a formal statement about the jolly red man's entry into America.

Apparently the normally stringent border control livestock checks didn't apply to the nine reindeer pulling his sleigh, with the department's Chief Veterinary Officer saying "we agreed to waive the normal application fees and entry inspection costs, provided he winks his eye and wishes port personnel a Merry Christmas."

Another condition of entry was that Santa Claus certify that the reindeer had never been fed anything other than hay, sugar plums and gingerbread.



**All I
want for
Christmas
is...
A stay at
Fraser Suites
Perth**

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.



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Pictured: The Wendy Wu Tours team enjoyed their Christmas party at L'Aqua, Cockle Bay in Sydney last Fri 20 December with a Great Gatsby theme enthusiastically embraced by the over 70 attendees.

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

New Hilton for Brazil

HILTON Worldwide has announced plans to open the first Hilton Garden Inn in Brazil.

The new property will be built in the Georgina Business Park development which is about 400km northwest of Sao Paulo.

It will be the first "condo-hotel" model operated by Hilton Worldwide, with 134 guest rooms and expected to open in 2016.

Qld airport refinance

NORTH Queensland Airport Group - 24.55% owned by Auckland International Airport - has announced the refinancing of \$587 million of bank facilities.

The loans include a provision of \$88 million for future capital expenditure requirements.

The group is the owner and operator of both Cairns and Mackay Airports.

Jordan time change

ROYAL Jordanian Airlines has updated its schedules due to an official change of the timezone in Jordan, which has shifted to GMT + 2 hours effective 20 Dec.

Blissful Bali with COMO



COMO Hotels & Resorts joined with GHM and Garuda Indonesia to host this group of Aussie travel agents on a recent educational to Bali.

Balancing adventure with sanctuary, the participants experienced the luxury new rooms at Uma by COMO in bud, where they dined at the newly opened Italian restaurant Uma Cucina.

And after a long day of cycling down from Kintimani and walking the Tjampuhan Ridge Walk they had their muscles rejuvenated

with a hydrotherapy and massage session at COMO Shambhala Estate.

On the coast the group was hosted by GHM's The Legian and The Chedi Sakala, and they're **pictured** at the Legian on Seminyak Beach ahead of a sunset cocktail and dinner in a private villa, from left: are Katharina Kustos, Director of Sales The Legian; Amy Evans, Encore Journeys; Carey Howard, GHM Hotels & Resorts; Jacqui Keating, Plan B Travel; Vivian Agosta, Port Travel; Jessica Haag, Destination HQ; Ian Murton, Garuda Indonesia; Elliott Miller, COMO Hotels & Resorts; and Sarah Hutchinson, Wings Away Travel.

Pacific broadband

A NEW satellite-based communications provider has launched this month with the aim of providing high speed internet access to island nations across the Pacific.

Dubbed Kacific, the venture plans to launch a Ka Band High Throughput Satellite during 2014 to address the current "substandard, over-contended" services across the region, targeting Tonga, Niue, the Cook Islands, Samoa, French Polynesia, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and eastern Indonesia.

Peru rail change

THE operators of the rail link to Machu Picchu in Peru has advised of new arrangements for passengers departing from Cuzco's Poroy station between 01 Jan and 31 May 2014.

For safety reasons during the rainy season travellers will be transferred by land from Poroy to Ollantaytambo station where they will board the train for the remainder of their journey.

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Calling for Expressions of Interest

World Youth Day 2016 Official Tour Operator

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) is seeking to appoint an Official Tour Operator to coordinate travel and accommodation logistics for World Youth Day 2016.

The Official Tour Operator will enhance and support the Australian World Youth Day Committee's co-ordination of pilgrims to WYD, to be held in Krakow, Poland, from 25 to 31 July 2016.

The Australian World Youth Day pilgrimage will provide pilgrims with opportunities to experience WYD, visit the attractions and sights of Poland and greater Europe as well as share the spiritual experience with other pilgrims.

It is anticipated that Australia's Pilgrims, Leaders, Clergy and Bishops will total approximately 2000.

The ability to effectively manage the varying requirements of a range of key stakeholders is essential.

IMPORTANT

Interested parties should attend a Briefing Session in early 2014.

Date: Monday 13 January 2014.

Time: 10am to noon.

Address: Catholic Diocese of Parramatta Diocesan Office,
12 Victoria Road, North Parramatta.

To register for the Briefing Session and to request an Application Pack send an email to Mr Malcolm C Hart, Senior Youth Ministry Projects Officer: youthministry@catholic.org.au

Expressions of Interest close at 4pm on Friday 28 February 2014.

Send Expressions of Interest on email to:
Mr Malcolm C Hart, Senior Youth Ministry Projects Officer
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Secretariat for Pastoral Life
Email: youthministry@catholic.org.au