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Travel Daily

First with the news

Thursday 9th January 2014



DTWM still US GSA

US AIRWAYS' local GSA Discover the World Marketing is advising that its relationship with the carrier remains "unchanged until further notice" during the merger with American Airlines.

An industry memo from DTWM yesterday said trade partners should continue to conduct business as usual.

"Service requests will continue to be fulfilled and authorised by the ticketing carrier so please continue to contact US Airways' appointed GSA for assistance," the company said.

Discover the World Marketing said the carriers are "taking time to make a collaborative, thoughtful decision to ensure a successful integration."

Regular updates will be fed to the trade during the transition.

QF Modern Family coup

AMERICAN sitcom *Modern Family* will film an episode in Australia after a deal was struck between Twentieth Century Fox Television and Qantas.

The Australian flag-carrier will be hoping to gain similar level of success achieved when it brought US talk-show queens Oprah Winfrey and Ellen DeGeneres to Aussie shores in 2010 and 2013.

Qantas said DeGeneres' visit here last year provided a 22% uptick in inbound flights from the US to New South Wales, as well as boosting destination awareness for the country at large.

This new partnership includes Twentieth Century Fox Consumer Products, and will see the Pritchett-Dunphy-Tucker cast and crew of the Emmy award-winning show fly down under with Qantas next month.

No specific locations have been formally announced as to where filming will take place, but it is expected to take up to two weeks to film in "many exotic locations."

The Australian holiday episode will go to air later in the season. CEO Alan Joyce referred to the deal with Twentieth Century Fox as a "huge coup" for Australia.

"The humour of the show is a great fit with Australia's own and as the national carrier we are proud to support this innovative way of encouraging more people

to fly here," he commented.

Joyce said QF was "the biggest private investor in promoting Australia as a destination" with the USA one of the country's biggest sources.

"An estimated 25 million people will watch this episode when it first airs, which is fantastic exposure and great news for tourism," Joyce added.

Tourism & Transport Forum said the deal would create "a significant profiling opportunity for Australia," particularly as a family holiday destination.

"This endorsement of Australia as a desirable tourism destination will put Australia front & centre for tens of millions of Modern Family viewers," chief executive Ken Morrison said.

Morrison said the TTF hoped interest generated through the episode would translate into "real bookings and tourism dollars."

Crown Syd decision

THE NSW Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority is expected to fast-track the application for Crown Sydney Hotel Resort, with a decision expected by Mar.

The \$1.3 billion project within Sydney's Barangaroo precinct still needs to clear separate planning approvals before construction can commence.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news & photos plus a full page from:

- AA Appointments jobs

Xmas comp winner

IN TODAY'S issue of *Travel Daily* we announce the winner of our Christmas photo competition which ran during Dec, courtesy of Fraser Suites Perth - see **page 4**.

DFAT Bangkok advice

SMARTTRAVELLER has updated its advisory for travellers bound for Bangkok in the lead up to next Mon's demonstrations (TD Mon), advising Australians they should expect traffic disruptions, delays and blockages and plan their travel accordingly.

EK A380s to Zurich

EMIRATES has commenced Airbus A380 flights on one of its two daily services to Zurich from its Dubai hub, making the Swiss city its 25th destination for the superjumbo.

THL non-exec recruit

TOURISM Holdings Limited has appointed Christina Domecq as a non-executive director to its board, effective 01 Feb 2014, boosting the firm's total number of directors back up to six.

More appointments on **page 5**.

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FC RWC packages

ONE of Australia's official travel agents for the 2015 Rugby World Cup, Flight Centre, says it will roll out packages to the sporting event for fans later this month.

The tournament will be played between 18 Sep-31 Oct 2015.

Canada Corroboree 2014



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Govt demand driven scheme

FEDERAL Minister responsible for Tourism, Andrew Robb, says plans are proceeding to deliver demand-driven infrastructure for the tourism industry by 01 Jul 2014 after scrapping TIRF grants late last year (TD 20 Nov.)

Addressing concerns from the National Tourism Alliance, Robb told ceo Juliana Payne the move was in line with the Abbott Govt's tourism policy, announced pre-election.

Payne wrote to Robb in mid Nov expressing disappointment the new govt had ditched the Tourism Industry Regional Development Fund, saying applicants had invested between \$3,000-\$5,000 to prepare their applications for a slice of the TIRF.

In his response, Robb said the application process for Round 2 of the TIRF didn't require consultants, was less advanced and that no applications had been assessed.

He said Austrade had been

called on to refocus the funds.

The new demand-driven program "will ensure the benefits of govt investment in tourism infrastructure can be multiplied across the tourism, hospitality & accommodation sectors.

"Austrade will consult with industry associations in developing the program, in particular on what the tourism industry sees as Australia's demand driven infrastructure policies," Robb told Payne in his reply letter dated 19 Dec.

Robb invited the NTA to participate in consultations for the development of the new scheme, which is hoped to deliver greater returns for the industry.

Barcelona line a hit

RAIL Europe says the new Barcelona to Paris high-speed rail service has been "immensely popular" since debuting mid-Dec.

The service has operated at near capacity across all three travel classes since its debut - "a major improvement from the ceased overnight Elipsos Trenhotel service," the firm said.

Operating twice daily, the service takes 6.25 hours, with tickets priced from \$130.

Rail Europe's Australasia boss Richard Leonard said the new service, along with other high-speed rail opportunities between France and Spain are likely to appeal to Australian travellers.

Interim boss for CTC

THE Canadian Tourism Commission has appointed senior vp of Marketing Strategy and Communications Greg Klassen as the organisation's interim ceo and president for a period of 90 days.

Klassen's promotion follows the departure of Michele McKenzie, announced late last year.

A search for a permanent replacement is already underway.

Expo 2020 committee

AN ORGANISATION committee will be set up to begin practical preparations for the Expo 2020 event to be held in Dubai, the emirate's leader has announced.

Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum has been tasked with supervising the committee, which will feature a variety of government officials including director general of Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, His Excellency Helal Saeed Al Marri.

MEANWHILE, the culinary range of the emirate will be showcased over four weekends in Feb & Mar through a Dubai Food Festival, announced by Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment.

A variety of events will take place across the city including the Dubai Food Carnival and The Big Grill, with appearances by world-renowned chefs as a highlight.

Cuisines featured will be created by both Michelin-starred chefs as well as popular street vendors.

B&B North Tas deal

LAUNCESTON Bed & Breakfast Retreat has partnered with Discover Tasmania to launch flexible three-night touring packages across the state's north.

Priced from \$787.50ppts, the deal includes daily brekkie, wi-fi, one-day of touring and return airport transfers.

Additional nights and touring options can also be added - see www.launcestonbandb.com.au.

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Industry Minister call

RUMBLINGS of discontent are again surfacing among Australian tourism leaders, calling for the Federal Government to appoint a dedicated Minister for Tourism.

According to a report this week in *The Australian*, fresh calls are coming from within ahead of the *G'day USA* promotion, which is now underway in Los Angeles.

Former JTG ceo Peter Lacaze was among those championing the need for a dedicated Minister at a national level, his comments echoed by AOT Group chief Andrew Burnes and former Tourism Minister Fran Bailey.

"For an industry that employs 700,000 Australians, is sustainable, does not rely on handouts and is economically viable, the commonwealth needs to rethink its position," Burnes said.

Trade and Investment Minister Andrew Robb, whose portfolio also contains Tourism, will make closing remarks at the *G'day USA* event tomorrow.

FC top pick for Kiwis

NEW Zealanders were most likely to book leisure travel with Flight Centre than any other source in the 12 months to Oct, Roy Morgan Research reveals.

Despite a 5% decrease in the percentage of Kiwis booking travel with online agents over the past four years, Flight Centre dominated the survey as the booking agent of choice, with 8.2% of votes.

Air New Zealand Holidays (6.2%) and House of Travel (5.2%) were the next most popular sources, followed by the OTAs Wotif.com (4.0%), Webjet.co.nz (3.4%) and Expedia.co.nz (2.4%).

Hong Kong arrivals

OVERNIGHT stays by Aussies to Hong Kong increased a fraction in Nov, up 1.1% to 38,584.

The Jan-Nov 2013 visitor tally for Australians was 428,600 - down 4.6% on the same period the corresponding year.

Qld ecotourism push

QUEENSLAND National Parks Minister Steve Dickson is calling for further details from tourism providers who flagged interest in expanding ecotourism projects in the state last year (**TD** 18 Apr).

Thirty-one proponents for 32 projects were received, of which 15 will be invited to move to the next stage for assessment.

Proposals included suspension bridges, ziplines, rope/adventure course, mountain bike parks and accommodation facilities such as permanent tents or eco-lodges and the reuse of shearing quarters and lighthouses.

"Our aim is to have contemporary and world leading ecotourism developments and I'm excited to see so many great proposals that will showcase our natural assets through best practice and innovative products," Dickson commented.

Queensland is hoping to earn the title of the ecotourism capital of Australia.



Window Seat

ANGRY Birds are about to get even angrier and into another dimension after the creators of the popular franchise signed a deal to develop a 4D experience at a UK theme park.

Rovio Entertainment Ltd has reached an agreement with the operators of the Thorpe Park Resort in Surrey, Merlin Entertainment, with plans for the attraction to open in May.

The four-dimension experience will consist of a 10 minute animated film featuring the world of the angry birds & pigs.

It will form the centrepiece of a new 4000sqm Angry Birds themed land at the park, featuring rides such as dodgem cars and the park's signature attraction, known as The Detonator - a 100ft tower drop.



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Travelrite gifted with Xmas prize



THESE festive folk at Travelrite International have more reasons to smile after being named as the winner of *Travel Daily's* popular travel industry Christmas photo comp which ran last month.

The Christmas image was sent in by Amanda Sloan from the Heathmont, Victoria agency, winning her two nights accom for two guests at Fraser Suites Perth, including brekkie and free wi-fi.

Fraser Suites Perth said it "couldn't go past people dressed

as Christmas gifts!"

Pictured with Amanda in the photo are Travelrite's Shawn Wallis, Emma Philpot, Kylie Knights, Madeleine Coyle, Leanne Girling and Michelle Lyssenkoff.

Rockies credit offer

ROCKY Mountaineer has rolled out a new Stay & Play offer that provides \$600 per couple in added value, valid for bookings in GoldLeaf of seven nights or more, departing in 2014.

The credit can be spent on extra hotel nights, additional activities, Alaskan cruises or more.

Credit offers also apply for RedLeaf and SilverLeaf packages.

Bookings need to be made before 28 Feb to avail the offer.

Infinity NSW brox

FLIGHT Centre wholesaler Infinity Holidays has announced the release of its new 48-page brochure for New South Wales, with product including new car hire supplier in the state, Avis.

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EDITIONs offloaded

THE Abu Dhabi Investment Authority has expanded its global hotel portfolio, purchasing Marriott International's EDITION property in London as well as soon-to-open EDITION properties in Miami Beach & New York City.

The total value of the purchase agreements is approx US\$815m and follows the purchase of 31 Accor-managed Australian hotels by the group last year (*TD* 13 Sep). Miami Beach EDITION and Manhattan EDITION are both under construction and on track to open late this year and early next year respectively.

Marriott will manage & operate the three EDITION properties once the purchase is complete.

Delta does deals

FARES to Los Angeles for travel between 15 Jan-15 Feb with Delta Air Lines are on sale from Sydney leading in at \$1,309 or \$1,709 to New York JFK, until 01 Feb.

Special offers are also available from Brisbane or Melbourne with DL partner Virgin Australia.

Cicada for Valentines

NITMILUK National Park-based property Cicada Lodge in the NT has released a two-night escape for Valentines Day which includes three-course Chefs table dinner nightly, priced from \$1,450 - to book, phone (08) 8971 0167.

Segway tick for Melb

THE Victorian Tourism Industry Council has lauded the state govt's red tape reforms which pave the way for Segway tours to commence in Melbourne.

VTIC said the decision was a "boon for the tourism sector."

"We welcome this change by the State Government as Segway tours will diversify the tourism experience and make Melbourne an even more enjoyable place to visit," chief Dianne Smith said.

Segway Victoria plans to operate tours to tourist attractions in the city outside of the CBD and along the Yarra River at times when streets are relatively quiet.

Over 30 regulatory burdens have been eased by the Victorian Government, most expected to be implemented by Jul.

Polish backroads tour

EXPLORE Worldwide has a small group itinerary of Poland that sets out from Warsaw and traverses the Narew National Park, the Bieszczady Mountains and the Biebrza Marshes - the largest area of inland marsh in Central Europe.

The 15-day Backroads of Poland tour departs on 18 May, 22 Jun and 17 Aug and is priced from \$2,110ppts - call 1300 439 756.

SpiceJet Boeing order

INDIAN low-cost carrier and Tiger Airways interline partner SpiceJet has placed a firm order with Boeing for up to 42 737 MAX aircraft, valued at US\$4.4 million at list prices.

Shangri-La Gulf goals

DUBAI, Qatar and Saudi Arabia will see new developments from Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts in coming years, the company says.

Already with five hotels and resorts in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Oman, Shangri-La is planning to open two new properties in the Qatari capital Doha later this year & is eyeing further UAE expansion.

Cebu Pacific buys DG

FULL ownership of Tigerair Philippines has been acquired by Cebu Pacific for US\$15m, with codeshare and interline deals for market development to follow.

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.

Long-time Rail Plus NSW BDM **Matthew Symonds** will depart the wholesaler this week for **Tourism Fiji**, where he will commence next week as the new State Manager for the organisation.

Still at **Rail Plus**, **Greg McCallum** has been promoted to a newly-created role as General Manager Sales and Marketing Australia & New Zealand at the rail wholesaler. McCallum takes charge of all sales in both countries.

Air New Zealand has recruited **Louise Struthers** as the new Group General Manager New Zealand and Pacific Islands. Her appointment was made by her direct predecessor Cam Wallace, himself recently promoted to his current role. Struthers joins the carrier from outside the industry.

Acting ceo of **Tourism and Events Queensland** **Leanne Coddington** has this week been appointed to the role on a permanent basis.

Nick Meredith has accepted the role of Regional Sales Director - North for **Wyndham Vacation Resorts Asia-Pacific**. Bringing experience in the timeshare industry, Meredith will oversee the group's six Qld properties.

Bringing 20-plus years in the travel industry, **AOT Group** has welcomed **Lisa Harrison** to take on the role of General Manager - Wholesale. Harrison also brings experience in corporate and leisure travel positions.

Asian Trails has a new Chief Executive Officer in **Laurent Kuenzle**, who will oversee the continued development of the brand in the APAC region.

Christophe Didier has been named by **Etihad Airways** as its new General Manager for Brazil to lead the carrier's commercial operations in the country. Elsewhere, the carrier has welcomed **Juan Torres** to a similar role based in the Philippines, who returns to the role after departing in 2010.

Fiji Airways has promoted **Sharun Ali** to the role of Head of Safety and Security. Ali will oversee all security operations for the fleet network-wide.

Recently departed Royal Caribbean Int'l exec **Lisa Bauer** has been named new Chief Operating Officer for **International Cruise & Excursions**.

Starwood Pacific has welcomed **Shane Cuning** as its new Area General Manager for Fiji and Samoa. Cuning will oversee a number of recently acquired properties in both countries for the global hotel giant.

Changes have been made at the **Canadian Tourism Commission**, with **Jon Mamela** moving within the organisation to the role of Chief Marketing Officer. Replacing Mamela as Vice-President International in an interim capacity is **Rupert Peters**, moving from his role in Core Markets.

The **Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre** has recruited **Alan Pryor** as the new General Manager Designate for the facility. Pryor replaces the retiring Datuk Peter Brokenshire.

Indigenous art to adorn AAT coaches



ABORIGINAL artwork designed by Alice Springs-based painter Kathleen Buzzacott has been added to all AAT Kings coaches operating in Central Australia, the tour operator today announced.

Buzzacott, who is of Pitjantjatjara descent, imagined her traditional dot painting to highlight the many evenings spent sitting around the campfire with her family in the central Australian bush.

The design was selected by AAT Kings from a number of indigenous-inspired submissions put forth by Maruku Arts.

Nine coaches already feature the artwork, while a further seven to be purchased and added to the fleet will also display the piece.

Buzzacott is pictured above proudly presenting her artwork.

Spencer store in TCF

THE newest in Spencer Travel's network of stores in Kogarah, NSW (**TD** 05 Dec) was among the latest registrants in the Travel Compensation Fund, according to the latest TCF update.

Flight Centre Travel Group also registered seven new branches in its Flight Centre, Escape Travel and Student Flights brands.

Head office locations signing up include The Original London Pub Co, Trekset Worldstrides and the Planetary Wave Travel and Leisure Centre, all headquartered in Vic.

LAX seeks to sue AA

LOS Angeles International Airport has sought permission from a New York bankruptcy judge to launch legal action against American Airlines for payment of overdue terminal rental fees.

According to *Daily Breeze*, Los Angeles World Airports contend they are owed more than US\$21 million by AA plus interest for maintenance and operations of its long-term lease of Terminal 4.

The facility says American must pay the arrears as it is no longer under Chapter 11 protection.

Norfolk short break

OXLEY Travel has a three night package to Norfolk Island staying at Ponderosa and including Air New Zealand Economy class flights priced from \$779 out of Brisbane or \$809 ex Sydney.

The package is valid for travel through to 31 Mar and also includes return airport transfers, three days car hire and a half-day island tour.

More at oxleytravel.com.au.

NZ Holiday Parks app

A NEW travel app designed to help drivers locate nearby holiday parks based on a GPS location has been launched in the iTunes store.

The Holiday Parks App provides information on nearby rest stops, toilets, petrol stations and more, along with road safety alerts.

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