



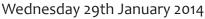
APT and AmaWaterways have announced their newest vessel, the 164-passenger *AmaSonata* will be christened on 22 Jul at a ceremony in Vilshofen, Germany. *AmaSonata's* godmother will be Canadian Automobile Association vp of Travel, Brenda Kullo.













Air NZ/SQ take on QF/EK

THE strategic alliance proposed by Air New Zealand & Singapore Airlines will help the airlines gain a "stronger position to compete" against the Qantas/Emirates alliance, the carriers have stated. Announced earlier this month,

Announced earner this month, the planned partnership will see Air NZ restart operations between Auckland & Singapore, while SIA will launch A380 services to NZ for the first time (**TD** 16 Jan). According to joint papers filed with the NZ Ministry of Transport, the NZ/SQ alliance "seeks to provide a similar network" to its customers as offered under the QF/EK arrangement, covering New Zealand to Australia, Europe (including the UK), the Middle

Seven pages of news

- **Travel Daily** today has seven pages of news and photos, plus full pages from: (*click*): • AA Appointments jobs
 - Travel Counsellors

East and Northern Africa. Benefits of the pact will enable Air NZ "to re-establish itself as a coded carrier for travel to and from the UK & Europe via Asia," providing pax with an alternative to flying over North America via Los Angeles, the airlines said.

The Star Alliance members say they will continue to face a "strong competitive restraint" from Qantas/Emirates, which have many more flight options on the Auckland-London Heathrow route, albeit with two stops (in Australia and Dubai).

The carriers also said the deal will provide Air New Zealand with the opportunity for efficient, sustainable growth of its Pacific Rim network as prepares to deploy new Boeing 777-300ERs in the second half of 2014.

Singapore Airlines will benefit from the alliance by gaining market share in the New Zealand and Pacific Rim, they said.



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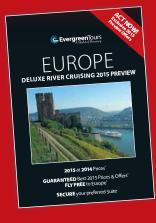


Cosgrove leaves QF

AUSTRALIA'S new Governor-General Peter Cosgrove AC MC has stood down from his position as a non-executive director from the board at Qantas Airways.

General Cosgrove had been on the QF board for over eight years, chairman Leigh Clifford said.





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Sofitel Wentworth Sydney up for sale

ICONIC Sydney luxury property the Sofitel Sydney Wentworth has been put on the market for sale.

Commercial realtor Jones Lang LaSalle's Hotels & Hospitality Group and McVay Real Estate have been tasked with offloading the hotel subject to management approval from Accor Asia-Pacific, who operates the property as its flagship Sofitel in Australia.

The hotel offers 436 guest rooms, multiple event venues and more, with expressions of interest closing at midday on 21 Mar.

Menon on the move

SINGAPORE Airlines regional vp South West Pacific Subhas Menon will depart the region to take up the London-based post of regional vp Europe as part of the airline's management rotation.

Filling Menon's place effective 17 Feb is Tan Tiow Kor who is the current senior vp of sales and marketing for Singapore Airlines Cargo, based in Singapore.

Tan has been with SIA for 30 years covering a number of HQ and overseas positions.



Wednesday 29th January 2014



Aircalin

'China Ready' fine tuning

A NEW Federal Govt report has revealed just over 1/3 of "grouptour" visitors from China gave their trip to Australia a 'high' overall satisfaction score, while nearly 20% said their visit to our shores was worse than expected.

According to Tourism Research Australia's latest Chinese Visitor Satisfaction report, out yesterday, there is a need for tour operators to improve organisation/service, quality of food and attractions to Chinese travellers.

The study of 3,606 Chinese holiday and business travellers took place over a 6-month period to 30 Jun, prior to the introduction of the new China Tourism Law.

"Group-tour visitors had poorer travel experiences than free and

More Avalon vessels

AVALON Waterways has released its 2015 European river cruise preview guide, announcing a further two ships will be added to its fleet for next year's season. To be named Avalon Tapestry II and Avalon Tranquility II, the new

vessels continue the Suite Ship traditions of abundant space.

independent travellers, reporting lower overall satisfaction, inferior trip outcomes and a lower likelihood to recommend Australia," the report indicated.

Over half of attractions were not interesting, there was not enough time spent at attractions and not enough attractions visited, respondents said.

Also of concern for groups was the quality of Chinese dining experiences offered, with 18% scoring Chinese food poorly.

It found overall satisfaction for both group-tour and FIT visitors was high for personal safety & security (96%), friendliness of locals (94%) attractions (77%) and wine experiences (72%), however dissatisfaction was highest for shopping (16%) and value for money (12%).

A summary of the report - which also covers satisfaction scores on nature-based experiences & food and beverage experiences for free & independent travellers - lists a number of key recommendations for tour operators to assist with fine tuning their product offering, - CLICK HERE to see the study.

10 years of VA Int'l

VIRGIN Australia has launched eight new codeshare services in celebration of its first decade of operating international flights.

The new routes will see VA codes added to flights operated by Delta Air Lines to Seattle and Boston; on Etihad Airways services to Zurich, Minsk, Medina and Rome; and to Athens and Brunei with Singapore Airlines.

VA's first int'l service operated in its former incarnation Pacific Blue and travelled from Christchurch to Brisbane on 29 Jan 2004, and together with alliance partners, now flies to 400 ports worldwide.

A special fare sale to mark the occasion has been launched, with seats network-wide cut in price if booked by 31 Jan for travel 16 Feb - 31 Mar and 14 Oct - 24 Nov.

Four Point Brissie gm

FOUR Points by Sheraton Brisbane has today confirmed the appointment of former Sheraton on the Park in Sydney hotel manager Brad Mercer as its new general manager (**TD** 16 Jan).

The property is slated to open to guests on 03 Mar.



www.onthegotours.com t: 1300 855 684







Air Seychelles ceo Ball out

AIR Seychelles Australian-born chief executive officer Cramer Ball has tendered his resignation to pursue future "career options."

Ball was appointed two years ago and "has been instrumental in revitalising our national carrier," Seychelles Minister for Home Affairs and Transport, Joel Morgan said overnight.

Morgan, who is also chairman of Air Seychelles, praised Ball for leading HM into profitability in his first year, while introducing new aircraft, routes, standards of excellence and employee opportunities.

The Minister said Ball was now mulling several roles and would remain with the carrier until late-Feb to assist with the transition of new ceo Manoj Papa from 01 Mar.

"I am considering a number of career options, and would hope to be in a position to provide an update in the near future," the

Aussie commented.

"Given this situation, I am resigning to be fair to both the business and to the staff who have supported me," he added.

Papa was most recently South African Airways acting general manager of commercial, and also spent five-years with Etihad Airways (until 2012) where he climbed the ranks to vice president corporate strategy.

Italy, Portugal strikes

SWISS International Airlines is warning travellers of potential flight chaos at airports in Italy and Portugal today.

The carrier yesterday advised planned air traffic control strikes in both countries would cause flight restrictions & cancellations.

Airports where disruptions are expected include Rome, Florence, Milan & Venice in Italy and Porto & Lisbon in Portugal.

Extra checks for QF

QANTAS has confirmed to *TD* an Airworthiness Directive handed down by the Federal Aviation Authority for Boeing 767 aircraft (*TD* yesterday) does apply to the Australian flag-carriers fleet.

A QF spokesperson told **Travel Daily** the AD mandates some new requirements, including replacing certain spare parts if applicable, as well as some extra repetitive inspections, all of which Qantas will incorporate into normal maintenance of its 14 767 jets.

1,300 new FRHI room

FRHI Hotels & Resorts, the parent firm of Raffles, Fairmont & Swissotel Hotels & Resorts says it plans to open seven new properties around the world in 2014, boosting room inventory by more than 1,300 rooms.

The additions include the Raffles Istanbul, Raffles Jakarta, Fairmont Bodrum Beach in Turkey and Fairmont Ajman in the UAE.



VIRGIN Australia's 'High Flyer' competition winner admits the jet-setting lifestyle has finally caught up with him.

Cameron Ernst won the highlycoveted role last year as part of Tourism Australia's *Best Jobs in the World* campaign & has been using social media to promote every corner of the country where Virgin Australia flies.

Ernst posted a pic on Facebook of himself hooked up to an IV drip in Adelaide (**below**) on Tue after coming down with strep while in Canberra last week.

"Getting rest but continuing

to push through & finish strong as High Flyer," he said.



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Trump Rio de Janeiro

TRUMP Hotel Collection has announced plans for its maiden property in South America. The Trump Hotel Rio de Janeiro is slated to open in 2016.

Choice move for Weston agency

INDEPENDENT

retail travel group Travellers Choice has welcomed ex-Harvey World Travel Weston owner Deborah Long and her staff of six to its national network. Rebranded with immediate effect to Weston

Cruise & Travel, the Canberra-based agency has been recognised as the top Scenic Tours seller for the past 2 years.

Long was also named as Scenic's Top Sales Consultant for 2013 and has been nominated as a finalist in this year's CLIA Cruise Consultant of the Year award.

Prior to taking over the agency in 2011, Long had worked in three other HWT offices.

She said the decision to align with Travellers Choice will aid in evolving her business.

"I love the fact that as the sole shareholders of Travellers Choice,



all the benefits come back to members."

Long is **pictured** with Travellers Choice NSW bdm Bruce Russ.

APT Winter program

EIGHT festive itineraries taking in European River cruising, Canada and the South Pole and South America are featured in APT's newly released Winter Wonderland brochure.

Trips range in length from 10 to 30 days including the \$19,495pp 22-day Classic Antarctica journey.

Melbourne no. 1 for short trips

THE Victorian capital has been rated the most popular destination in Australia for domestic short breaks, new Roy Morgan Research data shows.

For the 12 months to Nov 2013 Melbourne was the top domestic location for a trip of one or two nights by those Aussies surveyed, accounting for 6.1% of votes.

Sydney was second at 5.4%, then the Gold Coast at 3.2%.

The NSW North Coast, covering Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Forster, Port Stephens and Taree, was next at 2.9%.

Also in the Top 10 was the Sunshine Coast (2.7%), Brisbane (2.6%), the Hunter Valley (2.2%), NSW South Coast (2.1%), Canberra (2.0%) and the Great Ocean Road (2.0%).

Roy Morgan Research int'l director of tourism, travel and leisure Jane lanniello said Aussies were taking advantage of "alltime low" domestic airfares for a quick getaway.

MEANWHILE, over 200 events are scheduled to take place across Victoria as part of the 2014 Melbourne Food & Wine Festival.

Running from 28 Feb through to 16 Mar, the centrepiece of this year's event is The Immersery: Festival Kitchen, Bar & Raingarden - a three-level space on the banks of the Yarra River, featuring a floating barge bar, open-kitchen eatery and outdoor venue. The festival is now in its 22nd

year - **CLICK HERE** for details.

Contiki PIF reminder

CONSULTANTS are reminded by Contiki to take advantage of the youth tour operator's early payment scheme of 7.5% for bookings to Europe in 2014 paidin-full (PIF) before 31 Mar.

The same discount applies to Asia bookings PIF before 30 Jan.

SPTE choose Pullman

THE inaugural South Pacific Tourism Exchange will be held at the Pullman Hotel in Auckland from 22 to 23 May, event organisers have confirmed.

As revealed by **TD** last month (**TD** 19 Dec), SPTE will directly follow the TRENZ exhibition.

TGTC clarification

THE Golf Touring Company's new three-night package to Tasmania escorted by former ARL legends (*TD* yesterday) departing 14 Nov is priced at \$1,695pp.

Two golf rounds will be played at Lost Farm and one at Barnbougle, and all meals are included.

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Four Seasons growth

UPMARKET hotel operator Four Seasons has released details on the locations for new properties to be opened in coming years.

Brand new builds are expected to open this year in numerous cities across the world including Russia, Johannesburg and Seoul.

The group also championed its strategy of rebranding existing resorts as well as driving growth in residential developments, which make up two thirds of projects currently in development.

WIN A STAY AT AAVA RESORT AND SPA



This week *Travel Daily* is giving one lucky reader the chance to win three nights for two people at Aava Resort and Spa Thailand.

Located on a stunning 9-kilometre stretch of pristine golden sands and clear blue water, Aava Resort and Spa combines traditional Thai friendliness with Scandinavian quality and elegance.

For your chance to win, answer all four questions featured in *Travel Daily* throughout the week.

Email your answers by COB on Fri to: Aava@traveldaily.com.au

Q.2: What is the name of the restaurant at Aava Resort and Spa? Hint! Visit www.aavaresort.com



Legacy of 2018 Games

QUEENSLAND Tourism Minister Jann Stuckey has launched the state's long-term Commonwealth Games 2018 Legacy Strategy, with the plan including a post-games tourism plan for the Gold Coast. Stuckey said world-class venues left after the Games will create

opportunities for the region to bid for future int'l events. The Minister added the tourism

plan would "ensure we maximise the tourism benefits, both during and in the years following the Commonwealth Games".

Affordable Russia trip

NINE guaranteed departures of a new "affordable" escorted tour to Russia have been launched by Beyond Travel, priced at \$945ppts.

The wholesaler says the Simply Russia tour will help counteract a misconception with Aussies that Russia is prohibitively expensive.

EK promotes Boston

EMIRATES has launched a special introductory airfare from Australia to Boston, its eighth and newest destination in the USA.

Economy seats are priced from \$2,084 return, with Business Class set at \$8,048 if booked by 28 Feb.

Price hikes for Crystal

CRYSTAL Cruises will raise the price of cruise fares on a number of its itineraries, in some cases as high as 94%, for bookings made from 01 Mar, the line has said.

The line's president Edie Bornstein says recent strong booking trends on already limited inventory, combined with recent investments in its fleet and special discount sale campaigns will justify the imminent increases.

Falls Creek events

VICTORIA'S Alpine village Falls Creek will host the Regional Longest Lunch on 14 Mar as part of the destination's calendar of events over summer - more info at www.fallscreek.com.au.

New Dubai tourism body

DUBAI is set to introduce a pernight fee to be levied on all visitor stays to the Emirate in order to help fund the operation of a new promotional body for the Emirate.

To be known as the Tourism Dirham, the nightly surcharge will apply to all hotel, apartment and short-term accommodation stays, although no specific date for its introduction has been set as yet.

Dubai ruler His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum has issued a directive for the establishment of the new organisation - to be known as the Dubai Corporation for Tourism & Commerce Marketing (DCTCM).

The new government-regulated organisation will launch and promote "Brand Dubai" through a network of offices situated in key markets around the world.

DCTCM will be an affiliate arm of the existing Dept of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) and will seek to build relationships with public and private sector firms with the collaborative aim of boosting inbound arrival numbers.

Additional funding for the new organisation will come from an annual government budget as well as monies generated from sponsorships, promotional campaigns and other means.

Short-term projects for the body will include the opening of a new tourist information outlet located in the city centre, to complement those already in operation at Dubai Airport and the Dubai Cruise Terminal.

"In the lead up to [Expo] 2020, there is a need for us to continue to develop and enhance our tourism and trade marketing and compete as peers with the world's leading global cities," DTCM director general His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri said of the new organisation.

"This in turn will attract more visitors and businesses and help to expand Dubai's economy," Almarri added.

Bunnik bags TDU int'l exposure



BUNNIK Tours headquarters in Adelaide took centre stage during coverage of the Santos Tour Down Under held last week in South Australia.

During the final stage of racing around the streets of the City of Churches, Bunnik promoted its travel brand with arguably the world's largest suitcase mounted atop the store's eave (**pictured**). MD Dennis Bunnik told **TD** at 7 metres long, the suitcase could be seen from several blocks away. Bunnik captured this shot with Aussie Cadel Evans (far right).



SEC @ Glebe Island ready to roll



FINAL touches are being made to the temporary Sydney Exhibition Centre @ Glebe Island ahead of its first event, scheduled for the middle of next month.

A trial commissioning event designed to test all of the services in place for the facility took place last Fri, with 83% of visitors surveyed rating the experience as good or excellent.

"This was a good opportunity to test the venue operations, transport, logistics and catering ahead of the first major exhibition and we were pleased with the outcomes," SEC@GI general manager Malu Barrios said.

The temporary facility will be in place for the next three years as the new Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Centre at Darling Harbour gradually takes shape. Services available for attendees

UNWTO leader to visit

UNITED Nations World Tourism Organisation secretarygeneral Taleb Rifai will conduct a presentation to the industry on key global travel trends during a visit to Sydney next month.

Rifai will speak on 06 Feb at 5:30pm, with more information on his presentation available via ATEC - phone (02) 8262 5500.

and delegates include special event ferries operated by Captain Cook Cruises as well as buses from Sydney's Central Station, with transport schedules to be tailored to the needs of each show.

Barrios is **pictured** above with many of her team on the steps of the ready-to-go facility.

Record year at Changi

A NEW record of 53.7 million passengers passed through Singapore's Changi Airport during 2013, new full year statistics from the Changi Airport Group show.

The result was a 5% increase year-on-year, with Dec marking the first month the airport saw more than 5 million passengers in a single month since its opening.

MEANWHILE, Singapore Airlines has released special Economy class return fares to Bali from its east coast Australia hubs, priced from \$779 for travel from 10 Feb-10 Apr, now on sale to 24 Feb.

Sabre power AA Res

AMERICAN Airlines has signed an agreement with Sabre to provide and develop a reservation platform as part of its integration with merged partner US Airways. Integration to the new service is expected to take up to two years.



Wednesday 29th Jan 2014

Holiday Park brochure

TEMPO Holidays has released its 2014 European Holiday Parks brochure, which features accom offerings designed to mix with self-drive and rail itineraries.

Park accom covered includes more than 160 options in 11 countries including France, Italy, Switzerland and Central Europe.

Among the self-drive itineraries in the guide is a 14-day Italian Contrasts tour which takes pax to Rome, Florence, the Tuscan coast

NZ is still All Black

AIR New Zealand will this year launch a global advertising campaign promoting its close association with the national All Blacks rugby union team.

The promotion will feature well known players and will launch ahead of the team's Steinlager Series against England this year across social media, online and print channels.

Topdeck local deals

SAVINGS of 7.5% are available on youth tour operator Topdeck's range of 20 Australia and NZ tours when booked and paid by 28 Feb, with itineraries taking in many well known and hidden highlights.



Accommodation Updates

WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily*'s Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



Las Vegas' New Tropicana Resort has opened the doors to new Sky Villa Suites, which form part of the property's US\$20m refurbishment. Positioned on the 20th floor of the Paradise Tower, guests enjoy sweeping Strip views via full-length windows, with rooms containing

custom furnishings. Each offers a Master bedroom with plush carpets, bathroom with two walk-in steam showers, water closet & whirlpool spa.



The Sparrows Hotel in Palm Springs, California has reopened after a complete tear down and rebuild. The property exudes the charm of a classic 1950's ranch-style motel with modern conveniences and luxuries. Built using redwood stone walls, rooms offer

an outdoor fireplace, some with horse-trough bathtubs and hand-built furniture. Final touches are being added to an on-site restaurant and bar.



Utilising natural tones to complement the traditional design of the resort, remodelling works have now been completed at the **Centara Villas Samui** in Thailand. Designed to enhance the holiday experience by welcoming guests in a warm and vibrant way, the lobby overlooks landscaped gardens and out to the

ocean, and offers custom built furniture and lighting. A nearby bar which has also benefited from the renovator's brush creates a trendy nightspot.





India ready to tee off

GOLF tourism will become the next big focus for destination promotion and attracting inbound visitors to India, the country's Tourism Ministry has announced.

Virtuoso chalk up a decade in Oz



LUXURY travel network Virtuoso has concluded a series of events across Australia in celebration of its first decade of representation in the country.

Events were hosted in Sydney, Melbourne and on the Gold Coast and attended by many of the by-invitation group's 31 partner agency members, who collectively operate 53 offices in Aus and NZ.

Also in attendance was the network's new executive general manager Michael Londregan, who was named in the position late last week (*TD* Thu).

The group's Sydney-based members, **pictured** above at their local event, in the back row from left consist of Sharyn Kitchener, Goldman Travel; Mary Gava, Concierge Traveller and Tina Killeen from Spencer Travel. Middle row: Julie Denovan, Virtuoso; Anna McMurtrie, Wentworth Travel and Julie King from MP Travel.

Front row: Roger Hudson, Mary Rossi Travel; Claudia Rossi Hudson, Mary Rossi Travel; Maria Theodosatos, Spencer Eastside; Terry Wengdal, Jetset Rose Bay; Bev Cohen, Wentworth Travel; Paul Patane, Concierge Traveller and Michael Londregan, Virtuoso.

Walter Mitty effective

EUROPEAN walking tour firm UTracks has reported a significant increase in enquiries for walking holidays in Iceland thanks to *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* movie. UTracks said its "Walking in Iceland" page was its most visited for Jan, with a 20% year-on-year increase in bookings recorded.

China Southern strength in sails

AS ONE of the major sponsors of the 2014 Sydney Festival, China Southern Airlines again dolled up one of Sydney's Ferries for the annual Australia Day harbour race.

Travel Daily was invited along for the ride, positioned up front for the dash around Shark Island and under the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Cheering the ferry on was a 200-strong crew of travel industry partners, media and China Southern staff, all chanting "jai you" - Mandarin for "fill up

the engine with gas and go".

On this occasion, the race went to the crew on the NRMA vessel, however as a former winner of the event itself, the China Southern Airlines team all had a great morning on the harbour. **Pictured** above in front of the

SYD Airport signage

OUTDOOR advertising firm oOh! Media has completed a major upgrade of digital signage at Sydney Airport T2.

The upgrade includes 24 new digital billboards at baggage collection and two large digital panels suspended from the ceiling located on approach to airline check-in areas.

"We've invested in zones where dwell time is highest so advertisers can communicate with a captive audience," oOh Media group director Robbie Dery said.



colourfully decorated China Southern Airlines ferry from left is corporate affairs manager Bill Bryant, Nancy Lan Huang and CZ contact centre mgr Azad Rehman.

Final year for AirTran

AMERICAN low-cost carrier Southwest Airlines is expecting to complete the full integration of subsidiary AirTran and retire the brand by the end of this year.

Southwest ceo Gary Kelly said the carrier is on-track with its schedule in transferring 88 of AirTran's B717-200 fleet to Delta Air Lines and to replace routes operated by the outgoing carrier.

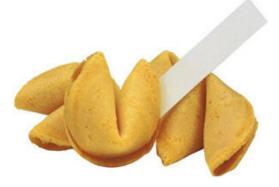
MEANWHILE, Southwest has begun selling tickets for its first international destinations, with daily non-stop services between Atlanta, Baltimore and Orlando to Aruba, Nassau and Montego Bay, beginning from 01 Jul.



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GREAT GROUPS - EUROPE & BEYOND! TEMPORARY TRAVEL CONSULTANT SYDNEY CBD - LONG TERM TEMP ROLE

Enjoy booking unique, specialist group touring holidays for a niche market including school and student groups and highend private groups. Manage calls and emails from well respected clientele creating unique worldwide, group travel bookings for various famous worldwide events. Long Term temp role with the chance to extend if successful, Monday to Friday only AND get paid weekly! The ideal candidate will have some group booking experience & GDS skills. Make the change to Groups today!

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Our client, an innovative & reputable travel company is seeking 3 experienced customer focused travel consultants to join their expanding team. This role will see you move away from face to face consulting & assist direct clients with their after sales queries. You must have minimum 12 months travel experience and Galileo skills to be eligible for this position. You will be welcomed into a friendly team, working in their new office only minutes away from the city centre. Ability to work a rotating roster essential. Apply today!

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NATIVE CALYPSO TEMPS WANTED TRAVEL TEMPS BRISBANE CBD – TOP HOURLY RATE

Are you in between roles? A whiz on native calypso? Then we need to talk... We are currently looking for expert native calypso temps for upcoming wholesale assignments. Working in these fun and friendly teams you'll be selling wholesale travel and assisting agents over the phone and via email. A top hourly rate is on offer along with a weekly pay cheque and possible temp to perm opportunities. All you need is previous travel consulting experience, strong native calypso skills and a can do attitude.



My Holly Stubington, Travel Counsellor

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I've always worked in the travel industry and I love it, especially now. I had owned and managed a bricks and mortar agency before taking a long maternity leave however I longed for a rewarding work environment. I also wasn't keen on the idea of directional selling, and found the prospect of being independent where I could concentrate on what is right for the customer really exciting, whilst having the support around the clock from seven countries. I really felt cared for. Read more at **www.travelhomeworking.com.au/ourstories** →

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