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Travel Daily

First with the news

Thursday 15th December 2016



Ovation cover page

“**SUPERCRUISING**” has today debuted in Sydney with the docking of Royal Caribbean’s *Ovation of the Seas* at Circular Quay today - see **cover page**.

At 348m in length, weighing 168,666 tonnes & with a capacity for 5,000 guests (and 1,500 crew), *Ovation* is Royal Caribbean’s fifth locally based ship.

“SuperCruising on *Ovation of the Seas* marks the dawn of a new era of cruising down under,” Royal Caribbean md Australia & NZ, Adam Armstrong said.

Crown Perth opening

CROWN Towers Perth has been officially opened in the WA capital, setting “a new standard in the high-end tourism market”.

Pitched at the “high-growth potential domestic & international luxury traveller”, the 500 room, suite and villa resort also features restaurants, bars, a business centre, luxury retail outlets, world class spa and a 1,500 seat ballroom.

Western Australia Premier Colin Barnett said Crown Towers Perth built on the unprecedented investment in hotels currently underway in Perth.

“With the development of the new Perth Stadium nearby, the opening of Elizabeth Quay and the recent announcement of direct flights from Europe to Western Australia, the state is now well placed to increase the value of tourism,” Barnett said.

Virgin Aus/Air Canada c’s

AIR Canada has formed a strategic cooperation agreement with Virgin Australia aimed at making travel between Canada & Australia & New Zealand easier.

Stage 1 of the alliance will see Virgin Australia begin codesharing on AC’s services from Los Angeles to Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Montreal from early 2017.

Likewise, Air Canada customers will be able to book travel on a single ticket to an additional 10 cities down under on VA operated flights connecting with AC’s year-round flights to SYD and BNE.

The Australian cities include Adelaide, Gold Coast, Canberra, Cairns, Melbourne and Perth, as well as Christchurch, Auckland and Wellington in New Zealand.

Future stages of the airlines’ Memorandum of Understanding will extend to a reciprocal frequent flyer redemption scheme on each other’s flights.

Virgin Australia will also be able to place its code on AC’s flights from Sydney and Brisbane to Vancouver in the future.

VA Group executive John

Thomas said the initial stages of the tie-up would enhance Virgin Australia’s proposition to Canada, via Los Angeles.

AC president and chief exec officer Calin Rovinescu said the MoU “lays the ground work for a mutually beneficial commercial cooperation that will offer Air Canada customers more travel options & frequent flyer benefits”.

In Oct, Air Canada’s director Asia & Pacific Lee Poh Kait (PK) flagged a possible alliance with Virgin Australia to **TD**, saying a pact would make the Canadian carrier more competitive in this market.

“We’re happy to look at the opportunities with Virgin on a more strategic and long-term basis because it will open up more opportunities in terms of feeding the traffic into Brisbane and Sydney, or even from Auckland to these gateways,” PK told **Travel Daily** exclusively.

“Australia is one area where we feel there should be a more strategic and sustainable relationship,” the AC exec said.

“The other important element is the frequent flyer benefit. When you have this close a relationship you can leverage off each others programs which is quite crucial in Australia.”

Ultimately, the partnership with Virgin would span a joint venture involving a sharing of costs and potentially revenue sharing, “that would be the next thing”, PK said.

HA lie-flat deployment

HAWAIIAN Airlines is today promoting the roll-out of its new 180 degree lie-flat seating in its Premium Cabin on the Sydney & Brisbane routes - see **page nine**.

The product also offers in-seat AC power and two USB ports.



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Today’s issue of TD

Travel Daily today has eight pages of news and photos, a front cover wrap for **Royal Caribbean Cruise Line**, a photo page from **Virtuoso** and full pages from: (**click**)

- Hawaiian Airlines
- AA Appointments jobs

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QF PNG update

QANTAS has confirmed it will codeshare on Air Niugini's flights from Port Moresby to Sydney and Brisbane effective 18 Dec, while PG will codeshare on QF flights from Brisbane to PNG.

The International Air Services Commission has denied QF the ability to codeshare on Air Niugini flights to Cairns (**TD** 18 Nov), meaning passengers will be able to earn Qantas Points, but not Status Credits, on the services.



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ACCC defends FLT action

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission says it pursued its long-running court case against Flight Centre (**TD** breaking news) because it was concerned that the agency group's conduct had "affected the competitive process".

Yesterday afternoon both Flight Centre and the ACCC issued formal responses to the judgement, which overturned the previous ruling and found that FLT had breached the Trade Practices Act by attempting to influence airlines not to offer lower fares directly to consumers.

ACCC Chairman Rod Sims said "at the core of the matter is the question of whether Flight Centre and the airlines are legally considered competitors.

"The ACCC has always maintained that they are in competition with one another to sell flights to consumers," he said.

Sims said the High Court ruling would provide important guidance for the future application of competition laws in Australia, in situations where competing offers were made directly to consumers by both agents and their principals.

MEANWHILE, Flight Centre managing director Graham Turner welcomed the resolution of the case and said the company did not currently believe there were any further implications for the business, "given that it voluntarily and proactively adjusted its behaviour before the ACCC initiated legal action".

However he noted the ACCC's vigorous pursuit of the matter, with the Commission undertaking "a long and expensive legal case

that challenged new and complex areas of competition law" despite full ongoing cooperation from Flight Centre.

"While the ACCC is well within its rights to test the law, we feel that this matter could have been resolved in a more amicable, timely and less expensive way."

He contrasted the ACCC's approach with its recent dealings with Expedia and Booking.com, where it came to an agreement which allowed the OTAs to enforce contracts stopping hoteliers from offering cheaper online prices to the public (**TD** 02 Sep).

Turner said "we expect the OTA agreement may now have to be revisited in light of the decision".

The ACCC-Flight Centre matter has now been referred back to the Full Federal Court for a hearing about whether the original \$11 million penalty in the case, which was refunded after a successful appeal, was "excessive or inadequate," Turner said.

The first hearing in the case took place in 2012, in relation to conduct alleged to have taken place between 2005 and 2009.

Sydney rates to rise

SYDNEY hotel rates will continue to rise, despite a string of new upscale properties in the pipeline, according to AccorHotels chief operating officer Pacific Simon McGrath.

"Sydney needs 3,000 new rooms, but there's only 1,000 coming in," McGrath told **TD** at last night's 50th anniversary of the Sofitel Sydney Wentworth (see page **five**).

"It is under-stocked still, in terms of rooms."

The city's hotel supply will increase over coming years with major developments including the Sofitel Darling Harbour, Crown Sydney and the Ritz-Carlton Sydney planned for The Star at Pyrmont.

The current building boom is the largest to impact Sydney since the pre-Olympic period.

Despite this, McGrath said properties such as the Wentworth would continue to benefit from rising rates and provided better prospects as hotel assets than as apartments or office space.

"New supply is not a threat in Sydney, based on the levels of new supply coming in," he said.

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AA fined \$1.6 million

AMERICAN Airlines has been slapped with a US\$1.6 million fine from the US govt due to tarmac delays of more than three hours and not allowing pax to deplane on 27 flights over two years.

The US Dept of Transportation said the incidents dated back to 2013 when 20 flights were grounded with passengers on board at Charlotte Int'l Airport.

DOT said AA failed to adhere to its contingency plans for delays.

MTM office closes today

MARINE Tourism Management which oversaw marketing for South Sea Cruises Group (incorporating Awesome Adventures Fiji, Yasawa Islands Holidays, Blue Lagoon Cruises and Vinaka Fiji Volunteering) is closing down its Auckland office today.

All sales and marketing matters for the collection of Fiji brands will now be managed in-house by a new team led by the freshly appointed director of sales and marketing, Wayne Deed.

Deed said it was "very much business as usual" and that he continued to look forward to working with their "valued trade and industry partners".

All trade contracts and marketing arrangements with South Sea Cruises Group remain unchanged as part of the group's new direction.

Aus-China air alliance

THE general managers of Air China, China Southern, China Eastern, Hainan Airlines, Sichuan Airlines & Xiamen Airlines will meet in Sydney next Tue to sign an Australia-Chinese Tourism cooperation agreement.

The pact, effective from 2017 will see collaboration between all six of the airlines flying from mainland China to Australia.



Window Seat

SOME of the team from All Nippon Airways popped into the **Travel Daily** office in Sydney yesterday to spread some very welcome Christmas cheer.

Among the guests was ANA vice president & general manager for Oceania, Ryo Sadayuki, who of course handed out his business card.

However, we noticed that along with the usual corporate branding, Ryo's card has a small embellishment - in the form of an added sticker with a cute caricature showing him holding a cuddly koala (**below**).

We really hope this is an emerging trend in the travel industry, and look forward to seeing many more cartoon characters on business cards.



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Helloworld roo hops to events



THE Helloworld roo was kept busy in Melbourne last week, covering the Volleyball Australia Schools Cup and the helloworld Schools Basketball Championship.

Helloworld is the major sponsor of Volleyball Australia and Basketball Australia.

'HelloRoo' hopped between the two events, entertaining crowds of more than 8,000.

He is **pictured** above being a star attraction with participants at the Australian Volleyball Schools Cup at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre.

EK Warsaw A380 test

EMIRATES will operate a three-class Airbus A380 superjumbo from Dubai to Warsaw on a one-off basis on 10 Feb 2017, according to GDS displays.

The daily EK service to Poland normally utilises a two-class Boeing 777-300ER.

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Rezdy partners with Website Travel

TOUR and activity aggregator Rezdy has today announced a new partnership with Website Travel, connecting more than 2,000 of Rezdy's suppliers with 600+ agents on the Website Travel platform.

The agreement facilitates real-time availability sharing between the two systems, giving travel agents the ability to confirm reservations immediately.

Rezdy ceo Simon Lenoir said the huge integration was "a massive jump forward for the industry...we strongly believe that connecting as many agents to as many suppliers as possible takes the industry forward".

Kevin Lu, Rezdy director of distribution, said it meant the firm's suppliers "can now capture even more business from one of the biggest networks of online and offline travel professionals across Australia & New Zealand".

Air NZ tops charts

AIR New Zealand's Christmas song 'Summer Wonderland' starring Ronan Keating and Kiwi actor Julian Dennison has reached number 1 on the NZ iTunes chart, beating Taylor Swift and Zayn.

The song has attracted some 10 million views on YouTube since the campaign launched at the beginning of the month, with the Kiwi carrier donating funds raised by the hit to not-for-profit Starship Foundation.

AS/VX deal closes

ALASKA Airlines has acquired Virgin America overnight, creating the fifth largest airline in the US.

The two carriers will spend the next year working on Federal Aviation Administration certification so they can operate as a single carrier.

The merger, approved by the Dept of Justice last week, will enable more services & frequent connections to int'l partners.



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ROYAL BRUNEI AIRLINES



Exploring the outback by rail

DELEGATES representing motoring organisations such as NRMA, RACQ, RAA, RACV and RAC departed on a railway adventure aboard the Ghan earlier this month.

Hosted by Great Southern Rail and supported by the South Australian Tourism Commission and Tourism NT, the four-day famil made stops in Nitmiluk Gorge in Katherine, Uluru and Alice Springs.

"It's an experience like no other to see the outback by classic rail, enjoying the sights and tastes of the land with personal service and new friends," said



RAC's travel and tourism product manager Emily Cotton, who attended the educational.

Pictured above (from left) in front of The Ghan are: Anthony Hunter, RAA; Danielle Bruno, SATC; Elitza Hydeuke, RACV; Patrice Sydor, NRMA; Meg Cotter, Tourism NT; Emily Cotton, RAC; Deb Falvey, GSR; Daina De Luca, RACQ and Emily Robertson, SATC.



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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

Wentworth marks 50 years



SOFITEL Sydney Wentworth last night marked its 50th anniversary with a champagne event in its storied ballroom, celebrating its history as a pioneer among Australian luxury hotels.

Having opened as the Qantas Wentworth Hotel in 1966, the property was Sydney's first true international hotel and attracted stars like Marlon Brando, Sophia Loren and Audrey Hepburn.

AccorHotels chief operating officer Pacific Simon McGrath said the Wentworth had a spirit that

captured the heart of Sydney.

"It's an iconic property within the Accor network - throughout the Pacific and certainly around the world - and it's an iconic property within the industry in Australia," McGrath said.

"This hotel still takes its rightful place as one of the leaders in our network," he said.

Pictured from left are Choe Peng Sum, ceo of the property's owner Frasers Hospitality Group, with Simon McGrath and the hotel's gm Craig Reaume.



A Helloworld Group Company

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Air Tickets, a division of the Helloworld Limited group has a position available in their Elizabeth Street Melbourne office, in the Technical Support Services Team.

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If you have initiative, great communication skills, thrive on the idea of being actively engaged in improving systems, then this is the position for you. For more information, please [click here](#).

Applications should be sent to careers@helloworld.com.au

Applications will close on 22 December 2016. Only successful applicants will be contacted for interview.

Explore the new Lizard Island in the December issue of *travelBulletin*.

CLICK HERE to read **travelBulletin**



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 email appointments@traveldaily.com.au.

Stella David has been appointed to **Norwegian Cruise Lines'** Board of Directors as an independent member as of 01 Jan. David was formerly the Chief Executive Officer of William Grant & Sons.

Mantra Group has expanded its staff, this week announcing several key appointments within its management team. **Todd Heal** has been promoted to GM of Mantra Broadbeach on the Park. **Andrew Walling** has taken the position of GM at Mantra on Jolimont in Melbourne, while **Jeremy Mossman** has been named GM at Mantra St Kilda Road. **Christopher Chew** joins the group as the new GM of Breakfree Eco Beach, Byron Bay whilst **Hayden Edgton** is GM of Peppers Soul, Surfers Paradise. Mantra's Regional Sales and Marketing Manager for NSW/ACT **Matt Border** will depart the role to take over as Director of Trade Sales early next year following a move to the Gold Coast. Outside of operations, **Tim Bridgman** is being welcomed to Mantra Group as its new Regional Financial Controller Vic/Tas.

Destination NSW has announced the appointment of **Julie Turpie** who has taken the role of Director Event Development - Arts, Entertainment and Lifestyle. Turpie commences her role from Jan.

Rail Plus' newly created Business Development Manager NSW/ACT & WA role has been filled by **Richard McKisack**.

Fiji Marriott Resort Momi Bay is welcoming **Silvano Dressino** to the team as its new General Manager.

TTA re-sign with HLO

HELLOWORLD for Business has secured The Travel Authority for a further three years after the firm re-signed with the company.

Managing director Peter Hosper said the TTA was delighted to continue its partnership, saying "there is nothing like helloworld for business on the market to help our company meet our business objectives and support our ongoing growth".

He named a number of benefits and support offered which were "unmatched by any other group".

Jetstar Pac new plane

JETSTAR Pacific has taken delivery of a fourth Airbus A320 leased from China Aircraft Leasing Group Holdings (CALC).

The addition is part of a plan to boost the Vietnam-based carrier's fleet to 30 A320s by 2020 and follows delivery of three other CALC-leased aircraft since Jul.

Domestic fares up

DOMESTIC airfares have continued their upward trend this month, ending the year higher in all cabin classes.

The Dec Airfare Index published today by the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) shows Discount Economy fares increased sharply, up 22.9 points from Nov to an index of 84.7.

Restricted Economy fares rose 1.4 pts to 81.5 and Business class fares increased 2.7 pts to 97.6.

All classes have increased steadily since Dec last year - discount Economy up 22.7, restricted Economy up 2.6 and Business up 2.0.

Anantara Saudi

MINOR Hotels will be adding the 226-guestroom, 105 villa Anantara Jeddah Resort in Saudi Arabia to its growing Middle East portfolio in 2019.

VA int'l web check-in

Virgin Australia has introduced online check-in for its international flights.

The service is available where a VA-operated flight is the first segment, including bookings with domestic to int'l connections.

Online check-in for international flights opens 24 hours before the scheduled departure time and closes 90 minutes prior.

Dedicated check-in counters will be available at select int'l airports for guests who have checked in online but the service is not currently available for flights from Port Moresby and Nadi due to current regulatory requirements.

Int'l online check-in can be accessed through the VA website.

Crown cans Vegas

CROWN Resorts shares were placed in a trading halt this morning as the company unveiled restructuring plans, including the sale of part of its stake in Melco, the firm which operates Crown properties in Macao and the Philippines.

The Crown board has also resolved not to proceed with the Alon project in Las Vegas, and has dropped plans to demerge its international investments.

Crown chairman Robert Rankin said capital would be redeployed to fund "high quality growth projects" such as Crown Sydney.

NCL 2018/19 itineraries

NORWEGIAN Cruise Lines has unveiled its 2018 and 2018/19 voyages for Alaska, Europe, Hawaii, Bermuda, Caribbean, Canada & New England and more.

Australasian itineraries aboard *Norwegian Jewel* are tipped to be finalised in coming weeks.

TC gets a taste for Oman



SEVEN Travellers Choice members recently experienced Peregrine's Taste of Oman tour.

A highlight for Byron Cruise & Travel's Jessica Milford was a 4WD journey across the Wahiba Sands for a night at 1,000 Nights Camp, during which she attempted to take a selfie with a camel that proceeded to lick half her arm and face.

The members wove their way through bazaars, souks and mosques, touring Oman's forts, took a sunset cruise along Muscat's coast, and swam at Wadi Bani Khaled.

The group also kicked back in Etihad's Business class, tried their hand at a flight simulator at EY's Training Academy and spent a night at St Regis Abu Dhabi.

Pictured in the top row are:

Jessica Black, Capricorn Travel; Chanelle Hetherington, Intrepid Group; Fiona Tianudom, iLuv2travel & Cruise; Jessica Milford, Byron Cruise and Travel and Said, Peregrine Tour Leader.

In the bottom row are: Shayne Williamson, Select World Travel; Cathy Barton, Canadian Bay Travel; Rebecca Dewhirst, Maryborough Travel & Cruise and Fleur Brenkley, Savenio Adelaide.

Movenpick Bali

THE first Movenpick Hotels & Resorts property in Indonesia (TD 04 Sep), Movenpick Resort & Spa Jimbaran Bali will open on 12 Jan.

The newbuild is 100m from Jimbaran Bay in southern Bali and features 297 rooms and suites, each with a balcony.



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Virtuoso celebrates a huge 2016 in Australia

THE Virtuoso travel group has had a big year, with members from across Australia participating in a series of local and international events. Activities included the inaugural Virtuoso Asia-Pacific Luxury Awards in Sydney, the annual Virtuoso Symposium event in Cape Town, South Africa, and of course the 28th annual Virtuoso Travel Week in Las Vegas, which saw almost 120 Australian luxury travel advisors in attendance.

More recently the group held a series of "Deep Dive" workshops in Australia, with Virtuoso director of professional development Helen Nodland providing advice for members on how to nurture and grow their high-end client base.

The year has been capped off with the addition of two new Australian agencies joining the group (**TD** yesterday), with Virtuoso md Asia-Pacific Michael Londregan welcoming Melbourne's Toorak Travel and Gold-Coast based Travel Masters into the Virtuoso fold.

"Over the past 12 months, Virtuoso has had an overwhelming response from Australian agencies keen to develop their talents into a viable competitive advantage," Londregan said.

THE Goldman brothers celebrate their Virtuoso success.



APAC Lux Award member winners: Alexandra Facy, Phil Hoffmann Travel; Elizabeth Clarke and David Brandon, Savenio; Danny Englman, FBI; Gina Maitland, Alpha Travel; Don Beattie, MTA; Claudia Rossi Hudson, Mary Rossi Travel; Fay Cohen, Travel Phase; and Jamie Strickland, Concierge Traveller.



MATTHEW Upchurch opens Virtuoso Travel Week in Vegas.



ANOTHER happy winner: Carol Morgan, Voyage Affaires, "Most Admired Advisor Asia-Pacific".



MICHAEL Londregan, Virtuoso; Michele Saunderson, Peninsula Travel; Matthew Upchurch, Virtuoso; Greg Duncan, Peninsula Travel & Suzanne Duzenman, Global International Travel Service.



CHER Roscoe, Travelcall; Tom Goldman, Goldman Group; and Fay Cohen, Travel Phase.



FAY Cohen, Travel Phase; Beverley Cohen, Wentworth Travel; Francesco Zugaro, Aqua Expeditions; and Claudia Hudson, Mary Rossi Travel.



GABRIELLE Thackray from Wentworth Travel was awarded Outstanding Customer Service by an Advisor at Virtuoso Travel Week, and is pictured with colleagues Beverley Cohen & Anna McMurtrie.



MANDY Dwyer, Main Beach Travel; Sharen Pataki from MP Travel; and Mike Dwyer from Main Beach Travel.



CUTTING the ribbon at the Virtuoso Sydney office opening.

The Statue of Leaferty?



A CANADIAN maple leaf seems to have sprouted in place of the Statue of Liberty in a creative entry into the Air Canada competition by Holly Mitchell of Greenhills Travel Centre.

We've affectionately dubbed it the Statue of Leaferty and think it's a pretty unique way of showcasing Air Canada, Canada and New York in one image.

If you've got more ideas on how to create a photo or meme combining AC, Canada and New York then read the full conditions **below** and enter.

If your image is deemed the best, you'll score two Economy class return tickets from BNE/SYD to New York - what better way to celebrate AC's Aussie route to New York via Canada?



Tis the season to be creative Win tickets to New York with Air Canada

This month Travel Daily and Air Canada are giving readers the chance to win two Economy Class return tickets from BNE/SYD to New York (EWR) and two CityPASSes for NY attractions from NYC & Company.



To win, submit a photo, meme or similar which combines Air Canada with a Canadian and New York theme, showcasing "Air Canada's Canadian connection to NYC via Vancouver". Send your entries to aircanada@traveldaily.com.au



TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY

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SQ A350 MAN-IAH

SINGAPORE Airlines will be putting an A350 into service on its five weekly Manchester-Houston services from Jan 2017 in lieu of the current 777-300ER, GDS show.

Bendigo's tourism spike

BENDIGO has experienced exponential growth in both domestic and international search traffic on TripAdvisor, according to the site's 2016 Inbound Travel Trends report.

Not only did the regional Victorian city have a 45% increase in searches, it saw a 60% jump in reviews and emerged as the most popular Aussie city searched by domestic travellers in 2016.

TripAdvisor's senior director for account management Grant Colquhoun told **Travel Daily** the spike was driven by Bendigo's destination management plan.

"They've done a lot to build a five year plan and it's really been leveraged around arts, food, wine and a bar scene and the big event that was on in Bendigo this year, the Marilyn Munro exhibition," he said.

"People are looking for new places to travel and Bendigo is another great alternative in country Victoria."

Following Bendigo in popularity for domestic searches were the cities of Coolangatta, Fremantle, Noosa and Mooloolaba.

Top searches by international travellers on the site were - as expected - Sydney, Melbourne,

Brisbane, Cairns and Perth.

Meanwhile, Spain came in as the top inbound market to show increased interest in visiting Australia, growing its total share of search traffic for Australia on the site by a whopping 112%.

"What is behind that is the Spanish economy has started to right itself," Colquhoun said.

"Spain has benefited from the political issues across other countries in Europe with people seeing it as a safe destination."

The United States was the top country overall to search Australia on the site followed by the United Kingdom and Singapore and New Zealand.

Japan came in at fifth place, a resurgence in a market that has been fairly flat in recent times.

Tobruk to sink in Qld

RETIRED Navy landing ship *HMAS Tobruk* has arrived in Bundaberg Port to await its fate as an artificial reef and dive site.

The Queensland regions of Bundaberg and the Fraser Coast have welcomed a decision to scuttle the ship in waters north of Hervey Bay, saying it will add millions of dollars to the local tourism economy each year.

Plans will now be developed for the ship's preparation and sinking, with *Tobruk* expected to be on the seabed by late 2018.

DFAT Turkey update

TRAVEL warnings for Turkey have been updated further by the Australian Government, with DFAT's latest advisory citing the possibility of terrorist attacks in Ankara in the wake of last week's bombings in Istanbul.

DFAT continues to advise Australians to reconsider travel to Ankara and Istanbul.

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