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TOURISM New Zealand is giving agents the chance to win a \$100 voucher to put towards their winter wardrobe when completing the "How to sell Ski New Zealand" training module before 26 May.

See the **cover page** for more.

Bestjet facing legal action

EXCLUSIVE

THE liquidators of collapsed online travel agency Bestjet have obtained orders for "Public Examinations" of the business failure, with the Federal Court of Australia issuing summonses for oral examinations starting in Jul.

An update to creditors issued this week confirms that orders were obtained from the Court on 16 Apr, with Pilot Partners saying "the subjects of the examination summonses are persons we believe have taken part or been concerned in the examinable affairs of the company".

Initially those served will be required to produce documents relating to examinable affairs of the company, followed by testimony from relevant parties.

Bestjet founder Rachel James, wife of disgraced former Air Australia chief Michael James, has been requested to supply all company books and records and information.

"Ms James has failed to comply and we have reported this non-compliance to ASIC," the liquidators noted, adding that access had now been obtained to the company's Xero accounting package which confirms that Michael James had logged in four times after the company was placed into administration (**TD** 18 Dec 2018), and as recently as 03 Jan 2019, despite his insistence he had no access to the account. Pilot Partners has also

commenced legal proceedings against Bestjet Singapore, which continues to be controlled by Rachel James, in respect to over \$3 million in outstanding rebates payable from GDS firm Sabre.

"Bestjet Singapore will shortly be required to file a defence in the proceeding and thereafter the matter will be set down for a pre-trial conference in May 2019," the report confirms.

The liquidators are also seeking payment of override incentives/rebates from airlines and consolidators owing to Bestjet Travel Pty Ltd and/or related party Wynyard Travel.

However "all these parties appear to have competing claims against the company that may exceed the amount outstanding to the company, which they may be entitled to a mutual offset".

The liquidation is being funded through a Deed of Understanding with credit card intermediary IntegraPay, which has an unresolved claim over \$3.6m in the Bestjet bank accounts.

Pilot Partners now estimates the collapse has impacted unsecured creditors owed over \$25 million.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has seven pages of news, a front cover page for **Tourism New Zealand**, photo pages for **Atout France**, plus full pages from:

- Viking Cruises
- AA Appointments jobs

Dare to Dream

VIKING Cruises is inviting agents to enter its Dare to Dream Eurovision Contest, with a total of 250,000 Rewards by Viking points up for grabs.

Agents have until 14 May to pick the winner, last place and where Australia places - see **page eight**.

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OA.CEAIR.COM

Discover the delights of the Mekong River in the April issue of *travelBulletin*.

CLICK to read
travelBulletin



Element Melbourne

AUSTRALIA'S first Element by Westin hotel, Element Melbourne Richmond, is set to open its doors on 12 Jun.

The hotel is located in Richmond's Botanicca Corporate Park and has been designed for the "healthy, active traveller".

Cruising growth plateaus

THE dramatic slowdown in cruising growth in Australia (*TD* breaking news) comes as no surprise to the industry, given the long-running debate about infrastructure constraints, according to Cruise Lines Int'l Association (CLIA) Australasia Chairman, Sture Myrmell.

Speaking at a CLIA event at NSW Parliament House this morning, Myrmell unveiled the figures, which showed a total of 1.35 million Australians cruised in 2019 - an increase of just 0.9%.

That was less than a quarter of last year's 4.4% local growth rate, and saw Australia slip significantly behind the growth rates of other major markets such as North America, up 9.4%, and Europe, which increased by 3.3%.

CLIA Australia MD Joel Katz noted that infrastructure

constraints saw cruising in Australia, NZ and the South Pacific stagnate with growth of just 0.1%, which was offset by a healthier 4.3% uplift in fly/cruise holidays by Australians.

"Cruising continues to be exceptionally popular among Australian travellers after many years of growth and world-leading market penetration.

"A lack of berthing capacity in Sydney has hampered cruise lines' efforts to expand their operations in local waters, but the increasing number of Australians flying to ports overseas shows the market is still strong and holds great potential for the future," Katz concluded.

MEANWHILE CLIA Chairman Sture Myrmell also unveiled a global #WEARECRUISE initiative which aims to highlight the ongoing contribution of cruising to the global economy.

A video will also be produced in the coming months featuring stories from Australian cruise operators.

Crystal wine comp

QANTAS Wine has partnered with Crystal Cruises to offer a 17-night \$60,000 Sydney-Singapore voyage as the prize in a competition for anyone who purchases from Qantas Wine between today and 31 May.

The *Crystal Serenity* voyage departs 03 Mar 2020, with the prize including twin share for two guests in a Penthouse Suite, return QF Economy flights to Sydney and Business class flights from Singapore to Sydney.

For more details, head to qantasepique.com.au.

Veriu for sale

COLLIERS International has listed the Veriu Central Hotel in Sydney's CBD for sale by expressions of interest.

The property features 112 recently renovated rooms and four retail tenancies, and is being offered for sale along with a long-term leaseback to Veriu Hotels.

More info at colliers.com.au.

Mekong River famil

TWEET World Travel has partnered with CF Mekong to offer trade the chance to sail the Mekong on the *RV Lan Diep*.

The all-inclusive trip, which departs in Sep, will take place over nine nights.

For details, email [HERE](#).

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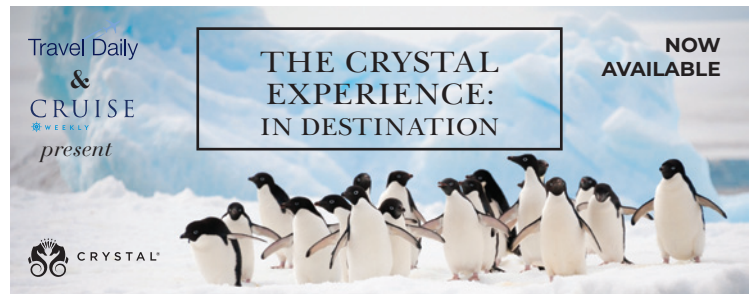
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Airbnb “out of control”

INDUSTRY leaders voiced fears that travel disrupter, Airbnb, had got “out of control” at *Travel Daily’s* 2019 Sustainability Summit in Sydney on Tue.

Speaking at the event, Cosmos and Avalon UK Chief Executive Officer Giles Hawke, said Airbnb was pricing locals out of their homes while failing to provide the same assurances around safety that travel operators are required to.

“The concept of it is good,” Hawke said.

“The reality is it’s probably gone further out of control than Airbnb might have expected.

“The way that Airbnb talk about it is people get to go places, to live like the locals and live in the local community.

“The reality is that in a number of places there are whole apartment blocks taken up by Airbnb, people just letting out their apartments, so they’re not

living like locals, they’re just with a bunch of other tourists.

“It gives people the opportunity to travel at a lower cost than if they stayed at a hotel or official apartments, but I think there’s going to have to be much more regulation,” Hawke said.

“One of the biggest challenges of Airbnb is around safety.

“When you work for a tour operator you go to a hotel, you make sure that hotel is safe - you are really on the hook for anything that goes wrong...the checks that tour operators go through are intense - Airbnb doesn’t have any of that and I see that as a big issue.”

Hawke said Barcelona has already taken steps to curb the impact of Airbnb by restricting the number of nights they can rent out accom on the platform.

Hurtigruten CEO Daniel Skjeldam also voiced concerns about the business model.

Tourism GDP grows

AUSTRALIA’S Tourism GDP grew by 5% for the 2017-18 financial year when compared to the previous corresponding period, notching up \$57 billion in value according to figures recently released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The rate of growth outstripped the 2.8% rate for the Australian economy and represented 3.1% of overall GDP for the year.

Chile/Peru famil op

ECLIPSE Travel and LATAM have introduced an 11-day Chile and Peru agent famil, which is set to depart on 20 Aug.

Highlights include trips to the colonial city of Cusco, the Valley of the Incas, Machu Picchu, Aguas Calientes, cooking classes and private guided tours.

To be in the running, sign up for Eclipse Travel’s trade newsletter and register your interest.

See eclipsetravel.com.au.

Window Seat

THE world of politics can certainly be a grubby business, and no more so when protesters use the excrement of local fauna to reject fiscal policies.

A man at an Alaskan airport was found with “moose nuggets” in his carry-on bag, apparently with the intent of delivering the smelly package to politicians for their “bleep policies”.

And it seems this was no isolated incident, with a man also seen passing out small bags of moose nuggets in the state’s capital Juneau during a recent budget protest.

Airport security said the incident didn’t warrant an official report and he was allowed to board his flight.

Bags not sitting next to him!



We’re taking 5 top travel agents on a famil to Club Med Phuket

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Joy on offer for Aussies

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line's (NCL) recently renovated *Norwegian Joy* still has availability on its inaugural Alaska season, which begins on 04 May.

With *Joy* joining sister-ship *Norwegian Bliss* in Alaska, the cruise line has effectively doubled its beds in the region.

Norwegian Cruise Lines Holdings (NCLH) Senior Vice President and Managing Director Asia Pacific Steve Odell told **Travel Daily** that NCL sees Australians as an important market for Alaska, which he believes will appeal to families looking for soft adventure experiences.

"Because we have these big new ships in Alaska, which are more family orientated, we see a big potential for growth from Australians.

"The challenge of Alaska last year was that *Bliss* was so successful in its launch that there wasn't any space," he said.

"Now having two ships here and getting into a third season there's a lot of opportunity.

"There was a lot of noise created about having this kind of ship in the Alaska market so I think that's our big growth opportunity," he added.

Joy was purpose-built for the Chinese market but underwent a US\$50 million renovation to make her almost identical to *Bliss*.

Changes from the Chinese version of the ship include replacing the carpet throughout the vessel, and the addition of 13 new dining, bar and lounge venues, which were facilitated by the removal of some of the casino and retail spaces onboard.

Joy's speedway track was also widened in areas to allow more opportunities for overtaking and the pool deck was updated, adding extra pools and removing the outdoor garden which was predominantly used for tai chi.

Machu see in amazing Peru



FIVE travel agents have recently returned from Unique Latin America's luxury agent famil trip to Peru, where the group ticked Machu Picchu and the Peruvian Amazon off their bucket lists.

The 12-day The Sacred Valley and Lares Adventure to Machu Picchu allowed agents to create their own journey each day by choosing between a range of cultural activities, as well as hikes on route to the ancient citadel of Machu Picchu.

The group then had the opportunity to fly to Iquitos

to embark on Delfin Amazon Cruises' luxury vessel, the *Delfin III*, with the cruise passing by a variety of wildlife such as pink river dolphins, sloths, and birdlife.

The posse of agents were: Sue Watts, Executive Edge; Belinda Brooke, FBI Travel; Annie Watts, Epic Private Journeys; Mia Caridi, Journeys by Design; and Tracey Fidone, Hawthorn Travel.

Pictured: Rebeca Espinoza, Unique Latin America; Sue Watts, Executive Edge; Mia Caridi, Journeys by Design; and Tracey Fidone, Hawthorn Travel.

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France pays respect to the Diggers at Sofitel Wentworth

MORE than 100 years on, France remembered what it owes to Australia with a special memorial commemoration soirée held on Mon by Atout France in partnership with Air France and Accor.

The event featured a menu with typical northern French dishes such as braised chicken in beer and a speculoos flavoured dessert.

Key representatives delivered words of thanks, including Executive Director of the French WW1 Centennial Mission, Joseph Zimet, Alexandre Lefèvre from Somme Tourism and the Mayor of Arras, Frédéric Leturque.



SUZY Wolanski, Phil Wolanski, Jules McGrath, and Simon McGrath, COO Accor Asia Pacific.



MADY Dorchies, Hauts-de-France Tourism and French Consul General, Nicolas Croizer.



JANE Rutter, flautist and Knight of the French Order of Arts & Letters.



HEATHER and Catriona Rowntree.



FRANCE operator specialists Carole Haslam, Angeliqne Sinclair, Christian Blondeau and Sonia Jones.



PETER FitzSimons.

Atout France says Merci Australia

ONE century on, Australian travellers of all ages travel to the sites and the memorials of shared remembrance to the dedication and resilience of the ANZAC troops on the WW1 Western Front.



FRÉDÉRIC Leturque, Mayor of Arras & Chairman of Hauts-de-France Tourism.

Bullecourt, Fromelles, Villers-Bretonneux...these villages were caught up in conflict in the Somme, the Nord and Pas-de Calais continue in the collective memory, with the new Sir John Monash Centre telling the story of the men who fought for freedom.

New generations will visit and continue to discover the other many cultural and gastronomic attributes of the Hauts-de-France region.



JOSEPH Zimet, Director WW1 Centennial Mission.



AIR France Regional Manager Quentin Voss and Alvaro Rodas Fernandez, Manager Alliances, Qantas.



Phil Wolanski AM and celebrity chef Guillaume Brahimi.



FRENCH Consul Nicolas Crozier with Frédéric, Arnaud and Maxime Tartour.



OJ RUSHTON and the OZY Youth Choir perform the Australian and French national anthems.



THE Atout France team.

Agents explore South Africa



THE Africa Safari Co recently hosted a group of agents on a famil to South Africa with a visit to Cape Town, the winelands and enjoying safaris in Kruger.

Pictured at the top of Table Mountain in the back row are Renee Hicks, Pursers Travel & Cruise; Darren Partridge, The Africa Safari Co; and Kathy Thomaidis, MTA Travel.

In the front row: Sarah Whyte, Helloworld Travel-Knox Westfield; Chloe Smith, Helloworld Travel-Vermont South; Katie Anderson, Travel Time Kings Meadow; and Naomi Botica, Helloworld Travel-Kalgoorlie.

NT Barkly plan

THE NT Government has launched the Barkly Regional Visitor Experience Master Plan in Tennant Creek with the Barkly Regional Council.

The plan aims to stimulate growth in the Barkly visitor economy and provide business and employment opportunities for Aboriginal communities and local enterprises.

"The Barkly region offers a wide range of distinctive and varied experiences for travellers," said NT Minister for Tourism, Sport and Culture, Lauren Moss.

"Exploring nature, four-wheel driving and learning about culture, history and heritage are the most popular activities for visitors to the region."

Emirates fares

EMIRATES is offering Aussie travellers competitive fares to destinations across the UK, Europe and Dubai when booked by 13 May.

Economy flights include fares from \$1,179 to Dubai, \$1,329 to Porto or Manchester, \$1,439 to Paris and \$1,489 to Rome.

Meanwhile Business class pax can enjoy fares starting from \$6,949 to Dubai, \$7,219 to Barcelona and \$7,229 to Porto.

APPOINTMENTS



WELCOME to Industry Appointments, *Travel Daily's* Thursday feature which is brought to you by **Travel Trade Recruitment**.

If you have just appointed someone to a new position and would like to update the industry email appointments@traveldaily.com.au.



The owner of Melbourne and Launceston Airports has appointed Peter Hay as independent Chair of the Board. Hay commences 02 Jul.

Shane McClelland will be joining the **Destination NSW** team as General Manager Communications. McClelland will take up his role on 20 May.

TravelManagers has welcomed **Sally McCallum** to the role of Business Partnership Manager for ACT and Southern & Central West NSW, along with **Leah McGrath**, who will be taking up the role of Business Partnership Manager for Northern & Regional Victoria.

Hospitality Group **Louis T Collection** has appointed **Scott Reid** as its new Project Manager. Reid formerly worked for six years with Workspace Design, a furniture, fittings and equipment contractor in the UK.

Gregory Anderson has joined **Allegiant** as Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. He will also continue as the company's Principal Accounting Officer, a role he has served since Jan 2015.

Wharf Hotels has welcomed **Roger Shing** as its new Group Director Purchasing, and **Carol Tsai** as the Group Director, Revenue Management & Distribution. Shing will lead the pre-opening procurement programs for new hotels, formulate strategic plans to develop new hotel products. Tsai will craft new strategies for more profitable revenue share across Niccolo and Marco Polo Hotels.

Ovolo campaign

OVOLO hotels has launched its NFW campaign, encompassing a new rate policy and flexible cancellation policy for all guests.

Founder and CEO Girish Jhunjhnuwala said that the latest offering is proof that Ovolo continues to "listen to their customers in an effort to create an effortless hotel experience".

For details about the two offerings, **CLICK HERE**.

Europcar e-cars

SCOTTISH Borders Council, in partnership with Europcar Mobility Group's electric car-sharing brand E-Car Club, has launched a fleet of low emission Toyota Yaris hybrids in the Scottish Borders.

The cars can be booked for any length of time and insurance is included - **CLICK HERE** for more.

NZ carbon offsets

AIR New Zealand and its customers have purchased over NZD\$1m worth of carbon offsets from permanent New Zealand native forestry projects through the airline's voluntary carbon offsetting program, FlyNeutral.

The airline's Head of Sustainability Lisa Daniell said she is pleased the airline has been able to provide a platform for customers to take greater responsibility for offsetting carbon emissions as well as support afforestation in NZ.

Eclipse Captain

JAMES Griffiths will be the Captain of *Scenic Eclipse*.

Griffiths has spent nearly 20 years in the cruise industry, has worked on 12 different ships, commanded six of them and visited over 105 countries.

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Rewards by Viking Eurovision contest is open to all Australia and New Zealand travel agents from 8am AEST Wednesday 1 May – 11pm AEST Tuesday 14 May 2019. Entries must be submitted through <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VikingEurovision> in order to be eligible for prize pool. Total prize pool is 250,000 bonus Rewards by Viking points, which will be divided between all agents who select the correct winners in the three categories. An additional 50,000 points will be awarded to any agent who successfully picks the top 3 countries in the correct order. Category one is 100,000 points, to be divided between the agents who select the correct winning country. Category two is 100,000 points to be divided between the agents who select the correct placing of Australia among participating countries. Category three is 50,000 points to be divided between the agents who select the correct country who comes last. In the event of more than one country placing in the same position, points will be awarded to the agents who have selected the applicable countries in the correct position. In the event that two countries tie for first place or last place, reward points will be split between the agents who selected either country. Agents must be registered with a Rewards by Viking account to enter. Agents can register at www.rewardsbyviking.com Membership to Rewards by Viking is at the discretion of agency management. Winning agents will be notified and have points awarded to their account by Friday 31 May 2019.



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