



# THANK YOU!

## APT – Best River Cruise Operator 2017

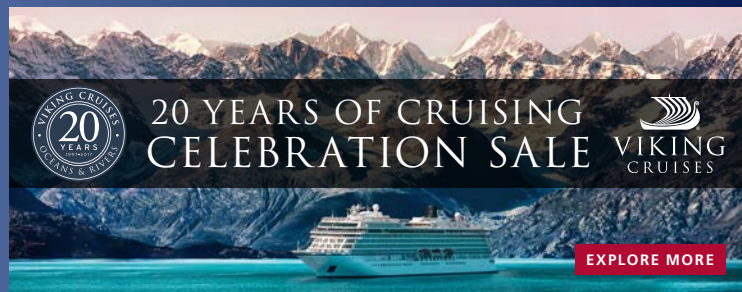
For the third year in a row APT has been voted by Australian travel agents as the Best River Cruise Operator! We would like to thank and acknowledge you, our valued industry partners for your recognition.

We are honoured given your expertise, knowledge and experience, and appreciate your ongoing support.

To thank you for voting for us number 1, we're bringing back our biggest trade incentive!

# CASH OR CABIN?

[CLICK FOR DETAILS](#)



## APT celebrates

**APT** continues to celebrate its big win in last Sat's National Travel Industry Awards, where the company was voted Best River Cruise Operator award for the third year running.

The company thanked and acknowledged travel agents for their support - see the **cover page** of today's **TD** for details.

## VA HKG biz promo

**VIRGIN** Australia is running a competition for corporate customers enrolled in its 'accelerate' program, with flown base fare revenue during Aug of just \$4,000 giving an entry into a competition to win two return 'The Business' tickets from Melbourne to Hong Kong.

Tracked expenditure of \$7,000 or more automatically results in a second entry, with travel agents, account managing corporates in the program urged to get their clients to spend up.

Tracked spend is as per the Aug statement sent to the key contact on the account, and excludes SQ-operated flights.

Entries must be lodged before 30 Sep by **CLICKING HERE**.

## Lux Escapes retail outlet

**EXCLUSIVE**

**LUXURY** Escapes has entered the bricks-and-mortar travel retail space for the first time, opening a new concept store in Melbourne's CBD, which if successful, will likely be rolled out more broadly.

Co-founder of the online travel business Adam Schwab and gm Blake Hutchison unveiled Luxury Escapes' take on the evolution of the retail travel store to vendors and VIP customers last night, ahead of this morning's opening.

Dubbed 'The Lounge', the outlet is based on a First class airport lounge experience which includes coffee or sparkling wine, gourmet snacks, on-site masseuse, plenty of comfortable seating and an on-demand BMW transfer service.

The store is in part stencilled on the Apple Store, with "travel concierge" staff floating around

the store with iPads rather than working from fixed locations.

"Customers can come in & have a coffee or a champagne. It is a completely different environment to the traditional travel agency," Schwab explained to **Travel Daily**.

"The look & feel is what will set us apart. It's much more relaxed.

"There's no pressure to buy.

People can come down, browse, have a look around, try on a VR [virtual reality] headset to sample a destination, then one of our consultants will call them back in a week. It's all about engaging with our clients," Schwab said.

Initially slated for an eight-week trial period to gauge consumer feedback, Hutchison told **TD** The Lounge concept was already under consideration for expansion in Melbourne and interstate, possibly to Sydney and Brisbane.

"The reality is, should it prove to be successful we're highly likely to continue it. For us, it's about providing a face to the brand."

Doors on The Lounge, located at 261 Little Collins St, opened today with a line-up of over 200 customers - see **page 4** for more.

## Today's issue of TD

**Travel Daily** today has eight pages of news, a cover wrap for **APT**, a photo page for **Excite Holidays** plus full pages from:

- Travel Trade Recruitment
- AICC



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## AICC tourism lunch

**THE** Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Sydney event on 16 Aug showcasing the performance of the Australian tourism industry, with speakers including Ann Sherry and Tourism Australia md John O'Sullivan and more - see the **last page**.

## INSIDER EXPERIENCE SPORTS

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## Etihad hit by \$1.9b loss

**ETIHAD** Airways has revealed an annual net loss of almost US\$1.9 billion (A\$2.4b) as Gulf carriers come under increasing pressure from political fallout and economic factors.

Reporting on its full 2016 financial year, the airline said its loss had been the result of "one-off impairments on aircraft and equity investments", and that its passenger revenues had held steady at \$US4.9 billion.

Passenger numbers had hit a record 18.5 million at load factors of 79%, with available seat kilometres up 9% to 113.9 billion.

However, yields fell 8% amid market capacity pressures and a tough economic climate, the carrier said.

"A culmination of factors

contributed to the disappointing results for 2016," said Etihad chairman Mohamed Mubarak Fadhel Al Mazrouei.

"The Board and executive team have been working since last year to address the issues and challenges through a comprehensive strategic review aimed at driving improved performance across the group, which includes a full review of our airline equity partnership strategy," he said.

**MEANWHILE**, Delta seized on Etihad's loss, issuing a statement to say it had come "despite receiving US\$1.4 billion in subsidies from its government".

The US carrier said the subsidy had been calculated by forensic accountants for the Partnership for Open and Fair Skies.

"To date, the UAE government has provided over US\$26 billion in government subsidies to its airlines," Delta said.

## Victoria-China push

**THE** Victorian Government has struck a partnership with China's biggest online travel agency CTRIP to market the state to its user base of more than 250 million people.

"This new deal with China's biggest online travel agency gives us an incredible opportunity to speak to millions more people and show them what they can enjoy by coming to Victoria," said Victorian Minister for Tourism and Major Events John Eren.

The Minister will today open a new Visit Victoria office in Beijing to strengthen ties with the Chinese travel industry.

## What's Left for 2017

### EARN A \$100\* GIFT CARD

When you make any new bookings for travel in 2017.

Valid for new bookings made between: 17 Jul & 8 Sep '17

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\*conditions apply

## AF-KLM VS stake

**SIR** Richard Branson is selling a 31% stake in Virgin Atlantic from the Virgin Group to Air France-KLM for £220m as part of a new partnership between the carriers.

The move comes as VS revealed plans to expand its transatlantic joint venture with Delta Air Lines to include Air France-KLM, to provide increased flight choices for customers flying between UK, Europe and North America.

Collectively, the alliance will offer 300 daily non-stop flights from 28 UK/European airports to 32 North American destinations.

The deal is expected to be concluded by early 2019.

Branson said the four-way strategic joint venture with Delta, Air France & KLM "will be extremely beneficial" to VS.

"I want to be certain that all the necessary building blocks are in place for Virgin Atlantic to continue to prosper and grow for the next 50 years," Branson told members of Flying Club.

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## Prowse opens in Qld

**SPORTS** and events specialist Keith Prowse Travel will expand into Queensland on 07 Aug with the opening of a Brisbane office, its third in Australia.

The company says the move coincides with a growth period and provides a chance to "streamline operations in a bid to scale and diversify the business".

Keith Prowse Travel managing director Daniel Morahan said the move would help build on an already dynamic and driven sales team in Sydney.

"I am excited about the opportunity to continue to grow our business from Brisbane," Morahan said.

## Webjet accounting dispute

**WEBJET** has warned of a major disagreement with its auditors, with the difference of opinion potentially impacting 2016/17 earnings by more than \$11 million and the removal of \$32.7 million in intangible assets from the OTA's balance sheet.

The dispute relates to the treatment of transactions associated with Webjet's agreement with UK travel giant Thomas Cook (**TD** 18 Aug 2016).

Webjet described the issue as a "technical accounting matter," saying it had obtained advice from two 'Big Four' accounting firms contrary to the opinion of

auditor BDO Pty Ltd.

BDO reviewed and signed off the company's accounts for the six months to 31 Dec, but now "no longer agrees with the accounting treatment adopted by the company in respect of recognition of the [Thomas Cook] agreement as an intangible asset and recognition of the fixed management fee payable to Webjet under the agreement as income," the company said.

Despite the BDO disagreement, the Webjet board said it intends to continue to apply the same accounting treatment of the Thomas Cook deal for the full year accounts - meaning BDO will "qualify" its audit report.

Webjet said the dispute does not in any way change the cash flows or economics of the Thomas Cook deal, which has commenced successfully and "is expected to deliver significant benefits to both parties".



## Window Seat

**TOOWOOMBA'S** Brisbane West Wellcamp Airport is proving to be a vital link for Asian diners, with the facility's first international route - a regular Cathay Pacific freighter service - carrying loads of fresh produce from South East Qld.

Fruit and vegetables, meat and grain are of course staple items, with other cargos also including fresh flowers and seafood which can be on restaurant tables within 24 hours of being caught.

Speaking to **TD** at the Travel Industry Exhibition in Melbourne earlier this week, Wellcamp representatives also noted that "less gourmet" items have also been on the menu - with a shipment last week including over 20 tonnes of chicken nuggets.

**Wendy Wu Tours**

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## ATAS Constellation

**NEW** all-inclusive touring company, Constellation Journeys, has received AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) approval and named David Reeves as its senior sales representative in NSW and Qld.

The company will launch tours on a privately-chartered Qantas 747, with the first to depart Sydney in 2018 visiting Hanoi, India, The Serengeti, Marrakech, New York, Havana and Tahiti.

An incentive for Australian agents to win a seat on the inaugural is open until 25 Aug - [CLICK HERE](#) for more info.

## Qld regions unite

**VISIT** Sunshine Coast has launched a Destination Promotion Program in partnership with sub-regional groups to increase destination awareness & visitation.

The panel will work towards an agreed set of priorities and marketing activities of mutual and regional benefit.

Appointed members include: Angus Richards, Hinterland; Louise Formosa, Eumundi; Megan Hartstone, Coolum; Ken Jeffreys, Caloundra; Billy Moore, Mooloolaba and Brendan Bathersby, Maroochydore.



As HRG continues to grow and increase our footprint in the Meetings Groups and Events segments in Australia, we have openings for the following two positions.

### Venue Sourcing Specialist - Melbourne

As the Venue Sourcing Specialist you will be responsible for sourcing venues and accommodation that meet the client event brief. You will liaise with local and international venues and hotels to negotiate and secure pricing and contractual conditions that meet the client requirements. You will prepare and maintain event budgets, documentation, data and reporting, and attend site inspections and client meetings as required.

#### SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Venue sourcing or events experience (minimum 2 years)
- Strong communication skills and attention to detail.
- Flexible attitude towards working hours to meet deadlines and attend events
- Knowledge and experience of GDS (TravelPort advantageous)
- Experience using Cvent

### Group Travel Coordinator – Melbourne

As the Group Travel Co-coordinator you will be responsible for the entire scope of travel arrangements for corporate events. There will be a focus on providing exceptional customer service and opportunities to build strong relationships with our clients.

The successful candidate will have experience in booking travel via GDS (group flights experience an advantage), with sound destination knowledge and a strong passion for corporate groups and event travel.

#### SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Travel consulting experience – required
- Coordinate and book individual and group travel including flights, accommodation, transfers
- Process supplier payments and invoices for clients
- Knowledge and experience of GDS (TravelPort advantageous Strong fares knowledge – international and domestic)
- Flexible approach towards working hours to meet deadlines

#### HOW TO APPLY

Please contact Laura Cozzi on 03 9604 3478 e-mail your details and resume to [laura.cozzi@hrgworldwide.com](mailto:laura.cozzi@hrgworldwide.com)

Both positions provide a strong opportunity for career growth within the HRG Australia family.

## AUGUST SUPER SAVINGS

# Bangkok

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\*Inclusive of taxes. Travel periods & conditions apply.



**VOWING** to shake-up the traditional way travel is promoted and sold to consumers, Luxury Escapes' The Lounge (**page one**) has been in the pipeline for 12 months but took the e-commerce firm just six months to activate.

Last night's event at the new store included a number of hotel, airline and other trade partners.

GM Blake Hutchison said The Lounge would not only be used as a location for existing Luxury Escapes' members to interact face-to-face with selling agents, but also appeal to walk-by traffic who may be inspired by the environment to make an enquiry.

To appeal to Melbourne's early starters & late finishing workers, The Lounge will be open from 8am until 7pm daily over its eight

week-trial period.

In the evenings, the venue will also be used to host events for partners, with Melbourne Airport to hold a function with some of its airline partners to entertain customers of Luxury Escapes.

For a gallery of images from The Lounge, [CLICK HERE](#).

**MEANWHILE**, the second season of Channel Seven's *Luxury Escapes: The World's Best Holidays*, featuring co-hosts Shane Jolley and Sophie Falkiner goes to air this Sun from 5:30pm.

Some of the team from Luxury Escapes are **pictured**, including co-founder Adam Schwab (seated left), general manager Blake Hutchison (back left), with Sophie Falkiner (front centre) and Shane Jolley (front right).

## HOLIDAYS

# viva! holidays

## A Big Thank You

To our teams, industry partners, suppliers and all the agents for your ongoing support!

**QANTAS HOLIDAYS & VIVA! HOLIDAYS BEST WHOLESALER INTERNATIONAL PRODUCT**

## TIME aboard *Carnival Spirit*



**CARNIVAL** Cruise Line hosted Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) members yesterday, with a lunch aboard *Carnival Spirit* in Sydney.

The event came hot on the heels of a great showing for TIME at last weekend's National Travel Industry Awards, with founder Penny Spencer, mentor Tina Killeen and graduate mentee Elizabeth Hutchison all enjoying moments in the spotlight.

Spencer Travel was named Best Corporate Travel Agency - Single Location for the sixth time, while Killeen received a Judges Commendation in the Best Travel Agency Manager - Corporate Single Location category.

Hutchison, from Air New Zealand, took out the Best Sales Executive Industry Supplier category - and partly attributed her win to participation in the TIME program which gave her a "self-belief I never knew I had".

More on TIME at the website [travelindustrymentor.com.au](http://travelindustrymentor.com.au).

Yesterday's on-board event included presentations from Phil Hoffmann Travel and Phil Hoffmann as well as Carnival Cruise Line vice president Australia, Jennifer Vandekreeke.

The pair are **pictured above** with TIME founder Penny Spencer of Spencer Travel (**left**).

Lots more pics from the event at [facebook.com/traveldaily](https://facebook.com/traveldaily).

### Wholesale Travel Consultant

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# Si

### Insight team grows

**ANGELA** Middleton's appointment as Insight Vacations' new head of sales (**TD** yesterday) follows David Farrar's recent move to director of sales for Luxury Gold (**TD** 17 May).

Other recent additions to the Insight team include former APT bdm Claire Haggarty as trade marketing manager and Samuel Rutledge as sales manager Vic.

### Avianca suspension

**BRAZILIAN** carrier and Star Alliance affiliate Avianca has ceased flights to Venezuela, with the pullout coming after 60 years of continuous service to the country engulfed in civil protests.

Sales are suspended immediately and the current double daily Bogota-Caracas and daily Lima-Caracas services will cease operating from 17 Aug.

Avianca said it would reconsider if airport infrastructure improved and "international standards" were met in Caracas.

Other carriers to pull out of Venezuela include United Airlines, Air Canada and Lufthansa.

### LHR arrivals lounge

**PLAZA** Premium Group has opened a new arrivals lounge at London Heathrow Airport, with the 28-person facility located in Terminal 3 - complementing existing Plaza departure and arrival lounges at LHR T2 and T4.

Entry costs start from £15.

### IHG into Bintan

**INTERCONTINENTAL** Hotels Group will launch in Indonesia's Bintan Island in 2019, signing contracts to manage a newbuild Holiday Inn and Hotel Indigo.

**MEANWHILE** IHG has also confirmed its new 24-hour cancellation policy (**TD** Wed) will apply in Australia by the end of Sep, as an "effective way to impact the upward trend in cancellation rates".

### UA adds DEN/LHR

**UNITED** Airlines will introduce new non-stop seasonal services between Denver and London Heathrow, from 24 Mar-26 Oct, subject to regulatory approval.

The daily services from the Mile High City to LHR will be operated using three-class Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner aircraft.

## Technology Update

Today's Technology Update is brought to you by **Tramada Systems Pty. Ltd.**

**Save time; collect more money: hotel commission automation**



AFTA selected tramada® Onyx Integration as a finalist for this year's NTIA awards for good reason.

Designed to improve hotel commission earnings for travel agencies while reducing the time and cost taken to do so, tramada® Onyx Integration clearly delivers incremental revenue to the bottom line of travel agencies.

Analysis conducted by Onyx has shown that around 40% of commission owed by hotels is never given to agencies that earn it. Most agencies fail to chase commissions because it is time consuming and often the expense of banking commission is more than the commission earned.

The significant issue solved by the tramada® Onyx Integration is ensuring travel agents get paid for all hotel commissions due - not only those booked via a GDS. Travel consultants or business owners lose valuable time doing this work manually instead of focussing on selling and servicing their clients.

Because the tramada® Onyx Integration interface with Onyx commission recovery is automated, the consultant doesn't need to do anything to follow up on payment other than create the original hotel booking within the tramada® environment. This includes automatic reconciliation of recovered vs expected commission for each hotel booking. The integrated solution then accepts single monthly payments from Onyx, massively reducing banking fees especially from international hotels.

Christian Stevens,  
Chief Financial Officer,  
Tramada - your technology partner

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## Excite's Arabian Adventure for agents

**EXCITE** Holidays in partnership with Dubai Tourism, recently held two exclusive travel agent events in both Brisbane and Sydney.

Held at Byblos Bar & Restaurant at Portside Wharf in Hamilton, Brisbane, and Embers Mezze Bar in Sydney's trendy suburb of Darlinghurst, the events were a chance for agents to learn more about Dubai and to see all that the incredible Arabian destination has to offer - now and in the future.

During the exclusive dinner events, the agents treated their tastebuds to tantalizing Arabian dishes and desserts that were filled with the authentic flavours of Dubai. It was during this time that they heard from Sheree Pekovich - Regional Sales Manager, Dubai Tourism.

Sheree was the presenter at both events, and showcased to agents the reasons why Dubai is the perfect extended stopover or standalone destination for all travellers. She gave travel tips and insights that will help agents sell Dubai, and tailor their client's holiday to suit their wants and needs.

Along with the mouthwatering cuisine, a talented Henna artist was on-site and created some beautiful artwork on the agents. The agents were also given a gift bag and a limited edition Arabian Nights candle from Glasshouse Fragrances.

Excite Holidays deemed the events a big success.

### AMANI

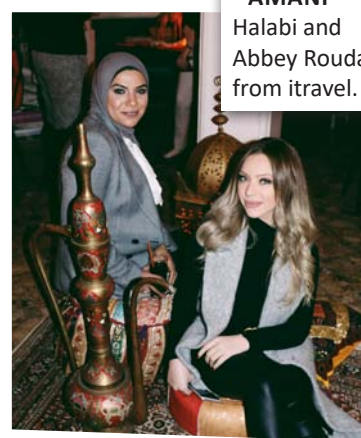
Halabi and Abbey Rouda from itravel.



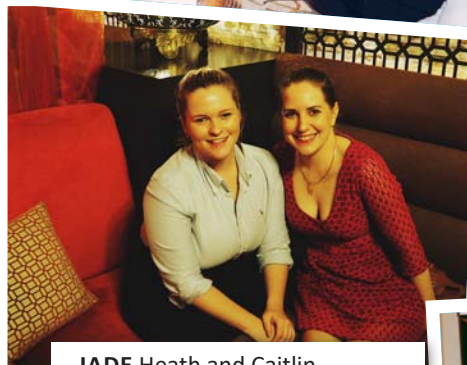
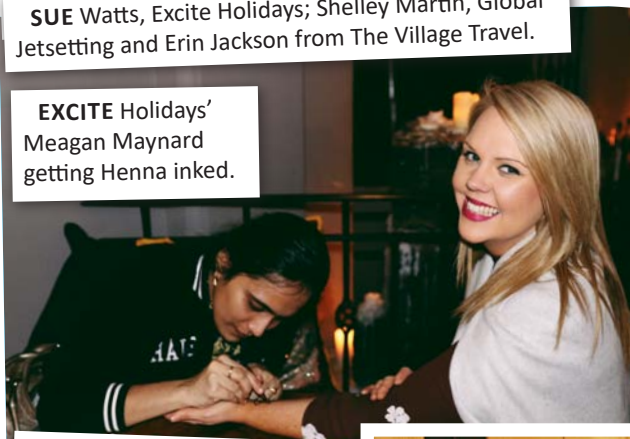
**MEAGAN** Maynard, Excite Holidays; Sheree Pekovich and Fiona Stewart, Dubai Tourism and Vanessa Richards, Excite Holidays.



**SUE** Watts, Excite Holidays; Shelley Martin, Global Jetsetting and Erin Jackson from The Village Travel.



**EXCITE** Holidays' Meagan Maynard getting Henna inked.



**JADE** Heath and Caitlin Verrender from Create Travel.



**VICKIE** Vogiazitis and Laura Kostouros from Gem Ezy Flights with Fiona Stewart, Dubai Tourism.





# Corporate Chatter

With Karen Tsolakis

HELLO everyone.

We got great feedback to my 17 Jul column, and it was clear the topic of winning new accounts and the rewards or fallout depending on the results resonated with many of you.

It is indeed a brilliant high to be called up on stage and be awarded 'Best BDM' at a company global conference.

Your head is already spinning from finding yourself at a dream location for three days and where it seems everyone is there to serve you. The 24x7 open bar further fuels the hallucination that you are a sales rockstar. The stories are legendary.

I remember a much-loved airline colleague who after partying non-stop for 48 hours, got on the next morning's long-haul flight home. His text was gold: "KT, dying here. In Y class & next to someone who is coughing up a lung!".

However, the everyday reality of life as a BDM is hard with unrelenting pressure to land that next account. Like the lions who must hunt to feed others or they are cast out and replaced, you either win or lose. And you need nerves of steel.

So today, let's follow you, a senior BDM, as you navigate the hurdles of a typical Request For Tender (RFT).

You learn that a high profile account will be going out to market. The relationship, however, is weak. There is no political or commercial connection, procurement is evasive and the reality is you do not really know nor have time to find out what their needs are. Experienced BDMs know what that means. You have buckleys.

What you do know, however, is your boss wants the business. You also have not won the past five RFTs. You scour salesforce for insights, but as usual it's outdated or just guff. You call a few trusted contacts but not much help with MI or money towards a sign-on.

With sinking heart but outwardly calm because the office white-ant Gladys watches you like a hawk, you make up what sounds like a pretty convincing win strategy and get started. It will be a long four weeks.

The inside-sales tender writer drives you nuts with the same BS phrases in each RFT: 'our dynamic & strategic approach', 'best in

class', 'unparalleled service', 'seamless', and my favourite, 'our unique insights'. Seriously!

You 'reach out' to stakeholders for help but most have their own deadlines. If you need to fracture relationships chasing answers, too bad.

Four days out from deadline,

**'The everyday reality of life as a BDM is hard with unrelenting pressure to land that next account...'**

product advises that the specific technology wanted in the RFT is not scheduled for build until 2019. You approach your boss only to hear..."what do we need sales people for if it's only about technology?! It's never just about technology. Sell our people, our service, our global footprint".

You finally submit the RFT. With this one, as with many, you know there is nothing that differentiates you from the other top tier TMCs. As it's a high profile account, the spotlight on you stays hot and the more time passes with no news the more despondent you feel. Externally however you look pumped.

The bad news eventually comes in. To a BDM there is no more dreaded phrase than "thank you... however unfortunately on this occasion you have been unsuccessful".

Unsuccessful. To then to go in and tell your boss takes major psychological fortitude. You leave his office drained.

Having worked in sales for many years, I have much empathy for my fellow sales colleagues. The successful ones are a tough breed, super resourceful, persistent, connected and trusted by internal and external allies. They also have great interpersonal skills, engage with their team and regardless of the stress and long hours also make it enjoyable and where everyone feels valued. They know one never wins these bids alone and whether successful or not, they openly acknowledge everyone's contribution.

Happy bidding everyone!

Karen Tsolakis is a specialist in corporate travel and a Travel Daily columnist.

# Travel Daily

Friday 28th July 2017

## Corporate NTIA winners

**CORPORATE** travel consultants stole a big part of the limelight at the National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA) on Sat, taking home six trophies on the night.

Alison Irwin of Stage & Screen Travel Services NSW won Best Travel Consultant - Corporate, her first NTIA win.

Other winners included Cherie Drummond of Corporate Travel Management (CTM) in NSW for

Best Travel Agency Manager - Corporate Single Location and Andrew Moten of CTM Qld for Best Travel Agency Manager - Corporate Multi Location.

Spencer Travel won Best Travel Agency Corporate - Single Location and Goldman Travel Corporation won Best Travel Agency Corporate - Multi Location. Best National Travel Management Company was CTM.

**CAPA**  
CENTRE FOR AVIATION

## CAPA Insights

CAPA Centre for Aviation today offers its latest exclusive infographic, presenting insight from its own data and external sources.

### CAPA International Travel to/from Australia - MAY 2017

1.39m  
Arrivals



1.48m  
Departures



#### Top Visitor Arrivals



**1. New Zealand**  
Month - 104,800  
Year - 1,318,900



**2. China**  
Month - 79,300  
Year - 1,126,300



**3. United States**  
Month - 50,200  
Year - 652,700



### Is the UK Brexiting Australia?

For the **1st** time since 2014 the UK fell to **7th** place for visitor arrivals

#### Changes over a decade...

**2007**  
Second largest source of int. travellers

**2017**  
Averaging 4th place behind NZ, China and the USA



Source: ABS - Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia, May 2017

A long-term trend continues to show international visitors from the UK "brexiting" Australia, but the full picture isn't exactly as it seems. Despite growth almost every year, UK visitor numbers haven't kept pace with the onslaught of rising numbers from New Zealand, China and the US. Within the last decade, the UK has moved from consistently being in second position among Australia's top sources of visitors to fourth place in 2017. Monthly results can be even lower, with the UK dropping as far as seventh place in May this year. Perhaps the launch of non-stop Qantas services between London and Perth next year will assist with improving these numbers and the UK can once again rival China and the US.

Friday 28th July 2017

## Osaka welcomed

**NEW** Qantas services between Sydney and Osaka will help leverage a growing market in Japan, according to the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC).

ATEC today welcomed QF's new Osaka route (**TD** yesterday) and said it would boost the Japanese market, which has grown 18% in the past 12 months.

The announcement was also welcomed by Sydney Airport which said Japan was the gateway's sixth largest market and that passenger numbers grew 32% last year.

## Rex boosts SA links

**REGIONAL** Express has been awarded the route licence to operate passenger air services between Port Augusta and Adelaide, with the carrier to operate thrice weekly services on the route effective 11 Sep.

Rex will also offer connections through to Coober Pedy, linking the opal mining town to Port Augusta by air for the first time.

An expression of interest was issued to take over the Augusta Route Service Licence earlier this year, after Sharp Airlines canned its flights on the route in May.



## 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).

**Rail Plus** is offering a free Vancouver tour valued at \$170pp for travellers who book on a Rocky Mountaineer 2017 journey of five days or more in length. The promo is valid until 30 Sep. **CLICK HERE** for further details.

**AAT Kings** is throwing in free return flights to Tasmania from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide for select departures of its 12-day Perfect Tasmania guided holiday. Call 1300 556 100 to book.

**Contours Travel** has released earlybird savings of \$1,000 per couple for two of its 2018 hosted tours in South America and Mexico if booked by 29 Sep. Call 1300 135 91 for more info or visit [contourstravel.com.au](http://contourstravel.com.au).

Enjoy three nights at the four-star **Poppys on the Lagoon Resort** in Port Vila from \$225 per person (40% reduced rate) in a Lagoon View Studio. Packages include free breakfast, a canoe tour and more. Offer is valid for travel until 22 Sep and must be booked by 04 Aug. **CLICK** for more.

## Starwood acquires

**STARWOOD** Capital Group has acquired the newly built 286-key The Jeremy West Hollywood hotel in West Hollywood.

The property is set to open in Aug as The Jeremy Hotel and will include 50 suites, a pool, fitness centre, 929m<sup>2</sup> of meetings and event space, a rooftop bar and lounge, cafe and restaurant.

Over the next year it will be transformed into the 1 West Hollywood to become the fourth hotel under the 1 Hotels brand.

## Qatar confirms CBR

**QATAR** Airways has confirmed its Feb 12 launch of services from Doha to Canberra (**TD** Mon).

Stephen Byron, md of Canberra Airport, said the Qatar connection was an exciting development in the fulfilment of a major goal.

"We have had a long-held dream that we could connect Canberra with the rest of the world," Byron said.

The daily flights will operate via Sydney on B777-300 aircraft.

## IHG cfo new role

**PAUL** Edgecliffe-Johnson, cfo of IHG has been appointed as a non-executive director of British travel company, Thomas Cook Group.

He took up the role on Wed.

## Lego exhibition

**AN EXHIBITION** made from lego featuring skyscrapers from Australia, Asia, Canada, USA and United Arab Emirates has opened at the National Museum of Australia today.

The buildings were constructed on a scale of 1:200 and will be on display until 08 Oct.

## PNG DFAT update

**POST-ELECTION** protests have worsened at Mt Hagen in Papua New Guinea, DFAT warns, with the local airport closed and all roads blocked due to unrest.

Travellers are advised to exercise a high degree of caution, DFAT's Smartraveller site says.

## SIA Q1 profit surge

**SINGAPORE** Airlines Group has announced a 45.6% increase in its first quarter profits, which rose \$88 million to \$281 million in the three months to 30 Jun.

Passenger revenue contributed \$121 million (up 4.3%) on increased traffic (up 7.6%), outstripping a reduced passenger yield (down 3.1%).

During the quarter Singapore Airlines introduced four new Airbus A350-900s and removed one A380 at its end of lease.

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