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Travel Daily
First with the news

Tuesday 1st April 2014

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Win a Kokoda trip!

IT'S a new month today and that means another new fantastic *Travel Daily* competition.

During Apr *TD* readers have the opportunity to win a trip to Papua New Guinea to do the famous Kokoda Track, courtesy of PNG Tourism, Air Niugini and Back Track Adventures.

The prize is valued at a whopping \$11,000, with entries via daily questions in *Travel Daily*. - see **page 10** for details.

We'll announce the winner of last month's New Zealand competition later this week.

Tiger Whitsundays

TIGERAIR today launches its newest route, with direct flights from Sydney to Whitsunday Coast Airport in Proserpine.

The low-cost carrier is the only airline to operate the route, with flights operating thrice weekly and providing 56,000 annual seats and a potential \$6m-plus economic benefit to the region.

Mayo slams ATAS, again

AFTA ceo Jayson Westbury says an opinion piece critical of the AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) released this morning by TravelManagers chair Barry Mayo is "old thinking for times past".

In the statement Mayo said "chilling reality" of the shortcomings of the ATAS has been highlighted by the recent TCF terminations of five Tribal Travel outlets (*TD* 06 Feb) and Travelwiz (*TD* 20 Mar), which saw consumers lodge claims "which they will not be able to do under ATAS as it is currently proposed".

He said that TravelManagers is concerned about the voluntary nature of the scheme, with the firm having the strong view that Travel Intermediary Insolvency Insurance should be mandatory so agents can "offer consumer protection similar to that currently provided by the TCF."

With just three months before ATAS kicks off, travel agents have

still not been provided with details of premiums or conditions for Travel Intermediary Insolvency Insurance, he said.

"TravelManagers views this as the most important issue facing the travel agency community and its supplier partners in 2014," he said, with particular concern about the impact of media exposure in the event of a future collapse where clients lose money.

Mayo said consumer confidence in travel distribution is critical.

However Westbury says making insolvency insurance mandatory will unfairly burden small travel agencies, because larger players may then not see the benefit of joining ATAS.

"ATAS is not a replacement for the TCF," he said, with the scheme providing a "future proof" solution - more in our exclusive AFTA column on **p8**.

Ten pages of news!

Travel Daily today has ten pages of news & photos, plus full pages from:

- AA Appointments jobs
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Travel Daily

First with the news

Tuesday 1st April 2014

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Contiki AU/NZ brox

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QF/EK jv 'approval stamp'

QANTAS has today revealed Queensland, Tasmania and the Northern Territory as regional "winners" of its now 12-month old alliance with Emirates.

QF International chief executive officer Simon Hickey said the joint network with Emirates has delivered on its vow to boost inbound tourism, earning "a clear stamp of approval" from Qantas passengers in its first year.

Citing new tourism data, Hickey revealed international inbound customers had purchased an average of five times more fares to the top regional centres, including Cairns and Hobart, than under QF's previous "partnership arrangements" for Europe.

Before launching its alliance with Emirates, QF had ties with carriers including British Airways and Air France to the continent.

Hickey said the Emirates pact has also resulted in "significant" increases in QF flight bookings for some of the 32 destinations in Australia, such as Alice Springs, Darwin and Townsville.

The majority of QF/EK traffic to Australia was arriving from the UK, Middle East, Singapore, Germany and Italy, he added.

Over one million Aussies are "also reaping the benefits of the partnership," having already travelled through Dubai and onwards to 65 cities in the Middle East, North Africa, the UK and Europe, Hickey commented.

"The reaction to the partnership has been extremely positive to the point where the highest customer satisfaction ratings across our international network are on flights from Sydney and Melbourne to Dubai," he said.

SEPARATELY, Qantas has confirmed to travel agents that five QF10 London-Dubai services will not operate next month.

Citing "system requirements", QF's inbound Dubai-Melbourne flights are being renumbered as QF110 on 08, 13, 14, 20 & 29 May, while the prior connecting service from London Heathrow has been axed.

Affected passengers on the cancelled sector will be rebooked on QF2 from London to Dubai.

GKI investor drive

TOWER Holdings has launched a global investor campaign with Greg Norman for its \$2b tourism infrastructure project on Great Keppel Island (TD 06 Mar 13).

Great White Shark Enterprises, JLL & Moelis & Company will lead the charge to source international backers for the project which incl 700 luxury villas and 350 units, a golf course, hotel and marina.

CIT Hols gm departs

CIT Holidays general manager Angelo Gaetani has announced his departure from the company after 7.5 years today.

Sheraton Melb debut

SHERATON Hotels & Resorts has returned to the Vic capital after a nine year absence, opening the Sheraton Melbourne Hotel.

The 174-room hotel is the first of four Sheraton properties to open in the Pacific region in 2014.

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DoubleTree x 2 for Perth

HILTON Worldwide yesterday announced an agreement to manage two newbuild properties in Perth and Fremantle, which will both operate under the DoubleTree by Hilton brand.

The new Perth property will be on the Swan River at 351 Riverside Drive, with 241 rooms and an anticipated opening date of mid-2016.

The 150-room DoubleTree by

Hilton Fremantle will overlook Princess May Park, with construction to commence later this year and an opening expected in 2017.

They will join the 20-strong Hilton Worldwide portfolio in Australia, with DoubleTree by Hilton global head John Greenleaf saying the company is "very committed to further expanding our brand portfolio in the region."

There are also three existing DoubleTree by Hilton properties in the Northern Territory.

The \$160 million newbuilds will be developed by SKS Group, the WA-based overseas investment arm of Malaysian firm MB Group.

Perth is experiencing a boom in hotel developments, with Crown, Ritz-Carlton, Westin and Aloft projects also recently announced.

VA Happy Hour back

VIRGIN Australia is promoting the return of its 'Happy Hour' email blast to V-Mail subscribers.

The carrier says the sales alerts will feature "exceptional airline and partner promotions."

TA laud Blumenthal

TOURISM Australia says the decision by British celebrity chef Heston Blumenthal to relocate his restaurant from Britain to Melbourne is a well timed coup.

Yesterday he revealed he would close Fat Duck and move it to Crown Melbourne on a temporary basis in 2015, after which it will be rebranded as Dinner by Heston Blumenthal.

The six-month Fat Duck diner would be more than a pop-up restaurant, Blumenthal said.

TA managing director John O'Sullivan said the move "speaks volumes for Australia's reputation as a world class food and wine destination."

O'Sullivan said TA would shortly be embarking on a huge food and wine promotion Restaurant Australia - a project that has been in the pipeline for the last year.

"It's great that world-class chefs like Heston recognise the quality of our food and wine experiences, and it's now our job to show the world what he and other chefs know, by sharing some of our best kept secrets which we'll be doing in our latest campaign," O'Sullivan commented.



Window Seat

YOU'VE heard of the Rolls Royce and helicopter transfers offered by Hong Kong's Peninsula Hotel - now the Crocodile Hotel and Cooinda Lodge in Kakadu National Park are going one step further.

Guests between the Top End properties are to apparently be offered transfers in a Holden HR, complete with a 12 foot crocodile on top.

The transfers begin today, with hotel gms, Daniel Lukritz and Vanessa Thompson, saying the special vehicle will ensure they have the "snappiest" transport in the Territory, with guests encouraged to book early - probably by noon today - to snap up the reptilian offer.

AN AIR France A380 was forced to make an unscheduled refuelling stop in Germany last week, after a Russian space launch saw it take a longer routing from Shanghai to Paris than usual.

AF flight 111 landed at Hamburg airport early on Wed morning, having flown the long way around Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan due to the launch of a Soyuz rocket, Reuters reports.

The former Soviet airspace was closed for at least 30 minutes for the space mission which carried two Russian and one American astronaut to the International Space Station.

The A380 diversion meant the flight landed in Paris about three hours later than originally scheduled.

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FINNAIR 

Sean Simmons Travel Pty Ltd are very excited to announce that for the 2nd year in a row we have been nominated in TWO categories for the:

2014 AFTA National Travel Industry Awards

Our nominations are:

Best Travel Agency – Corporate (Single Location)
Best Travel Agency Manager – Corporate (Sean Simmons)

To everyone who has travelled with us on our journey, we offer a heartfelt thank you. Please vote now to help us fly even higher!

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Saving applies to selected fully inclusive group tours to China and Indochina. Offer valid for new bookings made between 1-24 April 2014 for travel on selected departures between 1 Aug-30 Nov 2014. Initial deposit of \$300 per person required at time of reservation plus air portion of \$1200 per person. Air portion and completed booking form must be received by Wendy Wu Tours by COB 24 Apr 2014. All tours are subject to air and land availability. Airline fuel surcharge and tipping subject to change. Tour details and booking conditions as per 2014/15 brochures. Not available in conjunction with any other offer. Visit wendywutours.com.au for full details. Travel Licence 27A4792, 1698K

IHG, GDS tech tie-up

AMADEUS has inked a strategic technology relationship with the InterContinental Hotels Group to help facilitate the development of its Amadeus Altea replica GDS system for the hotel industry.

The pact will see the two firms share ideas and devise innovative "next-gen" technological systems for each stage of guest journeys.

Golfing in the Gulf

TOUR operator Gulf Ventures has launched a new seven-night golf holiday featuring rounds at three of the UAE's best courses.

Priced from \$1,805ppts for low season, the package includes rounds at Emirates Golf Club, Dubai Creek Golf Club, Jumeirah Golf Estates and more.

Phone (02) 9922 5520 for info.

Pax loads up at Virgin

DOMESTIC load factors at Virgin Australia for the month of Feb climbed 5.2% spurred by a 4% jump in passenger numbers & a 3% drop in available seating.

Comparisons of the figures were slightly skewed due to teething problems encountered last year as the carrier migrated to the SabreSonic operational systems.

Int'l operations performed even better, with pax figures up 16.8%, driven by strong demand for short-haul international sectors.

Capacity failed to keep up, only climbing 4.1% which led to a nine percent leap in loads to 78.4%.

Westminster loan paid

ASIAN TMC Westminster Travel has fully repaid a HKG\$117.4m (AU\$16.3m) vendor loan to Corporate Travel Management, thereby retaining a 24.9% stake in its business, according to a statement filed yesterday by CTM to the Australian Stock Exchange.

Corporate Travel Management last year purchased a 75% stake in the business in an expansion plan into Asia (TD 20 Nov).

QF BME lounge open

QANTAS has unveiled its new Regional Lounge at Broome Airport to accommodate rising traffic through the facility.

Located on the mezzanine level next to check-in, the lounge offers panoramic views of the tarmac.

Upgrades include new work and rest areas, with guests offered complimentary refreshments, magazines, papers, wi-fi & Foxtel.

Qantas and QantasLink operate approx 20 services each week to Broome from Perth, Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney.

United training pays off for PTM

WEEKS of intensive training on the US state of California paid off for TravelManagers' Melbourne-based PTM Amy Ferguson, who was presented with a hoard of cool prizes including return USA flights.

The prize from United Airlines and Visit California included two return economy seats to the US, two-night stays at Radisson Fisherman's Wharf, Cova Hotel & Sonoma County, one week car rental and plenty of things to do.

Ferguson is pictured above with United Airlines national account mgr Verena Billett.



Free Daydream night

WHITSUNDAYS holiday property Daydream Island Resort & Spa has released a Stay 5 Pay 4 deal for the upcoming school hols.

Priced from \$608ppts, the offer includes five nights in a Garden Balcony room, breakfast daily, a free holiday portrait and access to a variety of activities.

The offer is valid for sale until 30 Apr for school holiday periods in Apr & Jun (blackout dates apply).

Lufthansa pilot strike

GERMAN carrier Lufthansa has been all but grounded for the next three days, forced to cancel 3,800 flights from 02-04 Apr due to a planned mass pilot walkout.

The action by the Vereinigung Cockpit pilots union was in protest to the carrier's move to axe an early retirement program.

Only 500 short and long-haul flights will be able to operate over the three day period.

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after the award ceremony

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Britz

Car Campervan 4WD, Car Rentals

Hong Kong Sevens for CX boys



ABOVE: Cathay Pacific Airways' gm Southwest Pacific Dominic Peret hosted a group of travel trade partners at last weekend's Cathay Pacific HSBC Hong Kong Rugby Sevens in Hong Kong.

Pictured from left are Andrew Clark, Hong Kong Tourist Board; Jason Aghan, Cathay Pacific; Craig Davies, Marco Polo Hotels; David Galt, Webjet; Paul Gorman, Luxury Escapes; David Padman, Helloworld; Paul O'Brien, Avin; Paul Gorman, Luxury Escapes; Ari Magoutis, Independence Travel Group and Tom Manwaring from Orient Express Travel Group and Independence Travel Group.

In front is John Balloch from Flight Centre with Dominic Peret.

Regent Bali winner

CONGRATULATIONS to Lisa McCracken from Travelscene on Crown who won three nights at the Regent Bali, as promoted in **TD's** mini-comp last week.



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NZ/VA lift ZQN seats

AN EXTRA 40,000 seats to and from Queenstown will be made available by alliance partners Air New Zealand and Virgin Australia over the peak winter period.

The carriers yesterday said they would lift trans-Tasman capacity by 12% through the creation of five new services from Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, between Jul and Sep.

Air New Zealand will crank up domestic capacity to the South Island adventure hub by 11%, upgauging aircraft on a number of existing services to A320s from Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

"Queenstown has experienced exponential growth in recent years and we're pleased that through our alliance with Virgin Australia we are able to offer further capacity," Air NZ chief sales & commercial officer Cam Wallace said yesterday.

Alpha enters NSW

ALPHA Hotels & Resorts has officially opened its second hotel in Australia and first in New South Wales in western Sydney.

The former 102-room Chifley Eastern Creek - located adjacent to Sydney Motorsport Park - has been rebranded as Alpha Hotel Eastern Creek.

Its new owners intend to invest \$10 million in transforming the property to a full-service hotel and will add a new floor in 2015 to boost the room count by 60.

Creative hotel trend

AUSSIE travellers continue to opt for high-end hotels despite a dip by the Australian dollar and declining consumer confidence, Creative Holidays says.

MD James Gaskell said the wholesaler is seeing an increasing number of Australians choosing five-star, top-end luxury hotels in destinations close to home, such as Fiji, Malaysia and Queensland.

New Caledonia was identified as an emerging market.

The Creative boss said travellers are tending to "trade up" in high-end destinations such as the Maldives and in high growth locales like Dubai, Brunei, Croatia and China.

In Aussie holiday favourites such as Hong Kong and Hawaii, clients are selecting four- and five-star properties.

There is a greater tendency for 'modest' accommodation options around Europe, with a view the destination is expensive, while three-star hotels were more widely booked in Denmark, Spain, Greece, Germany and France.

UA transPacific spike

UNITED Airlines has launched a new daily service between San Francisco and Taipei using four-class Boeing 777-200 aircraft.

TPE becomes United's eighth city in the Asia-Pacific region serviced from San Francisco.

UA has also introduced a second daily service between Houston and Tokyo Narita.

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Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from Clermont-Ferrand, courtesy of Atout France and Air France at the Rendez-vous en France trade show.

CLERMONT-FERRAND is dubbed 'The City of Michelin' as brothers Edouard and Andre Michelin started their Michelin Tyre Company here in 1888 and created the first radial tyre.

Michelin is now one of the world's top tyre companies.

Four-hundred kilometres south of Paris, it's the ancient capital of the Auvergne region and one of the oldest cities in the country.

It is surrounded by hills and a chain of 80 volcanoes that ring the city.

In the distance stands one of the top attractions of the Auvergne, the volcanic mountain Puy-de-Dome - classified as one of the great sites in France with a peak of 1,465 metres.

Visitors can reach the site on foot or by the rack railway, the Panoramique des Domes.

MEANWHILE, Atout France launched this year's two-day Rendez-vous en France show at a spectacular theme park aptly called Volcania last night.

Guests descended 35-metres into an extinct volcano where they board the Dragon Ride, emerging some 15 minutes later from the twisting volcanic roller coaster, rather ashen-faced.

Rendez-vous en France fires up



ATOUT France has called on Aussie wholesalers to develop new niche markets to attract more visitors to the country.

Patrick Benhamou, director of Atout France in Australia, told *Travel Daily* the twenty operators from Australia should 'grab hold' of the more than 800 French exhibitors at the 9th annual Rendez-vous trade show that starts today in Clermont-Ferrand and find new product to sell.

"Australian visitors to France jumped 15% last year after reaching the symbolic figure of one million visitors the previous year, but it won't grow unless we have a range of new product in the market," said Benhamou.

"Of the 87 million people who visited France in 2012, more than one million came from Australia, most repeat clients, with the

famous wine regions recording extremely high numbers," he added.

Benhamou said he intends to embark on an amazing event next year called ABC - 'A' for Alsace, 'B' for Burgundy and 'C' for Champagne.

"Those three regions are close to each other and are grouping together to promote themselves overseas and I'm planning to have them come to Australia on a sales mission in Nov next year," noted Benhamou.

"Champagne is the 2nd highest market for Aussie visitors after the USA, and in Alsace we come in 2nd before Japan, China and Brazil, while in Burgundy we are just after America and China."

"The common factor is wine of these regions, so we might call it our 'Wine and Only' campaign.

Pictured at the Rendez-vous en France welcome party (see left) are some of the Aussie delegates; Sharon Ramos, Tempo Holidays; Angelique Sinclair, Eastern Eurotours; Patrick Benhamou, Atout France; Brad McDonnell, French Travel Connection and Sonia Jones, France Holidays.

Tuesday 1st Apr 2014

Vegas Roller spinning

THE Las Vegas High Roller ferris wheel has debuted on The Strip.

Launched yesterday, the High Roller has become the world's tallest observation wheel and is about 100-feet taller than the iconic London Eye.

Operating seven days a week, 365 days a year, the attraction is located at The LINQ.

It features 28 vestibules which can hold up to 40 passengers.

One revolution of the wheel takes about 30 minutes, offering panoramic views of the city and surrounding Las Vegas Valley.

Daytime tickets are priced at US\$24.95 plus "applicable fees."

CLICK HERE for more details.

Orpheus reopens

ORPHEUS has reopened for the 2014 season on the Great Barrier Reef following the wet season.

The property accommodates up to 28 guests, with prices starting from \$1,400ppts per night.

Rex clarification

REGIONAL Express' new Sydney -Armidale service (*TD* yesterday) was launched on Fri, not Thu.

The carrier said its re-entrance to the region was made in a climate where regional air services are under "immense pressure," citing the recent collapse of Brindabella Airlines.

Armidale's addition to the Rex network was not a consequence of Brindabella's demise (which had not operated to the region since 2012), an airline spokesperson told *Travel Daily*.



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AUSTRALIA

Area Sales Manager - VIC & TAS

Cruise Office is a boutique sales and marketing office representing Oceania Cruises, the American Queen Steamboat Company and Voyages to Antiquity.

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Air Mauritius mobile

FACILITIES including bookings, flight check-in and more are now available for Air Mauritius after the carrier launched its mobile booking platform late last week.

Qld agents try out EK's big bird



FIRST class service available on the Emirates A380 was recently witnessed first-hand by this group of Queensland agents, who were recently hosted by the carrier on a day trip to Auckland.

The group took an airborne tour of the pointy-end private suites & onboard shower spas, capped off with breakfast and refreshments in dedicated Emirates lounges both in BNE and New Zealand.

Pictured above on the stairs leading to the upper deck, from left is Ashleigh Hillier, Corporate Traveller; Michelle McGregor, Corporate Traveller; Robert Laitala, Corporate Traveller;

Samantha Mylrea, Escape Travel Kawana; Cassandra Schmidt, Corporate Traveller; Craig Brown, Emirates; Melissa Madigan, Travel Associates; Kate Brownlee, Corporate Traveller; Donna Schubert, Corporate Traveller and Michael Newcombe from FCm Travel Solutions.

TK/JetBlue codeshare

JETBLUE Airways has won US regulatory approval for a blanket codeshare of authorisation permitting Turkish Airlines to place its designator code of 'TK' on 33 domestic US routes.

Park Hyatt New York

HYATT Corporation will debut a new flagship property for its high-end Park Hyatt brand in New York City later this year.

Park Hyatt New York in Midtown Manhattan will feature 210 rooms within the 90-storey One57 tower at 153 West 57th Street, not far from Central Park.

Standard rooms will be among the largest in the Big Apple at 475sqf, with prices ranging from US\$795 to US\$1,295 per night.

Park Hyatt currently has 32 properties spread around the world including hotels in both Sydney and Melbourne.

Creative incentivises

LAND only bookings made with Creative Holidays will earn agents 15% commission in Apr as the wholesaler predicts a "slow booking month" due to the Easter and Anzac Day public holidays.

Air bookings will also earn a bonus 2% commission in Apr.

SAS adds Houston

SCANDINAVIAN Airlines (SAS) has revealed it will commence a new all Business class service between Stavanger, Norway and Houston, Texas starting 20 Aug.

The route is a direct response to requests from the resources industry which is seeking faster connections between the cities.

SAS will operate a modified Boeing 737-700 equipped with 44 Long Haul Business class seats six times weekly on the route.

WIN WITH SAMSONITE

This week *Travel Daily* and **Samsonite** are giving one reader the chance to win two Samsonite Spin Trunks 66cm spinners, valued at \$499 each in Violet & Blue.

With a unique 20:80 split, Spin Trunk offers the benefits of softside packing whilst maintaining the strength and security of harside luggage. This cutting-edge collection ticks all the boxes, guaranteeing cases are efficient, secure, manoeuvrable and glamorous.

To win, send through your answer to the question below in 25 words or less by COB 4th April to:
samsonite@traveldaily.com.au.

Why would you like to win a Spin Trunk?

Skywards Europcar

EMIRATES' frequent flyer scheme Skywards has partnered with Europcar, enabling members to earn miles for every booking made with the car rental firm.

Members will accrue 600 miles on rentals while top tier members will earn a bonus 200 points.



Time for a change? Looking to move back home to New Zealand and just waiting for the right job to come along? This is your chance to join GO Holidays, New Zealand's largest outbound travel wholesaler – a Company with a great culture and a fun work environment.

Groups Consultant - Auckland

An exciting opportunity exists in our wholesale team for a consultant specialising in groups.

The successful applicant must have:

- Excellent customer service skills
- Exceptional time management and great attention to detail
- "Can DO attitude"
- Sound knowledge of using a GDS system, preferably Amadeus
- Sound knowledge of Microsoft Word and Excel software
- Existing product knowledge of worldwide destinations
- The ability to work as part of a team

If you are motivated, hardworking and ready for this exciting role, please apply by forwarding your CV, along with covering letter to:

Jane Jones, Operations Manager, GO Holidays on email
jjones@goholidays.co.nz.

Applications close: Friday 04 April, 2014.



Wanted: Product Operations Manager

We are seeking a professional to own the strategic, implementation and operational relationships of all products that touch our clients. In addition, they will look to develop, communicate and provide training of these products internally and externally to ensure optimization.

The role is a varied one that will report to and support the IT Operations Manager in the day to day running of IT systems and the project management of new products. Good analytical and documentation skills are a must. A hands-on individual ready to take on the challenge of managing commercial arrangements and relationships, troubleshooting, handling product rollouts, actively contributing and supporting Travel Advisors through to Sales & Account Management and Senior Management.

Minimum of 8 years' experience working in the travel industry with an emphasis in managing, supporting and implementing Online booking tools. Sabre and Serko Online experience would be an advantage.

In return, the Concierge Travel Group will offer an exciting time in a growth organisation and an opportunity to shape the direction of a business that aspires to be the best.

Please indicate your interest to Louise Weatherman, Astute HR Consulting at lw@astutehrconsulting.com.au.

AWS giftcard bonus

AFRICAN Wildlife Safaris is giving agents booking clients on its 30th Anniversary Wild About Africa safari a \$200 Coles Myer voucher, per passenger.

The Kenya tour departs on 10 Sep and is escorted by AWS founders Steve and Sara Cameron.

The 18-day safari includes five nights in Kenya's Maasai Mara, handpicked camps & lodges and a private tour of Daphne Sheldrick's elephant orphanage in Nairobi.

It is priced from \$15,787ppts departing Nairobi, or \$18,223 from Melbourne, \$18,241 from Sydney or \$18,242 ex Brisbane.

Agents selling the trip also have a chance to win a seat on an African Wildlife Safari family departing later this year.

AY seasonal services

FINNAIR will launch seasonal services to two new destinations for the 2014 northern summer, both to be served by A319 aircraft.

From 24 Jun to 10 Aug, Finnair will fly on Mon & Fri to Pisa, Italy, along with services on Tue & Sat to French seaside town Biarritz, operating from 28 Jun to 09 Aug.

QF figures flat in Feb

MARGINAL improvement in overall passenger numbers, capacity & demand was recorded across the Qantas Group for the month of Feb, official stats show.

The rollout of new B717 aircraft on QantasLink services resulted in a 12.3% capacity hike which was not matched by demand, leading to a 3.5% fall in load factors.

For the financial year to date, the group has reported decreased yields across all its Australian operations, citing "challenging market conditions".

The strongest performer for the month was Jetstar domestic, which posted an 8.8% gain on pax numbers for the month to 870,000 & a 1.2% jump on loads.

MEANWHILE, Qantas has announced the departure of company secretary Taryn Morton and assistant company secretary Nawal Silfani, effective yesterday.

General counsel Andrew Finch has assumed the additional role of QF's company secretary.

Zoofari relaunched

TARONGA Conservation Society of Australia has a 25% discount at Zoofari Lodge at Taronga Western Plains Zoo in Dubbo.

Featuring 10 African-inspired luxury lodges, the attraction has reopened after a \$2.1m makeover.

AFP conduct warning

AIRLINE passengers have again been warned of the consequences of misbehaviour aboard aircraft following the arrest of a man on a flight to Sydney over the weekend.

A 36-year-old German national was arrested and charged by the AFP after assaulting a cabin crew member while intoxicated aboard a flight from Seoul, South Korea.

The Australian Federal Police warned that violence against cabin crew will not be tolerated & punished with the law's full power.

Bali airport taxes soar

VISA fees collected on arrival at Bali's Ngurah Rai Airport last year delivered US\$62.7m (AU\$67.8m) in tax revenues for the Indonesian government, the *Bali Post* reports.

The result was up from the US\$57.6m collected in 2012, with Bali officials saying the increased income from visa fees reflects the important contribution travellers make to the local economy.

Peregrine Arctic brox

PEREGRINE Adventures has added five itineraries to its just released 2015 Arctic brochure, incl one final voyage to the North Pole by ship.



AFTA UPDATE

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

LET me start this week's column with a reminder that it is April Fools Day. It may be because of this that I find myself responding in this way, but nevertheless I think it is time to put to bed once and for all the claims and assertions being made by one travel company via the trade media about AFTA, ATAS and the way we are all moving forward.

The assertions made by this travel company that ATAS would bring about a back to the future approach to the way travel agents trade in Australia are misleading and false. In fact upon my reading of the opinion piece that I have received which suggests that insolvency insurance should be mandatory for ATAS participants brings to mind the reference; the "Grim Reaper of Small Business".

The heart and soul of travel agencies in this country are fundamentally small business. ATAS has been designed to underpin and prove a third party endorsement based upon professional standards and fit for purpose criteria which provides a solution particularly to small travel agencies to use this endorsement as a form of credential when dealing with consumers in a de-regulated environment.

Indeed this element was fed back to AFTA loud and clear during the workshops and development phase. This new de-regulated environment will take effect from 1 July 2014.

ATAS is putting in place a scheme that will deliver on the feedback and requirements under the Travel Industry Transition Plan and provide a future proof solution for how the travel agency community conducts itself for years to come. To suggest that participants of a voluntary scheme be forced to take out an insurance cover which protects the consumer against their own insolvency in my mind gives rise to the beginning of the end of the scheme.

Remember, ATAS is a voluntary scheme. So the assertions by said travel company is that only ATAS participants take out this insurance surely puts into the question – what about those agents who choose not to become accredited? If it's OK for non accredited agents to trade without the insurance being taken out, why would the scheme which has been built with the specific purpose of professional standards, by industry for industry kill itself before it even gets launched?

Surely the scheme should be launched and given the opportunity to succeed. This is very much the view of large majority of the industry as ATAS gathers a great amount of support and solid enquiry to join.

ATAS is NOT a replacement for the TCF. Why would the industry and for that matter government impose rules and regulations that simply put back in place what was already there, but make access to the new arrangement voluntary? It simply does not make any good common sense. There is no good argument to making insolvency insurance mandatory as all it will do is unfairly burden small agencies, which is why I am referring to the "Grim Reaper of small business".

By this I mean that if a large travel company can trade in its mind on the back of its consumer brand and marketing and see no benefit in the third party endorsement offered by ATAS, they are much less likely to join the scheme for the paramount reasons it was developed.

But if ATAS imposes mandatory insurance to what more likely is to be small travel agents as they would see the benefit of the third party endorsement to be able to compete on credentials, then why would we impose the insurance only on the smaller agents?

The notion of mandatory insurance upon a voluntary scheme smacks in the face of an unlevel playing field. We are on the cusp of new and creative thinking underpinned by a range of commercial solutions which allow intelligent travel agency owners to make their own decisions; this commentary by said travel company is old thinking for times past.

Rd 4 Winner

CONGRATULATIONS

Coral Lopez

from *GlobalCARS.com.au*

Coral is the top point scorer for Round 4 of *Travel Daily's* NRL industry footy tipping competition, and has won a High Tea Cruise for two people, courtesy of **Captain Cook Cruises**.



Major Prize Sponsors

1st Prize: two return flights to Dubai, courtesy of Emirates



2nd Prize: 5-night holiday to Vanuatu, courtesy of Air Vanuatu & The Grand Hotel and Casino Vanuatu



Hanging out with Insight in SFO

TRAVEL agents with the Insight group on the Travel Corporation Mega Famil in the US this week have been enjoying the delights of San Francisco, with participants also including Virgin Australia's Nicole Laurie who is pictured right riding one of the city's famous cable cars.

The experience included Bistro Boudin, the city's longest-running bakery where they had a behind the scenes tour and a cooking lesson with the chef, learning how to create the characteristic flavour of the popular sourdough before sitting down to fabulous seafood cob loaves for lunch.

They also took in Sausalito, the Golden Gate Bridge and rode the cable car to dinner in Chinatown.

After San Francisco the group headed off towards a reunion with the rest of the mega famil participants in Las Vegas, along the way visiting the beautiful Napa and Sonoma valleys with some delightful winetasting.

The journey continues through California's Gold country as well as the spectacular Yosemite National Park.



LEFT: The group gathered in front of the Golden Gate Bridge before getting up close and personal with the monument - by walking across it.

BELOW: Check out these nice buns! Amy Haughey from Insight Vacations and Jessica Bould of Flight Centre Lynbrook sampling some of the Bistro Boudin treats.

Travel Daily
on location in
the USA

Today's issue of TD is coming to you courtesy of The Travel Corporation, which is hosting 100 Aussie travel agents on the American Explorer Mega Famil.

INSIGHT Vacations took its group north from Los Angeles, overnighting at Santa Barbara before heading to San Francisco via the famous 17 Mile Drive with spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean.

They travelled past the Pebble Beach Golf Course, one of the country's most expensive places to play a round, and later arrived in San Francisco for a fabulous familiarisation with the city.

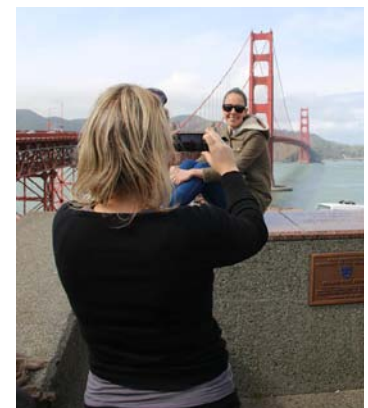
After taking in the highlights including the Golden Gate Bridge they enjoyed a highlight dinner at Empress of China Restaurant in Chinatown.

BELOW: These travel agents are really making dough now! Leanne Preston from Escape Travel Caloundra; Amber Power from Flight Centre Maroubra Junction; and Gregoria Stefanovski of Helloworld Lower Templestowe brush up on their baking skills.



RIGHT: Rolling in it at Bistro Boudin are Jessica Lillis of Insight Vacations and Janis Tennett from Creative Holidays with Samantha Gregory and Sarah Weir.

LEFT: The Insight group also enjoyed a delicious three course seafood dinner at Neptune's Waterfront Bill and Bar.



ABOVE: A photo of a photo - Insight sales rep Stephanie Kluck snaps Amy Haughey.

Lots more pics at facebook.com/traveldaily.

Port Arthur audio app

TASMANIA'S Port Arthur historic site has launched a new smartphone app offering an audio tour of the region to visitors.

The app features historic stories and information including readings from colonial-era journals, and can now be downloaded for \$1.99 from the iTunes app store.

Cheap calls from HKG

HONG Kong Tourism Board has launched a new Discover Hong Kong Tourist SIM Card offering discounted cellular phone access.

Five-day and eight-day cards are available, offering cheaper data, call rates and more, and can be bought from convenience stores.

Caravan visitor boom

MORE than 11 million visitor nights to NSW were recorded in the year to Dec 2013 by travellers staying in commercial caravan parks and campgrounds, figures from the NSW Caravan & Camping Industry Association (CCIA) show.

The sector contributed around 30% of the state's total tourism growth for the year, with median stays higher than the state average and one of NSW's fastest growing tourist sectors, CCIA said. "Caravan and camping is now experiencing significant growth - punching well above its weight and making it a major contributor to the NSW economy," CCIA NSW ceo Lyndel Gray added.

Sun Peaks rebrand

CANADIAN ski property Delta Sun Peaks Resort will be renamed as the Sun Peaks Resort from 01 May, with new hiking trails and skiable terrain set to be opened.

SQ marks pearl milestone at BNE

A MODEST cake celebrated a major milestone this past weekend as Singapore Airlines marked 30 years of operating flights to Brisbane.

SQ became only the seventh carrier to reach the mark at the main Qld gateway, with the occasion celebrated with staff and passengers.

The carrier operates three services daily to Brisbane, the most of any int'l carrier on a single route.

"We look forward to continuing our partnership well into the future," Brisbane Airport Corporation ceo and md Julieanne Alroe said.



Alroe is pictured above cutting the cake with Singapore Airlines' Qld state manager Greg McJarrow.

WIN A TRIP TO PNG TO DO KOKODA

To coincide with the launch of PNG Tourism's new Kokoda campaign and website 'Do Kokoda', this month PNG Tourism, Air Niugini & Back Track Adventures are giving you and a friend the chance to trek Kokoda during the 100th year anniversary of the ANZAC.

Thousands of people walk in the footsteps of heroes on Kokoda each year through the jungles of the Owen Stanley Ranges in Papua New Guinea, our closest neighbours and allies.

The prize includes:

- Back Track Kokoda trek package for two including flights.
- 2 x return economy flights between Australia and Port Moresby with Air Niugini.
- 10 night/11 day package - 2 nights accommodation at Holiday Inn Port Moresby and 8 nights at Kokoda Track camping
- Total Prize Value: \$11,000

Each day *Travel Daily* will ask a PNG-related question - just read the issue and email us your answer. There will be 19 questions in total. 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 incredible experience.

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

Click here for terms & conditions of the competition.

Q.1: In which country is the famous Kokoda trek located?



CT Connections (Corporate Travel Connections Pty Ltd) is a privately owned Australian corporate travel management company with offices in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth. We provide a full range of travel management services and products delivered by a highly professional and responsive team that appreciates every customer is different. Our adage is that 'EVERY CONNECTION COUNTS'®, in every interaction, both externally with our clients and internally with our colleagues.

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- ❖ **Multi Skilled Consultant, Groups - Melbourne Office**
- ❖ **2 x Multi Skilled Consultants (After Hours) - National**

For more information on these job opportunities, visit <http://www.ctconnections.com.au/careers/>.

Applications close 9 April 2014.

Travel Daily is Australia's leading travel industry publication. Produced each weekday since 1994, the newsletter is first with the latest industry news and is available by paid subscription to people within the travel industry. Sign up for a free 14 day trial subscription at www.traveldaily.com.au.

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MELBOURNE – SALARY PKG UP TO \$70K (OTE)

The world cup is not the only thing to look forward to in 2014! We have a sensational new role called in working for a Latin American specialist. If you can't get the buzz of Rio & the history of Machu Picchu out of your mind, then here is your chance to work in an office where you get to talk about all things Latin America everyday! Responsible for creating itineraries throughout the region for travel agents & the general public, you must have a min 3 years high end travel consulting experience & solid Latin America knowledge.

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Are you a talented travel consultant feeling a little neglected in your current role? We a fantastic opportunity for a retail extraordinaire to work for a boutique agency & welcomed as valued member of the team. Servicing a varied clientele, you will be assisting clients with booking their holidays to worldwide destinations whilst ensuring they are provided with good old fashioned customer service. You must have a minimum of 12 months previous consulting experience in order to apply for this sensational role.

A NEW MONTH = A NEW JOB

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Come and join this fun, dynamic and vibrant team of travel consultants. This well established travel company has a high volume of walk in traffic and no 2 days will be the same as you assist your clients in organising their dream holidays. Booking round the world flights, cruises to exotic destinations, land tours to faraway places and more. You will need a positive attitude, ability to multi task and previous retail consulting experience as well as strong GDS skills. A new season means a new you – apply now!

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This new role will see you join one of Gold Coast's most prestigious member based travel companies. Here you will liaise with clients over the phone and via email in helping them book everything from insurance, flights, tours, cruises and more. You will get some fantastic benefits including gym access, massages & uncapped earning potential. To be considered for this you must have min 2 years international consulting experience and strong GDS skills. Get back that work life balance!

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This is your opportunity to rub shoulders with the rich and famous. If you are passionate about the world of movies and bands, this is your opportunity to make your passion an every day reality. Servicing VIP and famous clients booking all their travel needs, your world will be filled with glitz and glamour. If you are already a travel consultant with 2 years experience, strong GDS skills and excellent customer service skills this is your opportunity to make the way into your dream role.



The Hiring Process- Does your business pass the test?

Read the latest inPlace blog



Team Leader/ Senior Cruise Specialist - Syd

- ▶ No weekends! Monday to Friday only!
- ▶ City fringe location
- ▶ Salary to \$75K doe



Sandra Chiles

If the love of cruising gets you to work every day and you enjoy working in an office where you are surrounded by like minded cruise travel professionals who also work, eat and breath cruise, then this is the role for you!

This multi-award-winning travel agency specialises in cruise travel and escorted group cruise tours for Australians travelling internationally. They are recognised as one of Australia's leading specialist cruise agencies.

You will be overseeing an experienced team whilst providing detailed and premium service to your clients.

To be successful for this role you will need to have worked in a retail travel environment having sold cruising as your speciality. Plus demonstrated experience managing and motivating staff. Superior CRS skills and strong communication will ensure your success in this role!

Call Sandra or [click here](#) for more details

Online Travel Customer Service - Sydney

- ▶ Work 7 nights on get the next 7 nights off! No sales!
- ▶ Excellent work/ life balance - Online Customer Service
- ▶ 2 positions available for late April start \$46K pkg

Service clients direct- no face to face! Must have experience working in Australia in hotel or travel reservations. Work Mon-Sun 11pm-8am 7 nights straight then get 7 off!

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Holiday Consultant - Rail & More - Sydney

- ▶ Global company based in Sydney CBD
- ▶ Social team environment
- ▶ Salary from \$40K + super + incentives

A unique opportunity working with intricate & detailed rail product. You'll love piecing together itineraries for your clients with the 'little engine that could!'

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Events Account Director - Sydney

- ▶ Domestic & International travel required at times
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Ski Reservations Specialist - Sydney

- ▶ Northern Beaches location
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- ▶ Salary from \$45K + super

Our client is a boutique ski wholesaler. With bookings significantly increasing their business is growing and they are needing experienced ski professionals to join their team.

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