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Travel Daily

First with the news

Tuesday 31st December 2013



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DXB set for record

QANTAS' new flights to London via Dubai have helped contribute to an expected annual record of passenger numbers at Dubai International Airport this year.

The airport was forecast to reach an annual total of 65.4 million passengers this year, but now expects this to be surpassed after a busy Nov when traffic reached 5.337 million, up 9.5% on the previous corresponding period.

That makes 12 consecutive months in excess of 5 million passengers, with numbers to 30 Nov totalling 60,384,407, up 15.35% on Nov 2012.

Qantas' services have contributed to a 33.4% growth in passenger numbers from Australasia, which was the second fastest growing market.

Eastern European passenger numbers soared 56.5%, driven by flydubai services to 15 destinations across the region.

Aircraft movements during Nov increased 6% to 31,525 and year to date movements are up 7.6% to 337,121 in total.

Dubai Airports ceo Paul Griffiths said the growth in passenger traffic had been "nothing short of phenomenal.

"We continue to focus on improving our facilities and customer service as our infrastructure development program keeps pace with our healthy traffic growth," he said.

The airport's total capacity increased to 75 million passengers annually when Concourse A opened during Jan, with Concourse D set to open in early 2015 to further lift capacity.

IATA celebrates 100 years

TOMORROW marks exactly 100 years since the birth of commercial aviation, according to the International Air Transport Association.

The first ever scheduled commercial airline flight took off on 01 Jan 1914, with the St Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line operating a flight across Tampa Bay in Florida, USA.

IATA is inviting anyone with an interest in aviation to join a "year-long celebration of the 100th anniversary, and take part in a conversation about what needs to happen to make the next 100 years even more momentous".

The initiative aims to highlight aviation as a force for good, according to IATA director-general Tony Tyler.

"The potential of commercial flight to keep changing the world for the better is almost unlimited," he enthused, urging the industry, government,

regulators and local communities to keep true to "the 'all-in-together' ethos that was the bedrock of that pioneering first flight.

"Aviation provides people around the globe with the freedom to make connections that can change their lives and the world...we should be guided by the long-term interests of all whose lives are positively transformed by commercial aviation every day," Tyler added.

A number of activities are planned for 2014 including a special website online at www.flying100years.com which will officially launch tomorrow.

IATA is also one of the sponsors of 'Flight 2014' which is planning to re-enact the first commercial passenger flight using a replica of the original Benoist airboat.

The historic event is planned for 10am US Eastern Standard Time tomorrow, retracing the exact path taken a century ago.

RJ 787 services

ROYAL Jordanian has outlined initial routes to be operated by its new Boeing 787 aircraft which are currently scheduled to enter service on 01 Jul 2014.

The oneworld member will use the 787s configured with 23 business class and 244 economy seats, with the launch route between Amman and Jeddah.

RJ's Dreamliner services will roll out to Lagos and Accra later in the month, along with Montreal and Abu Dhabi.

From 31 Aug Royal Jordanian will operate the 787 on its daily Amman-Chicago flights, adding Sana'a and Madinah during Sep.

MH Ethiopia c'share

MALAYSIA Airlines will tomorrow launch a new codeshare agreement with Ethiopian Airlines, covering ET's new flights from Addis Ababa to Kuala Lumpur.

Russia DFAT update

THE Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade yesterday reissued its travel advice for Russia, adding details of two terrorist attacks which have occurred in Volgograd in recent days.

The Smartraveller update also warns of threats which have been made against the upcoming Sochi Winter Olympic Games, but the overall advisory remains at the second-lowest 'exercise a high degree of caution' level.

Code brown?

NEW Year's Eve revellers in Sydney will be very disappointed to hear that a major event planned for tonight at the new Wet'n'Wild attraction has been cancelled at the last minute.

Billed as an 'Australian First' the NYE festival was 95% sold out, with organisers One Cube Entertainment citing a "major technical production issue" and postponing the event to 26 Jan.

No end to Antarctic stranding

THE passengers on board the stranded *Akademik Shokalskiy* have undergone a rollercoaster of emotions in the last day or so, having now been stuck in the Antarctic ice for a whole week.

According to expedition leader Chris Turney, when the vessel was initially caught by the sea ice it was just two miles from open water, but continued winds from the east have now put the ship's nearest point of exit some 16 nautical miles distant.

The international community had pinned its hopes on the arrival of Australian research icebreaker *Aurora Australis* which reached the region yesterday - but was unable to get through the massive pack of ice to reach the stricken vessel.

According to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority the weather conditions have made it "difficult and unsafe" for *Aurora*

Australis to continue to assist the *Akademik Shokalskiy*.

It's also unsafe to attempt to launch the helicopter from the Chinese vessel in the region, with the area "currently experiencing winds of up to 30 knots and snow showers".

An update yesterday said it was likely that the helicopter would be used to evacuate the passengers, with a makeshift helipad reportedly being constructed on the ice, but currently weather conditions mean this is impossible.

In his latest update Turney said "we are all hoping the *Shokalskiy* will find a route out thanks to the efforts of the Australian and Chinese icebreakers" and in the meantime morale on board the vessel "remains good" with passengers keeping busy with classes in knot tying, languages, yoga and photography.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has four pages of news & photos.

The next issue of Travel Daily will be on Thu 02 Jan due to tomorrow's New Year's Day public holiday.

We'd like to wish our readers all the very best for 2014!



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Money

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

\$1AUD = US\$0.89

STILL sitting below US90c, the Australian dollar is forecast to drop even further, with analysts this week predicting that it will drop to 80c during 2014 due to record low interest rates.

The Australian economy is likely to struggle to adapt to a slowing in the resources sector, according to a forecast published in today's *Fairfax* media.

The Australian dollar has dropped against several currencies including the British pound sterling, which has reportedly cheered up the 'Barmy Army' disappointed in the results from the Ashes cricket.

Aussie travellers to Japan will also enjoy good spending power during the ski season, with the ongoing weakness of the Japanese Yen providing excellent value.

Wholesale rates this morning:

US	\$0.891
UK	£0.540
NZ	\$1.086
Euro	€0.646
Japan	¥93.63
Singapore	\$1.129
China	¥5.400
South Africa	R9.271
Canada	\$0.948
Crude oil	US\$100.32

El Salvador volcano

ALMOST 40 international flights to and from El Salvador have been cancelled in recent days due to the eruption of the Chaparrastique volcano, which is located about 140km east of the capital San Salvador.

Ash has been deposited over a wide area but no major damage or injuries have been reported, with nearby residents evacuated into emergency shelters.

Chaparrastique's last major eruption occurred in 1976.

Jetstar to rejig DRW-SIN

JETSTAR Asia is set to replace Jetstar Australia's operations on the Singapore-Darwin route, with the change seeing a new operational schedule effective from 30 Mar 2014.

According to GDS displays, the existing JQ62/63 services will be

AA-US integration

THE merger between US Airways and American Airlines will see a "single point of contact in the US market representing both of our great airlines," according to Discover the World Marketing which represents US Airways in the Australian market.

An update issued this morning said that at this stage corporate and agency contracts held with either American or US Airways remain the same, but it's planned to "work toward providing you with an enhanced combined network and contracts" in the coming weeks and months.

The integrated carrier will be known as the new American, with US Airways to also join the oneworld alliance on 31 Mar.

Thai Smarttraveller

THE latest Smarttraveller advice for Thailand contains updated information on civil unrest and tension in the country, after recent protests which were "accompanied by instances of violence causing death and injury".

Political demonstrations are ongoing in the lead-up to planned national elections on 02 Feb, with the Internal Security Act (which gives authorities additional powers to manage protests) currently in force in Bangkok.

DFAT continues to advise Australians to 'exercise a high degree of caution' in Thailand, as well as warning not to travel to the provinces of Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and Songkhla due to the threat of terrorist attack.

replaced with Jetstar Asia flight numbers 3K161/162.

Currently the Darwin-Singapore flights depart at 6.20pm but the rejigged schedule will see this shift by 11 hours to 7.20am and arrive in Singapore at 10.25am.

The Singapore-Darwin sector, which currently departs SIN at 10.20pm will move to a later departure of 12.35am, arriving in Darwin at 6.40am - giving the service just a 40 minute turnaround time.

Flights between Darwin and Singapore currently operate nine times per week, and this will drop to a daily operation once the switch to Jetstar Asia occurs.

The change is due to the closure of Jetstar's Darwin base (**TD** 10 Dec) which will see the carrier relocate the four of its A320 aircraft currently stationed in DRW to Adelaide and Melbourne.

CA to upgrade US

STAR Alliance member Air China has announced that it will upgrade the aircraft used on its Beijing-San Francisco route to a Boeing 777-300ER.

The move will mean that all of its US destinations, which also include New York, Los Angeles and Houston, will operate using 777-300ER aircraft.

"The surge in tourist numbers and business traveller numbers in recent years has tremendously ramped up demand on the China-US aviation market," the carrier said in a statement.

CA operates to New York 11 times weekly, Los Angeles double daily and commenced flights to Houston this year.

On 21 Jan 2014 Air China will also become the first carrier to ever operate direct services between Beijing and Hawaii, with non-stop flights to Honolulu.

On its US routes Air China offers "gourmet meals and Sky Cellar on board," along with VIP chauffeured transfers.

AirAsia boosts Perth

INDONESIA AirAsia is set to further boost capacity between Perth and Bali, with a fifth daily A320 flight on the route to be added later this week.

The new service, debuting 03 Jan, will depart from Denpasar at 3.50pm arriving in Perth at 7.30pm, while the return service leaves the WA capital at 8.05pm and arrives in Bali at 11.50pm, according to agent GDS screens.

Frankfurt incentivises quieter aircraft

FRAPORT AG, the operator of Germany's Frankfurt Airport, has announced reduced charges for airlines which deploy "modern, low-noise aircraft on international routes" while at the same time achieving passenger growth of more than 1% per annum.

The new incentive program has been approved by local authorities and will become an official part of FRA's Airport Charges Regulation effective from tomorrow, 01 Jan 2014.

"Fraport is already a global leader in establishing a greater range in airport charges based on noise categories," said FRA executive chair Stefan Schulte.

"Quiet aircraft are charged less, while loud aircraft pay significantly more...this additional incentive program underscores how we consistently use airport charges as a way to reward airlines that deploy the quietest aircraft possible," he said.

Continental and intercontinental passenger numbers are measured each year, with carriers required to transport at least 7,500 departing pax in each segment and achieve 1% annual growth.

If these criteria are met Fraport AG will refund at the end of 2014 and or 2015 a growth-dependent amount to the airline as an incentive for each additional passenger, on a sliding scale from €4 to €10 per pax.

The new program doesn't include domestic traffic.





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Voyager spreads the cheer

STAFF at TMC Voyager this year decided to forgo the usual Kris Kringle gift giving tradition, instead each opting to donate a toy to the Salvation Army.

Hats were passed around the office and each employee chose a child - boy or girl - and an age range to shop for.

The toys were collected a couple of weeks ago by the Salvation Army which distributed them to disadvantaged families via its annual Christmas 'shop'.

Altogether Voyager donated more than 100 presents to the Salvos, with the help of the three elves pictured: the organising committee, Georgina Sillcock, Jaimi Groves and Haylee Power.



Malaysia Airports to lift Istanbul stake

MALAYSIA Airports has reportedly agreed to increase its shareholding in Istanbul's Sabiha Gokcen airport, with the purchase of the entire 40% stake currently held by Indian company GMR Group.

Malaysia Airports already holds 20% of the airport, acquired when it purchased the 20 year operating rights for the airport in partnership with GMR and Turkish firm Limak in 2007 for €1.93 billion.

The 40% held by GMR is being sold for €225 million, with Malaysia Airports exercising its first right of refusal for the stake.

CX set to lift Osaka

CATHAY Pacific will add a fourth daily direct non-stop flight between Hong Kong and Osaka in Japan from 16 Feb 2014.

The additional flight will utilise a Boeing 747-400 jumbo jet, and lifts overall Cathay Pacific service to Osaka Kansai to five daily flights including one which operates via Taipei.

VS facing class action

A GROUP of disgruntled airline passengers are seeking more than £50,000 in compensation from Virgin Atlantic after their flight was delayed for 26 hours.

British law firm Bott & Co is leading the class action which it describes as the "biggest group claim for flight compensation under EU regulation 261/2004".

The controversial European rules dictate the compensation which is payable by airlines in the event of avoidable delays.

The VS flight from Orlando in Florida to London Gatwick was held up on 27 Oct 2012 due to an engine issue, with passengers eventually accommodated in a nearby hotel.

"Having not been offered any food until breakfast the following morning, they then left the hotel at 2.30pm but due to further delays the flight did not depart until 9.35pm that evening," according to a statement which confirmed that court proceedings had been issued in the case.

The passengers have maintained their rage via a Facebook page, claiming they were offered just £50 worth of air miles in compensation.

A Virgin Atlantic spokesperson said "we believe this technical problem was the result of extraordinary circumstances that could not have been avoided even if all reasonable measures had been taken and therefore not eligible for EU Delay compensation".

DoubleTree for CAN

HILTON Worldwide has announced the opening of the new DoubleTree by Hilton Guangzhou, which features 305 rooms including 25 suites, five restaurants and seven multi-function meeting rooms.

The property is located in the heart of the Yuexiu business district on Dongfeng Road and within walking distance of two metro stations.



Window Seat

TOURISTS visiting Western Australia's beaches can now feel a little bit safer by using the Twitter social network, with an initiative which has seen 300 sharks fitted with radio transmitters.

The innovative system works using underwater receivers to pick up signals from the monsters from the deep whenever they come within a kilometre of the shore.

That in turn posts an automated tweet on the Surf Life Saving WA Twitter feed, allowing beachgoers to easily check out the amount of shark activity at a particular coastal location.

The program is an initiative of the WA Department of Fisheries - but it's also great for tourism, with the technology attracting media attention from across the globe this week and raising awareness of the destination.

AND while we're on the subject of social media, Starwood Hotels and Resorts has announced the integration of guest Instagram photos on the websites of its more than 1500 properties across the globe.

Photos and videos from the online sharing site which have been "geo-tagged" by hotel users will appear in new Guest Galleries on the sites for all nine Starwood brands.

Starwood says the move will help travellers visualise and plan their next trip.

PASSENGERS on board this cruise are really going to be rocking - but in a good way.

Carnival Ecstasy will next Sep host a four-night onboard music festival titled 'Rockaholica' with more than ten headbanging acts.

The headline group will be Grammy award winners Korn, alongside Fuel and Hoobastank.

New-look Arcadia

P&O Cruises World Cruising has unveiled a transformed *Arcadia* which has undergone a multi-million pound refurbishment at Germany's Lloyd Werft shipyard.

The large makeover included the addition of 24 new cabins on deck ten, including 14 deluxe balcony staterooms, four inside single cabins, three larger inside double cabins, a mini suite, and two of P&O Cruises World Cruising's first ever single cabins with balcony.

The Crow's Nest lounge and bar has been refitted, while the Orchid restaurant has been replaced with a new Asian fusion eatery called East which also features on P&O's *Ventura*.

All cabins on the ship also have new carpets and flat screen TVs.

QR 787s to Singapore

QATAR Airways will operate its new Boeing 787 aircraft on one of its two daily Doha-Singapore flights between 01 and 30 Apr, according to GDS displays.

Agents really cross the line



THE Africa Safari Co recently took this group of retail travel agents to Uganda as part of the company's final famil for 2013.

Led by Brodie Poole, The Africa Safari Co BDM NSW/ACT, the primary focus was to find the rare mountain gorillas in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest - but they were thrilled to discover that Uganda has much more to offer.

Activities included chimp trekking in Kibale forest, great game viewing in the Queen Elizabeth National Park and of course an encounter with a family of mountain gorillas.

Budget Transaero

RUSSIAN carrier Transaero Airlines has announced that in 2014 it will offer a new low-cost product called Discount Class.

Available on Boeing 737 aircraft from Moscow Domodevo Airport, Discount Class will be offered to popular destinations in Russia and Europe and will have free on-board meals and 20kg of luggage.

Full service flights will continue to be offered on Transaero flights from Moscow Vnukovo Airport.

Costa boosts South America presence

COSTA Crociere is set to add a third ship to its South American deployment, with the addition of the *Costa Fortuna* to the region.

According to a statement issued to media in Brazil, the *Fortuna* will join Costa's *Pacifica* and *Favolosa* in sailing South American itineraries, boosting its capacity by about 50%.

The *Fortuna* was the biggest ship to ever sail in South America when she debuted her first sailings in Brazil in 2006.

Sheraton to Slovenia

STARWOOD Hotels & Resorts has announced its first property in Slovenia, with the new Four Points by Sheraton Ljubljana Mons set to open during 2014.

Located about 10 minutes from the centre of Slovenia's capital city Ljubljana and 15 minutes from the international airport, the 114 room property will feature complimentary wifi in public areas, meeting facilities, a fitness centre and restaurant.



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: TravelManagers' Tasmanian Christmas lunch was held at Smolt Restaurant in Hobart's Salamanca Square. It was just one of several state-based Christmas festivities held around the country by the group, and pictured above are personal travel managers and national office representatives Samantha Temple, Sandy Bay; Christine Millington, Tarooona; Scott Hallo, Business Partnership Manager; Jasmine Jackson, Accounts; Anna Bayley, Sandy Bay; Sheridan Wilson, Lindisfarne; Kirsty Whittaker, Margate; and Melanie Whyte, Devonport.

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

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