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# Travel Daily

First with the news

Friday 10th January 2014

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## Less Aussies travelling

**HOLIDAY** spend by Australians since the Global Financial Crisis four years ago has remained relatively unchanged, according to newly released study data.

Total annual holiday spend by Aussies for the 12 months to Nov 2013 was \$66 billion, the same mark as Nov 2009, Roy Morgan's Single Source Survey shows.

In the 12 months to Nov, Aussies took 54 million holidays - 5 million less than over the same period through to Sep 2009.

Since Jun 2012 there has also been a growing number of people not taking any annual holiday.

"Our data shows that Australians have been taking more overseas holidays since the GFC but they're compensating by cutting back on the number of domestic holidays they take," Roy Morgan Research director of Tourism, Travel & Leisure Jane Ianniello commented yesterday.

### Today's issue of TD

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

- AA Appointments jobs
- Etihad Airways Perth jobs

## Encounters Travel in Aus

**THE** small group adventure touring space has expanded in Australia with UK-based company Encounters Travel establishing a presence in the local market.

Established in Sep 2011, Encounters Travel specialises in "imaginative and adventurous" tours using quality mid-range accommodation and transport.

The firm operates trips with a maximum of 18 participants to destinations including Egypt,

Morocco, Jordan, Turkey, Russia, India, Nepal, Thailand, Kenya, Tanzania, Peru and Bolivia.

Headed up in Australia by Erina Kilmore - who is national sales and marketing manager - the company aims to work with travel agents to "provide them with a fantastic adventure tour product that offers great competitive commissions" and expert service.

Kilmore has worked in the travel industry for several years holding management and marketing positions within Flight Centre Ltd.

"We also offer innovative ways for our agents to work with us online and still earn commissions on sales generated," Encounters Travel company profile advises.

See [www.encounterstravel.com](http://www.encounterstravel.com) or email Kilmore for more info at [erina@encounterstravel.com](mailto:erina@encounterstravel.com).

### Cheap New Cali fares

**AIRCALIN** has released 'Nou Year' special return airfares to Noumea priced from \$290 ex Brisbane and \$320 ex Sydney (plus taxes & fuel levies).

Available to book from 13 Jan for travel in 'W' Class over select dates to 31 May, fares can be booked without hotel content, giving pax greater flexibility.

Further discounts are offered when packaging air and land arrangements via wholesalers.

SB says it has also freed up extra seats solely for the Australian market to ensure there are "generous quantities" of capacity.

### Shelley back to ATEC

**AUSTRALIAN** Tourism Export Council chairman John King has this afternoon announced the reappointment of Peter Shelley as the new md for the organisation.

Shelley previously held the title for seven years until Jan 2006.

## APT ERC '15 preview

**APT** has today unveiled its 2015 Preview brochure for Europe River Cruising (ERC), showcasing 24 itineraries ranging from eight through to 35 days, sailing on the Rhine, Rhone, Moselle and Douro rivers and Black Sea.

The program has been released earlier than originally slated this year due to anticipation from trade partners.

New exclusive Signature Experiences, more land tours and more choices are on offer in 2015, APT general manager of marketing Debra Fox said.

"The Preview brochure offers the first glimpse of what is to come and allows guests who book early to benefit from incredible savings, securing their favourite suites and preferred departure dates in the process," Fox commented.

Among the offers are 'SuperDeals' which combine 2015-at-2014 prices with FlyFree, Companion Fly Free, Air Credits or No Solo Supplements.

Preview spaces are limited with bookings needing to be secured by 15 Apr 2014.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

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## USA Today: Sydney "cost prohibitive"

AN ARTICLE featured on USA Today has offered guidance on how to "stretch your dollars" in a shortlist of some of the world's most expensive countries & cities.

On the list was New York City, Tokyo, London and San Francisco, along with Switzerland and Norway more generally.

Also making the grade was Sydney, which although currently has a favourable exchange rate vs the US Dollar, was deemed pricey for long-haul flights and continues "to create a cost-prohibitive environment for travellers."

The story suggests travellers to the NSW capital plan to visit "many once-in-a-lifetime" free activities to save a penny, such as the Royal Botanical Gardens, walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge or visit one of the local beaches.

**CLICK HERE** to see the article.

## Elderfield joins CMV

CMV Australia has announced the appointment of former Scenic Tours sales exec John Elderfield as sales manager for WA & SA, with immediate effect.

His past industry experience also included roles at Harvey World Travel, Trafalgar, Contiki, Northwest Airlines and Cartours.

Cruise & Maritime Voyages Australia operates the 620-pax Astor which is currently offering a selection of seasonal sailings from Fremantle and is scheduled to cruise here during the 2014/15 and 2015/16 summer seasons.

## Jetstar HKG selling A320s

THE yet-to-launch Jetstar Hong Kong is considering offloading up to seven of its new Airbus A320 aircraft as it awaits regulatory approval to commence operation.

Jetstar Hong Kong was originally expected to take-off in 2013 but has suffered a series of setbacks and run into stiff opposition from future competitors Cathay Pacific, Dragonair, Hong Kong Express & Hong Kong Airlines.

The low-cost carrier plans to have an 18 strong A320 fleet within three years of operation.

According to the *South China Morning Post*, sources close to the Qantas/China Eastern Airlines joint venture say seven A320s are parked at an Airbus production

based in Toulouse, with another two joining the line-up by Jun.

The plan being mulled could see Jetstar Hong Kong sell idle A320s to a leasing company, which would then be leased back should the budget-carrier be given the green light to launch.

"As Jetstar Hong Kong is still progressing through the regulatory process, the board is evaluating options to manage its fleet in the short term, with a small number of aircraft in Toulouse," a Jetstar spokesperson said.

The *Post* reported it costs about US\$400,000 per month to lease an A320, with the Qantas offshoot likely to face a charge from Airbus for not taking delivery of the A320s on time, plus parking fees in Toulouse.

MEANWHILE, Moody's Investor Services yesterday followed Standard & Poor's downgrading of the Qantas Group's credit rating to junk status last month.

QF chief financial officer Gareth Evans underlined the importance of taking decisive action to address a difficult operating environment.

## DL narrowbody rejig

OVER US\$770 million will be ploughed into the upgrade and revamp of Delta Air Lines domestic narrow-body fleet over the next two years.

Delta's Boeing 757-200, 737-800 and Airbus A319 & A320s will be refreshed in the project which will see power provided to every seat, new slim-line seats with adjustable headrests added and lavatories overhauled.

Once completed, the 757s, 737s and A320s will all feature in-seat video with satellite TV streaming.

Since 2010, Delta has invested over US\$3 billion to improve the customer experience onboard its aircraft and improve technology and facilities.

## TNZ Aus GM vacancy

TOURISM New Zealand is on the hunt for a new General Manager - Australia, listing the position on Seek.com.au.

Applicants must possess "a great track record in developing & managing effective relationships and networks to grow a business." Applications close 5pm 14 Jan.

## DC&A Yukon contract

DC & ASSOCIATES Worldwide has been appointed as trade marketing and PR representatives for Tourism Yukon in Australia.

Under the management of Charlie Trevena and Pip Macken, DC&A will support the 'Yukon - Larger Than Life' brand.

"As a unique and compelling area of Canada that's easily accessible from Western Canada's gateway cities, Yukon has exciting opportunities for growth from the Australia market," director at DC & Associates Worldwide Donna Campbell said this morning.

The appointment is a natural fit for DC&A who are the general sales agents in Australia for the Canadian Tourism Commission.

## Spirit itinerary shuffle

CARNIVAL Cruise Lines is advising passengers of changes to two upcoming South Pacific sailings aboard *Carnival Spirit* due to "operational reasons."

Affected is the 12-day Fiji, New Caledonia and Vanuatu cruise scheduled for 18 Jan (S403), which is now departing Sydney at 6pm (30mins earlier than originally planned), and has one additional hour in both Suva on 23 Jan & Port Denarau on 24 Jan.

The 11-day New Caledonia & Vanuatu cruise on 30 Jan (S404), also departing Sydney, has seen a reversal of its port-of-call days in Port Vila and Santo, now on 03 Feb (Santo) and 04 Feb (Port Vila).

Carnival apologised on Facebook for any inconvenience caused.



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## Fiji readying growth spurt

**TOURISM** Fiji will significantly increase its destination promotion activity within the Australian travel industry this year, headed by recently appointed regional director Australia Carlah Walton.

For the first time, dedicated business development managers for east coast states have been recruited to drive marketing and industry strategies.

Walton revealed to *Travel Daily* Karen Everingham, formerly of Virgin Australia, Matt Symonds from Rail Plus and David McMahon of Intrepid Travel will all start work with Tourism Fiji next week looking after the Qld, NSW and Vic markets respectively.

"We have a big target this year and we understand we have to expand our programs and agent support," Walton told *TD*.

Travel agent famils will be ramped up, with incentive trips to be run exclusively for selected agency groups as well as home

based consultant networks.

Educationals will also be run for niche travel specialists such as wedding planners, backpacker, luxury, MICE, golf, adventure and more, with tailored itineraries to suit attendees client bases.

Referring to the Tourism Fiji mantra, Walton added "Fiji is that place where happiness finds you and we want to show that to as much of the industry as we can.

"Our goal is to ensure agents get the experience in the country to obtain the knowledge to qualify their clients and ensure they sell the most appropriate products to match client needs," Walton said.

Tourism Fiji will be ensuring a strong presence at major trade events in 2014 such as upcoming expos nationwide, as well as its own networking functions and sponsorship of public events such as open-air cinemas in summer.

A mega-famil incentive program is also marked for development.

## Fiji Airways strategy

**FII** Airways has released more details on its five-year strategic masterplan for growth, initially hinted at last year (*TD* 19 Dec).

Through new aircraft, the carrier is aiming for a 35% increase in available seats across its network and subsequent boosts to overall passenger numbers and yields.

Acquisition and leasing of four new aircraft will consist of one A330-200, two B737-800s & two ATR72-600s, with plans to grow capacity to Asia by 144%, the Pacific Islands by 86.6% and Australia by 28.4%.

Growth in staff numbers will see Fiji Airways invest in a trainee program to develop opportunities for Fijians at all business levels.

Operating profits are expected to exceed FJ\$100m as part of the five-year masterplan through an aggressive financial performance based on fuel prices and currency.

"This is our plan, we believe in it and we will make it happen," Fiji Airways ceo Stefan Pichler said.

## Window Seat

**NOVOTEL** Barossa Valley has taken the meaning of "outdoor bathroom" to a new level, utilising bathtubs originally intended for the scrap heap in a new on-site herb garden.

The tubs were replaced as part of a \$2m refurbishment of the hotel's bathrooms & have been put to use again with soil, herbs and other floral arrangements.

Taps and showerheads were also kept and repurposed as the garden's irrigation system.

The garden is also supported by a worm farm, sustained by leftover greens and other scraps from the kitchen and conference catering departments.



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## New Tas Air aircraft

A **SECOND** seaplane has been introduced into Tasmanian Air Adventures' fleet to cater for growing tour demand.

To be based at the firm's HQ at Hobart Airport, the plane is capable of both land & water landings, providing access to the state's East Coast, Tasmanian Peninsula, South West and nearby Huon region.

"The company offers an exciting visitor experience which also helps showcase and support regional parts of the state," Premier Lara Giddings said.

The DeHavilland DHC-2 Beaver transports up to six passengers.

## QR adding LHR slots

**QATAR** Airways is in the final stages of negotiations to acquire one of two slots used by Cyprus Airways at London Heathrow Airport, with the transaction valued at €14.7 million (US\$20 million), the *Cyprus Mail* reports.

## Big year of openings

**STARWOOD** Hotels & Resorts Worldwide opened 74 new hotels and signed agreements for a further 152 properties last year, the organisation advised.

The full year tally marks a 16% increase on new property signing levels achieved in 2012.

More than half of new hotels signed and opened in the year were in developing markets.

The group says 2014 will feature more new properties and deals across all of its nine brands.

## Countdown to Games

**GOLD** Coast Airport has started its second countdown clock for the 2018 Commonwealth Games, opening the new attraction at the Gold Coast Airport at Coolangatta.

The clock, shaped as a 2.7m high surfboard with an LED display counting down to 04 Apr 2018, is expected to be a popular photo for airport pax, Qld Tourism Minister Jann Stucky said.

## No new BER in 2014

**BERLIN'S** much maligned new Brandenburg Airport will not be opened this year, the city's Mayor Klaus Wowereit has said.

Speaking to local media this week, the Mayor, who is also the head of the airport's supervisory board, confirmed ongoing issues with fire safety equipment has contributed to incessant delays.

The facility has been beset with delays and problems almost from the get-go and is now nearly three years behind schedule after its 2012 opening ceremony was shelved only weeks beforehand.

Initial planning for the airport first began way back in 1989, just after the Berlin wall crumbled.

## Second UAE Waldorf

**LUXURY** Hilton brand Waldorf Astoria has opened its second hotel in the United Arab Emirates.

The 319-room Waldorf Astoria Dubai Palm Jumeirah features six restaurants and a private beach.

## QF safest in the skies

**QANTAS** has once again topped the list as the world's safest airline, according to the latest rankings from AirlineRatings.com.

The rating takes a number of factors into account including aviation audits & fatality records.

Other airlines to make the Top 10 grade with a seven-star rating for safety include Emirates, Air New Zealand, Etihad Airways, Singapore Airlines, Virgin Atlantic, Cathay Pacific Airways, Eva Air, Royal Jordanian and All Nippon Airways.

**MEANWHILE**, at the beginning of the 100th anniversary of aviation, safety of air travel has risen to a 10-year high, with the number of accidents involving fatalities on large commercial aircraft falling to its lowest rate in the history of aviation.

Last year saw 17 aircraft crashes worldwide, compared with an annual average of 27 in the ten years to 2012, according to the European Aviation Safety Agency.

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## A&K Aus Open tickets

**PLACES** are still available for Abercrombie & Kent's range of Australian Open tennis packages, with the Melbourne grand slam beginning next week.

## Agents flop & drop in Mauritius



**SUMMER** for this group of WA top-selling agents kicked off with a bang as Asia Escape Holidays rolled out the welcome mat with a six-night famil to Mauritius, with air seats for the educational provided by Air Mauritius.

Sightseeing during the trip consisted of a range of activities including cooking classes, rum tasting experiences and treasure hunts looking for some of the more famous sights on the island.

A number of the top resorts in the destination were visited and inspected, with plenty of time also provided to kick back, relax and soak up the atmosphere of their surroundings at leisure.

Following a delectable lunch and tour of the grounds at the

Lux Grand Gaube Hotel.

The group is **pictured** above and consisted of Linda, HWT Mandurah; Carl, Air Mauritius; Sue, Jetset Joondalup, Amanda, HWT Morley; Raymond, Latitude Holidays Bunbury; Harry, RAC West Perth; Claire, Fremantle Travel Services; Amanda, Travelworld Broome; Sally, Asia Escape Holidays and Joanne from Travelworld Willetton.

## Ameron Worldhotels

**WORLDHOTELS** is expanding its partnership with Ameron Hotels - a brand marketed under Althoff Hotels - to four properties in Germany and Switzerland.

The new additions are Ameron Hotel Speicherstadt in Hamburg, Ameron Hotel Konigshof in Bohn, Ameron Mountain Resort in Davos & Ameron Hotel Flora in Lucerne.

## Wellness retreat open

**ARO** Ha Wellness Retreat has opened its doors overlooking Lake Wakatipu in Queenstown.

The NZ\$30 million haven offers a variety of treatment facilities catering for up to 32 guests.



## Travel Specials

**WELCOME** to Travel Specials, *Travel Daily's* Friday feature. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of, send the details to [specials@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:specials@traveldaily.com.au).

Having missed its 40th birthday due to a tropical cyclone, Fiji's **Treasure Island Resort** is instead celebrating its 41st with a special birthday offer. New bookings made before 31 Jan can enjoy a Stay 4 Pay 2 valid for stays between 01 Feb and 31 Mar 2014. Book through your preferred wholesaler.

**Travel Indochina** has released a five-night package at luxury Thai resort, The Sarojin including accom in a Garden Residence, breakfast and return transfers, priced from \$1,679pp for travel to 28 Feb 2014. The resort is preparing for Valentines Day with experiences for couples including the Waterfall Dinner and luxury yacht cruising. Phone 1300 138 755 to book.

Earlybird free bonus days are available as part of the new Citroën Drive Europe brochure through World Drive Holidays. Additional deals include free pickup and GPS on many models. **CLICK HERE** to see the brochure.

Working in conjunction with Cook Islands Tourism and Air New Zealand, the **Crown Beach Resort & Spa** in Rarotonga has launched a special deal packed with inclusions including early check-in/late check-out, return airport transfers, NZD\$300 resort credit and free one-day scooter hire. Valid for six night stay if booked by 31 Jan through preferred wholesalers.

## JAL 787 to Vancouver

**VANCOUVER** will see its first 787 *Dreamliner* operation come to fruition next month after Japan Airlines announced it would begin operating the aircraft to the Canadian city effective 03 Feb.

JAL will introduce the 787-8 on its Tokyo Narita-Vancouver service initially as once weekly before ramping up to daily by Mar 2014.

## Dockside sales hiring

**HOSPITALITY** events operator Dockside Group has announced the appointment of Mike Sarino as its director of sales and events.

Sarino's appointment comes following Dockside being named the exclusive caterer for Sydney Convention Centre @ Glebe Island.

## Insured for Venezuela

**FOREIGN** travellers entering Venezuela must be able to show they are covered by adequate travel insurance under changes to entry laws advised by DFAT.

According to a Smarttraveller update, arrivals may be denied entry if they hold insufficient cover or be forced to purchase a policy on the spot.

## E/Bird deadlines loom

**LESS** than a week remains for 10% early payment discounts to be enjoyed on 2014 European itineraries through Trafalgar, Contiki and Insight Vacations.

Guaranteed places on desired departures are available if booked and paid in full by 15 Jan, with hundreds of itineraries available and savings of up to \$1198pp.

Repeat clients can avail a further 7.5% discount through combined savings if taking their second or more guided holiday through the three operators.

## New features at SFO

**A RANGE** of new enhancements will feature as part of the newly renovated Boarding Area E in Terminal 3 at San Francisco Int'l Airport, which was funded in part by United Airlines.

In addition to expanded views of the airfield via a 23-foot high window wall, flyers will have access to new seating options, free wi-fi, work stations, yoga room & interactive kids play area.

Further, passengers will be able to utilise the "Flight Deck", an information and entertainment zone, prior to their flight.

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