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For more details, see the cover page of today's Travel Daily.

Qantas learning hub

QANTAS has revamped its online "Learning Hub," with a new look, interactive videos and other tools including a calendar.

Every two weeks a new program will be uploaded to the Learning Hub, which is now online at www.qantas.com.au/learninghub.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has seven pages of news a cover page for **Ponant** plus full pages from:

- AA Appointments jobs
- Oceania Cruises

There will be no **TD** issue next Mon due to the public holiday.

Australasia key for NCL

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line's new Australian office (TD 01 Jul) is part of major international expansion plans for the company, which will boost its capacity by 40% in the coming years.

Speaking to *Travel Daily* in Sydney yesterday on the first formal day of the local operation, Harry Sommer, executive vice president of NCL Holdings said Australia joins new offices in Brazil and Hong Kong, with further growth planned in Asia.

"North America has been a great market for us, but growth is slowing," he said.

The acquisition of Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises has given Norwegian critical mass, with a combined 21 vessels across its three brands.

More are coming too, with Norwegian Escape to launch next month and the upcoming Oceania Sirena and Regent Seven Seas Explorer debuting in 2016.

Sommer said the company believed having a local call centre in the new Sydney office would be a significant advantage for agents selling all three brands,

providing support for existing partnerships representing Oceania and Regent Seven Seas.

He said Australia was already a top three market for the company, with the brands "resonating really well with the Australian consumer".

Sommer wouldn't be drawn on the expected growth in local business, but said moving from one employee in Australia and New Zealand to around 40 was an indication of the potential.

"Put it this way, if we were looking to grow 5% I wouldn't bother," he said.

NCL has already published its itineraries out to 2017 so there are no short-term plans to expand local deployments for the company which will bring Norwegian Star for a limited season cruising out of Sydney and Auckland in 2016/17.

But with further capacity under construction including two new "Breakaway-Plus" class ships for delivery in 2018 and 2019, "we will be assessing opportunities for the future," Sommer said.

More in Tue's Cruise Weekly.





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VA axe ALH, EPR, RVT

THREE destinations in Western Australia will disappear entirely from the Virgin Australia network effective 28 Feb next year.

Services to Albany, Esperance and Ravensthorpe were reduced in Dec last year (TD 03 Dec), however demand has now slipped to unsustainable levels.

The latest cuts take the number of regional destinations axed in WA to four after Busselton, which loses VA service from 22 Apr.

Virgin Australia has issued a commercial policy & waiver code of SWF21390913WA to remove change and cancellation fees for affected passengers.

Record global loads

AVERAGE load factors on air services globally reached a record 84.7% in Aug, according to the latest passenger data from IATA.

Total passenger demand for the month rose 7.1% year-on-year, while capacity in turn grew 5.9%.

Helloworld NZ agent exodus

MORE than thirty Helloworld affiliated agencies in New Zealand have resigned from the group in the wake of the company's move to establish the helloworld brand across the Tasman (TD Mon).

Earlier this week Helloworld ceo Elizabeth Gaines confirmed the acquisition of ten Air New Zealand Holidays offices across the country, with Air NZ exiting the retail operations which it now considers as non-core.

The move is expected to see the company rebrand its existing Harvey World Travel and United Travel franchisees as helloworld - a move which has been long resisted by the 45 or so United Travel members.

According to reports this morning, more than two thirds of the United Travel members have resigned, with rival group First Travel announcing that it will grow by 34 new agencies.

Helloworld NZ ceo Greg Leighton has confirmed the departures, saving "some franchisees have made the decision that our approach is not for them.

"While this is disappointing, we are confident that we will offer an extremely strong value proposition for our New Zealand branded and associate franchisees," he said.

United Travel, which is 50% owned by its members, voted earlier this year not to adopt the Helloworld brand (TD 06 Mar).

Leighton said the decision to establish helloworld had "resonated well with our Harvey World Travel franchisees".

He said the company would continue to work closely with members on a case-by-case basis ahead of the 2016 launch of helloworld in New Zealand "to achieve an optimal outcome for all".

SANZAR rugby pact

FLIGHT Centre entertainment and sports management travel brand Stage & Screen Travel Services has secured a five-year contract for int'l rugby union.

SANZAR, a joint venture made up of rugby union organisations in Argentina, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, saw travel arrangements for players, officials and staff managed by Stage & Screen, starting from yesterday.

The contract for Stage & Screen covers international test matches as well as the Super Rugby comp.

Stage & Screen general manager Tiziano Galipo said the company was skilled in managing complex travel logistics with multinational itineraries and excess baggage.

"Under our service model, each team across SANZAR's key regions will have a dedicated Stage and Screen travel manager. This will ensure team managers & players have a single point of contact for all of their travel needs," he said.



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Friday 2nd Oct 2015



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Hotel hurdles hit tourism

A PLETHORA of planning regulations are causing significant delays and uncertainty for hotel developments which are "vital to Australia's surging tourism sector," according to a report released today by Trade Minister Andrew Robb and new Tourism Minister Richard Colbeck.

The Urbis report on Hotel Development Regulations in Australia, commissioned by Austrade, identifies opportunities to improve planning and environmental approval processes across the country.

The report recommends that federal, state, territory and local governments work together to promote "simplicity, transparency and predictability" in all jurisdictions, with Robb saying new properties are required to boost the quality and supply of hotel rooms.

He said there was a healthy

pipeline of hotel investment opportunities, particularly in capital cities.

"Now it is time for us to deliver on that pipeline," he said.

Colbeck said too often new hotel developments are slowed by unnecessary red tape.

"Working across all levels of government to make our regulatory environment more investment-friendly will have broader benefits outside tourism," he said.

Another recommendation urges stronger coordination between different levels of government, adopting a flexible approach to design requirements, making 'fast tracked' development approval processes available for low risk projects, and putting more emphasis on preapproval engagement and case management - to view the report, see www.austrade.gov.au.

Cathay ADL fare sale

CATHAY Pacific has released an Asia Getaway promo for flights ex Adelaide, on sale during Oct.

Economy class return fares start at \$654 to Hong Kong, \$636 to Shanghai or Beijing, \$752 to Tokyo and \$756 to Osaka.

Flights are also available to
Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia.
Offers apply for travel from 24

Offers apply for travel from 24 Dec-31 Aug, (seasonal surcharges and blackouts apply).

Last week, CX announced the addition of a new fourth weekly service to Adelaide, starting Dec.

Velocity Accor pact

MEMBERS of Virgin Australia's loyalty scheme Velocity can now accrue points for stays at 2,700 AccorHotels properties across 13 brands in 92 countries.

The new partnership enables Le Club AccorHotels Points to be converted into Velocity Points on a 1 to 1 ratio.

CLICK HERE for all the details.



Window Seat

THE NSW South Coast township of Huskisson on Jervis Bay is clearly hoping for an influx of *Bachelorette*-inspired tourism.

One of the aspiring suitors on the popular reality show is Sasha Mielczarek, who is currently a front runner in the quest to win Sam Frost's heart.

Sasha hails from Huskisson, and the quick-thinking locals have added a Bachelorette-themed banner (below) to the welcome sign so visitors are aware of the celebrity local.





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Mantra on Mary, Bris

SERVICED apartment operator Mantra Group has acquired the management and letting rights to its largest property in Brisbane in the M on Mary Apartment Hotel.

Effective 01 Nov, it will rebrand as the Mantra on Mary.

The 43-storey tower will become Mantra's eighth property in the Queensland capital and its largest with 367 one and threebedroom apartments.

Public facilities will include an outdoor pool, BBQ, gym, sauna, spa, free lobby wi-fi and more.

Hurricane Joaquin

EVASIVE action has been taken by a number of cruise ships off the east coast of the US to stay clear of Hurricane Joaquin.

The weather system is set to unleash on the Bahamas, with the Carnival Pride, Carnival Valor and Norwegian Getaway shelving planned port calls and opting to remain at sea to avoid the storm.

Casa Angelina offer

CASA Angelina on Italy's Amalfi Coast is offering Australians 15% off stays of three nights or more.

The luxury hotel is also throwing in a 10% discount on dinner at Un Piano Nel Cielo Restaurant. a complimentary bottle of Casa Angelina Champagne and fruit platter upon arrival and early check-in or late check-out.

The offer applies to bookings confirmed by 15 May for stays from 24 Mar-31 May and Autumn bookings confirmed by 15 Oct for stays from 01 Oct-25 Oct 2016.

For more specials, see page 7.

Earlybird reminder

TIME is running out to take advantage of Scenic's Europe River Cruising earlybirds, bookable until 31 Oct.

Earlybirds include free flights to Europe, Business class flights from \$2,995 and the waiving of the single supplement for the solo traveller - scenic.com.au.



JQ, LAN flag c'share growth

FURTHER details of the new codeshare arrangement between Jetstar and LATAM Airlines (TD 21 Sep) have been revealed, with the Latin American carrier to place its code on 15 JQ-operated flights.

Effective 25 Oct, the initial arrangement will see Jetstar carry LAN Airlines' designator code on Trans-Tasman routes ex Auckland to Melbourne & the Gold Coast.

Also from Auckland, the new codeshare will cover domestic routes to Christchurch, Dunedin, Queenstown and Wellington.

In Australia, LAN will place its code on Jetstar metal to Byron

Eurostar incentive

QANTAS Holidays has launched a Eurostar incentive for agents, rewarding the top selling agency of tickets booked during the earlybird period of 22 Sep-03 Nov with a \$500 restaurant voucher. See www.ghv.com.au for info.

Bay, Cairns, Darwin, Gold Coast, Hamilton Island, Maroochydore and Hobart, ex Sydney.

LAN Airlines said in a statement: "In the future, the airline expects to strengthen the alliance by incorporating international routes between countries in Oceania and South America."

LATAM Airlines Grp vp strategic alliances Soledad Berrios said the new deal strengthens the existing relationship with Jetstar.

New agency owners

WESTERN Australia Travellers Choice agency Bridge the World Travel & Cruise Centre in Two Rocks has been acquired by Julie Maina and Melanie Grigoratos.

Together, the duo possess over 30 years travel experience across travel, tourism & airline sectors.

Maina was agency manager at Bridge the World for over a year prior to linking with Grigoratos.



Happy selling!



ABOVE: Britain is hopeful of a similar 'legacy effect' for tourists after the Rugby World Cup as it experienced in the years following the 2012 London Olympic Games.

With the 2015 Rugby World Cup underway, packaged sales for the tournament sold through Australian sellers (Flight Centre, Gulliver Sport Travel, Qantas Holidays and Sportsnet Holidays) reached the 15,000 mark - on par with expectations from the local tourism board, VisitBritain.

"Expectations were there would be an additional 30,000 Australian vistors into the UK, and by all accounts the [Rugby World Cup] packages have sold really well," insights & communications mgr Australia Kristen Angus told *TD*.

While exact market attendances may be hard to gauge for the RWC, Angus said Britain as a whole is set to prosper once again from another major sporting event in the years to come.

"Hallmark events such as the Olympics have done so much for Britain in terms of driving our welcome message.

"I think we are the only nation to successfully build on tourism after an Olympics where we had two years growth out of Australia."

Angus said Britain's next major sports event would be the 2019

Cricket World Cup, which would likely see a spike in arrivals out of the subcontinent and Australia.

Next year, Britain is celebrating the Year of Gardens in London for Lancelot 'Capability' Brown who revolutionised landscape design in the UK 300 years ago.

VisitBritain marketing manager Mark Haynes told *Travel Daily* gardens are a massive touch point for Australians, with some 60% of Aussies visiting a garden or park while in the United Kingdom.

Iconic garden sites incl Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire (which will also appear in the soon-to-be-released 007 film, *Spectre*) and Chatsworth House in Derbyshire.

The birth dates of many 'Literary Legends' will also form a focal point of celebrations next year, with events in the Lakes District to mark the 150th birthday of Beatrix Potter and in Wales for the 100th birthday of Roald Dahl.

Other literary milestones incl Charlotte Bronte's 200th birthday and 400 years since the death of William Shakespeare.

A 'Great Value Britain' guide has been launched, listing 14 free things to do in Britain - see **HERE**.

Pictured are VisitBritain's Kersti Martin, Mark Haynes and Kristen Angus at a media event in Sydney hosted at Nel Restaurant on Thu.

Echo Entertainment

TOURISM has every ability to fill the economic gap left by the mining downturn, according to Echo Entertainment ceo Matt Bekier, but only if infrastructure & services are significantly improved.

Speaking at an American Chamber of Commerce function in Sydney this week, Bekier said better signage for Chinese tourists also need a wider rollout.

"We're number one in terms of where they want to go, but we're only number 15 in terms of where they actually go," he said.

"This is going to be the next mining boom," Bekier added.

Echo Entertainment was chosen as the preferred proponent to develop a casino & integrated resort complex at the Queen's Wharf in Brisbane (*TD* 21 Jul), with building to begin in 2017.

Bekier said tourism was now in an "arms race" of sorts, with cities around the world competing for the attention and spend of global travel markets such as China.

Amtrak baggage levy

PASSENGERS boarding Amtrak trains in North America with more than two carry-on bags and two personal items will now be hit with a \$20 fine for each extra.

Overweight bags owners will be slugged also if carry-on bags weigh more than 50lbs (22.6kgs) or if personal items tip the scales at more than 25lbs (11.3kgs).

Venezuela warning

ESCALATING tensions on the border between Venezuela and Colombia in South America have led DFAT to issue a warning to any Australia travellers in the area.

Venezuela has closed its land border to Colombia indefinitely, with DFAT urging Aussies not to consider trying to cross by land.



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Philippines agent tool

TOURISM Philippines has launched an online travel agent training course aimed at making the destination easier to sell.

The Philippines Specialist Program will consist of a series of modules able to be completed at leisure, with graduates to be given priority access to famil trips & furnished with new sales leads.

Orlando face scans

AUTOMATED facial recognition technology will be employed to scan arriving passengers in the US as part of new requirements from US Customs & Border Protection.

Airport tech giant SITA will drive the rollout, to begin at Orlando Airport before being rolled out to other international gateways.

Noosa Global Strategy

A FIVE-PRONGED strategy to build a sustainable global tourism market has this week been outlined by Tourism Noosa as it seeks to grow its global brand.

The Noosa Global Market Strategy 2015-2017 was outlined by ceo Damien Massingham and calls for new partnerships, trade engagement, consumer marketing and new product ideas.

Unveiled to stakeholders, the strategy objectives are to see the average visitor spend and length of stay increased as well as creating compelling holiday offers.

Tourism Noosa said it will continue to work closely with Sunshine Coast Destination Ltd, focusing on established markets and supporting local marketing.

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Orminatours.com.

The name 'Ormina' is a derivative of what Sicilian town?

CX's Marco Polo rejig

CATHAY Pacific Airways' Marco Polo Club loyalty program will change to a points-based system on 15 Apr.

The points will be based on a combination of the cabin customers travel in, the fare class booked & the distance travelled.

It will allow members to earn club points from a wider range of fares & those who fly in premium classes earn tier status faster.

CX will also introduce extra lounge passes for members and their guests and will lower the qualifying age for members to 12, down from 18.

VA, QF F1 contingency

VIRGIN Australia and Qantas have issued a waiver for pax affected by the change of date of the Melbourne Formula 1 Grand Prix to mid Mar (*TD* yesterday).

Next year's Melbourne F1 was initially to be held from 31 Mar-03 Apr but has been brought forward to 17-20 Mar.

VA's waiver can be applied to additional fare, taxes and change fees eventuating from the need to change ticketed Virgin Australia (795) flights issued before on or before 01 Oct.

Agents can use the waiver code of 'SWF014010MELF1' up until 2359 AEST 31 Oct.

QF passengers with affected domestic or international flights to/from MEL over specific dates can (without fee) rebook travel, change destination or retain the value of the ticket in credit.

All Qantas changes must be made by 15 Oct - for full details, see www.qantas.com.au/agents.

Eclipse fly free promo

savings of up to \$2,500 per couple travelling to South America with its Companions Fly Free packages, which include a range of select tours to South America, including the 14-day South America Essentials trip.

The offer is valid until 11 Nov for Travel from Mar-Sep 2016.

For more info. **CLICK HERE**.

DoubleTree Jimo

DOUBLETREE by Hilton Qingdao-Jimo has opened in Shandong, China offering 365 rooms, more than 2000m² of meeting space, four dining options and business centre.

The hotel has a heated indoor pool, 24-hour fitness centre, steam room, sauna & whirlpool.

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Please send your resume through to italk.ttt@gmail.com

Singapore cycle tour

SPICEROADS Cycle Tours has three new short tours in Singapore: a 4hr heritage trail, 3hr evening jaunt and a 120km challenging road bike ride.



Friday 2nd Oct 2015

Quest Apartments Soldier On

QUEST

QUEST

Apartment Hotels members in Nowra and Liverpool have joined forces to donate \$6,000 to Soldier On, a charity supporting current and exsoldiers wounded while serving Australia.

Soldier On NSW

state manager Sarah Bowe expressed gratitude for the generous contribution.



ABOVE: Tom Wang, Quest Liverpool franchisee and Sarah Bowe, NSW State manager for Soldier On.

LEFT: James Blanchett, Quest Nowra franchisee and Darrin Lincoln, Soldier On NSW reintegration officer.

Metro Hotels promo

Metro Hotels are offering 25% off the best available rate for stays between 13 Dec 2015-15 Jan 2016, for bookings by 31 Oct.

To book or for more info, see www.metrohotels.com.au.

JetBlue adds Quito

SEATS are on sale today for JetBlue's Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport-Quito, Ecuador's Mariscal Sucre International Airport route, with service beginning 25 Feb.



Reservations Supervisor

FULL TIME JOB OPPORTUNITY MSC Cruises (Australia)

MSC Cruises (Australia) Sydney office is seeking a highly motivated Reservation Supervisor to join our fast growing Cruise Division.

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The ideal candidate will have excellent oral and written communication skills, high proficiency in Microsoft Office particularly excel along with project management experience and the ability to work under pressure, be sales driven and interact with the Sales and Marketing Departments. Salary on application.

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Travel Specials

THIS week's Travel Specials is brought to you by Freestyle Holidays. 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.



Rayavadee Krabi in Thailand is offering a huge 50% off room rates for four-night stays in a Terrace Pavilion between 28 Sept and 31 Oct. Packages including breakfast start from \$1,195 pp. Book by 31 Oct 15, for more information, CLICK HERE.

Three FREE nights are on offer for all seven-night stays at **Kuta Station** Resort in Tuban Bali. Seven-night packages including breakfast and 15% off spa treatments start from \$299pp for a Deluxe Room Valid for travel 28 Sept to 23 Dec, to find out more, CLICK HERE.

Velassaru Maldives are offering great value packages in Deluxe Bungalow for five nights including one FREE night, reduced rates, breakfast daily and a meet and greet at Malé airport with return speedboat transfers for \$1,349pp. Packages must be booked at least 60 days prior to travel and are valid o1 May to 24 Jul 2016. For details, CLICK HERE.

Discover Ireland with early bird rates on Irelands Ancient East self-drive itinerary. Packages include reduced rates, seven nights accommodation, Irish breakfast daily, Heritage Island guide and all service charges and taxes. Packages start from \$765pp and valid for travel o1 Jan to 30 Apr 2016 and 01 Oct16 to 31 Dec 2016. Book by 31 Oct 2015. For more information, CLICK HERE.

All specials can be found on our website http://www.pinpointtravelgroup.com.au/info/latest-deals/

Aeromexico rail link

MEXICAN airline Aeromexico has inked a new agreement with AccesRail, providing customers with connectivity options on rail and bus services in Spain, the United Kingdom and Canada.

Service providers include rail operators Renfe in Spain to 31 destinations, First Great Western in the UK to 11 cities and VIA Rail Canada to 13 locations, as well as 29 destinations on National Express' UK bus network.

BridgeClimb parties

BRIDGECLIMB Sydney has introduced party packages above Sydney Harbour.

Celebrating its 17th birthday yesterday, BridgeClimb hosted its first ever birthday party on the summit for 11 children from Fort St Public School in the Rocks, with entertainers, party hats and entertainers arranged.

Parties can be tailored to suit specific requests - for more info, phone (02) 8274-7777.



Cadbury centre shuts

CHOCOLATE-MAKER Cadbury has confirmed it will close its visitor centre in the Hobart suburb of Claremont in mid-Dec.

The visitor centre replaced the popular factory tours that were phased out by Cadbury in 2008.

Tourism Minister Richard Colbeck referred to the closure as "disappointing" but said he was pleased there was an option for another operator to potentially provide an alternative tourismbased experience on site.

New NY subway stop

THE Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has opened the new 34 St-Hudson Yards 7 Station.

The US\$2.42b, 2.4km extension of the 7 Line introduces subway service to the far West Side of midtown Manhattan, with access to the High Line & Jacob Javits Convention Center.



Friday 2nd Oct 2015

Fraser Instameet

FRASER Coast Opportunities will be hosting an Instameet event on 03 Oct from 7.30am at WetSide Waterpark.

An Instameet is where Instagrammers gather in different locations at a set time to take photos and upload them.

GSAs for FlySolomon

FLYSOLOMONS is expanding its booking scope, appointing APG Network as its GSA representative in 11 countries.

APG Network will oversee sales for the carrier in Canada, France. Germany, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, the UK and the USA.



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 at www.traveldaily.com.au.

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