

A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO OUR TRAVEL FAMILY

The APT Travel Group has the safety and wellbeing of our guests, employees, travel industry partners and crew as our highest concern during this challenging time.

Like all businesses we have been watching the evolving COVID-19 situation and the impact it is having not only on our travel industry, but all industries, communities and people across the world.

As a company with more than 90 years of history, we have overcome major challenges in our time, but this is unlike anything we have seen before.

Our focus has always been and continues to be on our valued guests and our employees, who are the heart of our business. We are saddened to see our people, along with our industry and all of Australia, struggling at this time of uncertainty.

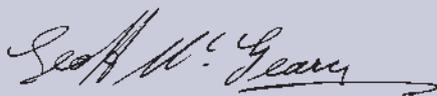
I'd like to thank our wonderful team of employees across the business who have been working tirelessly over these past weeks in what are very challenging circumstances. Thank you also to our loyal customers and travel partners, who continue to show their commitment and support of our longstanding business.

The travel industry is a vital and vibrant component of our society and it will weather this storm – we will get through it. The APT Travel Group has a strong and well respected history of delivering inspirational travel experiences to our valued travellers and we look forward to a time when we can do this again.

We will recover and people will travel again. We need to, it is an enriching part of all our lives, and the APT Travel Group will be here when that time comes.

On behalf of my family and the entire APT Travel Group, we wish you and your family health and wellbeing at this time.

Kindest regards,



Geoff McGeary, OAM



Robert and Geoff McGeary, and Lou Tandy (nee McGeary)

SNA out of ATAS

THE AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) participation of a company called SNA Asia Group Pty Ltd (ACN 165 238 326) has been terminated, with AFTA citing a breach of s2.5 (d) of the ATAS charter for the move.

The company, which also trades as SNA Travel Group and SNA Tours, is closely associated with the Travel Asia Pty Limited, which collapsed late last month owing over \$3.8 million (**TD** yesterday).

Travel Asia creditors include Inspiring Vacations, Webjet, Luxury Escapes, Groupon, Scoopon and Kogan Travel.

SNA Asia Group's sole director and 100% shareholder is Lili Cai, also a director of Travel Asia.

The SNA website carries the Travel Asia logo, and it's understood consolidator ticketing for Travel Asia flights was done under the SNA Travel brand.

Unlike Travel Asia, SNA Asia is not under external administration.

Hang on until 2021 - Burnes

HELLOWORLD Travel CEO Andrew Burnes has warned Australian travel agents not to expect the world to begin moving again until next year.

In an update to the various HLO networks yesterday, Burnes predicted that the "re-emergence of international travel is 9-12 months away from today, so in the meantime it's going to require a tremendous amount of discipline for travel businesses to basically go into hibernation for the next six months or so".

The HLO chief laid out a speculative schedule for recovery, along with a reminder that "the virus controls the timelines".

He said some destinations may open up earlier to Australians with a range of quarantine options, and while the permutations are endless, "that plays to your strength as professional travel advisors".

"People will need your services more than ever to navigate the complexities of international travel as restrictions come off and, quite possibly, are re-imposed.

"Getting to the other side of this is everyone's greatest challenge... and it will come at a cost, both financial and personal.

"But the travel industry has shown itself to be one of the most resilient industries on earth and it will come back," he added.

With massive amounts of money being poured into the economy by Governments, Burnes urged agents to "push on to the other side of this once-in-a-century cluster#\$&%".

"We need to bunker down, bunker down hard and be ready for when things begin to open up again and the insatiable desire and love of travel starts bringing customers back in the door and off to the airport," he said.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news plus a front cover page from **APT**.

APT off till 30 Jun

THE APT Travel Group this morning confirmed that its international and domestic tours were suspended up to and including 30 Jun 2020.

The company is offering a future holiday credit equal to the amount paid on the booking for all suspended tours, including absorbing applicable third party fees and the credit is valid for travel through to 31 Dec 2021.

The COVID-19 impact is being classified as a "Force Majeure" event by APT, meaning it is beyond all reasonable control.

Tours beyond 30 Jun are planned to operate on schedule.

The company continues to pledge its support to the Australian travel trade, via the **cover page** of today's **TD**.



EPISODE 3 OUT TODAY!

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CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS

Travel Daily



What actually is a carbon credit? Find out in the April issue of *travelBulletin*.

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travelBulletin

FLT founder dilution

FLIGHT Centre founders Graham Turner, Geoff Harris and Bill James have had their stakes in the firm slashed after not taking up their full allocations of rights in the current \$700 million capital raising (**TD** 06 Apr).

Notices lodged with the ASX yesterday indicate their combined stake dropping from 42.21% to 25.57%, with the trio telling the *Australian Financial Review* they have put in a total of \$25 million rather than their theoretical allocation of almost \$175 million.

Turner said "if I had \$70 million lying around, it would have been a good opportunity not to get diluted...I didn't like being diluted, but that's the way it goes.

"Most people don't keep their assets in cash," he added.

The update yesterday shows the threesome holds 45,932,824 shares in total, now valued at just over half a billion dollars at Flight Centre's trading price today of just over \$11 per share.

\$165m for Qantas, Virgin

VIRGIN Australia has today kicked off a limited domestic schedule of 64 weekly services, with operations on the minimal network underwritten by the Federal Government for the next eight weeks (**TD** breaking news).

Qantas will boost its current schedule from 105 per week to 164 services, covering all capital cities and 36 regional destinations.

As well as reopening up some destinations to passengers, the flights will provide critical freight capacity, with belly space on the planes to be used for mail and other shipments including medical equipment.

"We are ensuring secure and affordable access for passengers who need to travel...as well as supporting the movement of essential freight such as critical medicine and personal protective equipment," said Deputy PM Michael McCormack when he

announced the move.

Flights will be sold as normal commercial fares, and customers of both airlines will earn frequent flyer points and status credits under their respective loyalty programs.

Qantas said on-board service would be a scaled-back version of what would normally apply.

Virgin's announcement confirming the move said passengers seeking to travel between today and 29 Apr inclusive would be offered additional flexibility, including the ability to rebook their ticket to any day or service within that period with any applicable fare difference waived.

Both Qantas and Virgin Australia also continue to operate limited long-haul repatriation flights to bring Aussies home under the Federal Government's International Aviation Network initiative (**TD** 06 Apr).

Viking opens Mississippi res

VIKING Cruises today opened up bookings to the public for its inaugural Mississippi season of river cruises, with the new destination to launch in 2022.

Currently scheduled ports of call will see the custom-built *Viking Mississippi* visit seven US states including Louisiana (Baton Rouge, Darrow, New Orleans and St Francisville); Mississippi (Natchez and Vicksburg); Tennessee (Memphis); Missouri (Hannibal and St Louis); Iowa (Burlington, Dubuque and Davenport); Wisconsin (La Crosse); and Minnesota (Red Wing & St Paul).

A past passenger pre-release has seen some departure dates almost completely sold out.

The purpose-designed 386-passenger ship is inspired by Viking's Scandinavian heritage and has "no paddle wheels - real or fake," according to Chairman Torstein Hagen - call 138 747.

These are extraordinary times, however all of us at P&O are looking positively toward the future.

As our valued Travel Agent partners you are at the heart of what we do.

You, more than anyone, understand the gravity of what is happening in the travel sector and we are standing with you during these challenging times.

A big thanks for your past, present and future support.

We look forward to working with you in welcoming guests back onboard soon

We will all get through this together.



NSW launches video Zooms



HOW about this as the ideal backdrop for a sneaky quarantine? Destination NSW has joined the Zoom background movement - but with a twist - by offering the ability to have a spectacular scenic video background for your online conference calls.

Hosted on the DNSW consumer website at visitnsw.com, the Zoom-ready assets have been specifically curated to “inspire wanderlust in the dreaming phase of the travel planning cycle,” according to DNSW Acting CEO Stephen Mahoney.

“Our stunning NSW Zoom backgrounds have been created to keep NSW’s unique experiences and destinations top of mind, and to provide inspiration for future holiday makers as they dream about travelling while staying connected and entertained through Zoom calls in the current stay-at-home period,” he added.

Drinks this arvo!!

DON'T forget to BYO and gather with your colleagues online this afternoon for the Industry Survive & Revive “Travel Industry Pub” session at 6pm.

The regular Fri afternoon meeting follows a 3pm session on Hosting a (Great) Webinar, while next Mon at 2pm former Travelport CEO Scott Barber will present on The Power of Networks.

Full details and login info at thetravelindustryhub.com.

Themes for still images include Talk with the animals, Sunrises & Sunsets and Spectacular Scenery, while videos allow users to have breakfast with kangaroos, spend time underwater with some sea creatures or enjoy some top Sydney nightspots (**pictured**).

Mahoney urged the industry to take their pick of the backgrounds to “immerse yourself in NSW like never before”.

EY set for take-off

ETIHAD Airways has outlined its post-coronavirus restart plans, while undertaking what it is calling the “most extensive maintenance program” in the airline’s history.

Subject to the lifting of UAE Government-imposed passenger travel restrictions, the carrier plans to operate a reduced network of scheduled passenger services from 01 May to 30 Jun, with the aim of gradually returning to a larger schedule when possible.

“We remain cautiously optimistic and will push ahead with our plans to resume normal flying, while striving to better serve and support our customers and our employees,” said Etihad Aviation Group Chief Executive Officer Tony Douglas.

“The cumulative gains achieved by our ongoing transformation, and the unwavering support of our shareholders, has left us in a relatively strong position to withstand any instability.”

TD podcast episode

THE third episode of our *Travel Daily - News on the Fly* podcast is now live on the Apple iTunes store, Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts.

This week’s edition comments on the major news in just over 10 minutes - check it out at traveldaily.com.au/podcasts.

Azamara chief out

LARRY Pimentel, the highly respected CEO of Azamara Club Cruises, yesterday confirmed he was resigning from the role, amid thousands of lay-offs at parent company Royal Caribbean Cruises Limited (RCL).

Going forward Azamara will be led by the brand’s Chief Operating Officer Carol Cabezas.

Royal Caribbean has furloughed more than a quarter of its US-based workforce and terminated the contracts of many crew, and today also confirmed it now plans to resume cruising from 12 Jun.

Guests on impacted sailings are being offered a 125% future cruise credit to rebook by 31 Dec for sailings departing on or before 30 Apr 2022.



Window Seat

THERE have been plenty of people from the travel industry putting their new-found free time to good use to help lift spirits, but a special shout out must go to Sydney Melbourne Touring’s Paul Cooper.

Earlier this week Cooper’s latest videographic work emerged online, featuring a range of tourism colleagues from across the globe lip-syncing enthusiastically to the 1985 hit *We are the World*.

Cooper said the song “seems so fitting all over again”, with Tourism Australia Managing Director Phillipa Harrison even making an appearance in home isolation - along with her cat.

View the video **HERE**.



ATTENTION NZ TRAVEL INDUSTRY



To our Kiwi cousins, in this time of upheaval make sure you stay up to date. Sign up for a **FREE** *Travel Daily* subscription.

CORPORATE UPDATE

Business travel key post-COVID

CORPORATIONS are unlikely to significantly reduce their air travel demand once coronavirus restrictions ease, according to a new survey by Irish private equity firm Rénatus Capital Partners.

The study, reported in *The Irish Times*, was the outcome of a poll of about 1,000 business owners and managers, with 44% saying they had no plans to reduce air travel post COVID-19.

A further 35% said they expected to travel by air “marginally less,” while about one in five said they would “significantly cut flying”.

Serko urges control

LISTED travel technology firm Serko Limited has released a guide for corporations in the light of the COVID-19 shutdowns, saying “now is the time to ensure business spending and reconciliation processes are in place to make sure you’re in control as cash-flow dwindles and balance sheets come under pressure”.

The guide highlights ways to wipe out the temptation for employee fraud, tighten up approval thresholds and develop “work from home-friendly” expense processes.

Download at serko.com.

QR first lounge shut

REDUCED demand due to the coronavirus pandemic has led Qatar Airways to temporarily close its Al Safwa First Lounge at Dubai International Airport.

The airport’s separate dedicated Business class and First class lounges for economy travellers holding Oneworld high tier status have also closed, with all eligible passengers now able to utilise the Al Mourjan Business Lounge.

QR is one of a few airlines continuing to operate, with Qatar Airways services still in place between Doha and Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

A small proportion of respondents (2%) said they planned to increase their travel.

About two thirds of the company bosses said they were expecting workers to be able to return partly or fully to offices by Jul this year.

More familiarity with working from home meant more than 80% of those surveyed said they would use video conferencing more, while more than three quarters said they would work more from home when COVID-19 recedes.

The full report is available online at www.renatus.ie.

CX status extension

CATHAY Pacific will extend the current membership levels for top tier Marco Polo Club loyalty scheme participants, with Silver, Gold and Diamond members to keep their current status for an additional 12 months.

Previously CX had been planning to offer bonus points on a monthly basis for Feb, Mar and Apr 2020, but this plan has now been replaced with a simpler year-long extension.

Other benefits, such as lounge passes which were set to expire between May and Dec 2020, will also be available for an extra year.

Cathay Pacific also yesterday updated its fee waiver policy, with all new tickets purchased through until 30 Jun 2020 given the option to make unlimited changes up to a year after purchase.

In an update on its website, the airline said it was “exploring all options” in the light of the drastic and intensifying cut to demand.

“We still do not see an improvement in our advance passenger bookings, and we are anticipating average daily passenger numbers to remain below 1,000 through April,” the company said, with its schedule reduced by 97% - in contrast to normal traffic of about 100,000 travellers on a typical day.

Plan your clients’ next trip around a UK food festival

Find out more in the Autumn edition of *Travel & Cruise Weekly*

Travel & Cruise Weekly

CORPORATE CHATTER

with Linda Brettell

Accessible travel in Australia

TRAVELLING with a disability isn’t easy, particularly in a wheelchair. Australian hotels are wheelchair accessible however, this does not mean they are practical or even enjoyable when they often don’t have any accessible facilities.

Airlines have come a long way in making international and domestic travel possible and relatively easy for those travelling in a wheelchair.

Procedures vary amongst carriers and check-in officers are always courteous. People with disabilities are able to fly all over the world, yet many tourists travelling around Australia in wheelchairs are faced with hotels missing the mark in accessibility.

Many hotel rooms are not fully wheelchair accessible. Rooms are not big enough to fit a wheelchair beside each side of the bed, and have high mattresses that an elderly or disabled person couldn’t climb upon unassisted. Power points are often unreachable. A great hotel for someone in a wheelchair will have a power point at the base of the bedside table, and a nice view if they’re

extremely lucky.

Most hotel rooms are ill-equipped for an emergency. Often accessible bathrooms don’t have emergency phones or pull cords installed. Typically, a plastic chair is provided rather than an adjustable medical chair this is unsafe on a slippery surface.

“ People with disabilities are able to fly all over the world, yet many tourists travelling around Australia in wheelchairs are faced with hotels missing the mark in accessibility ”

One of the biggest issues is inaccessibility to swimming pools. There doesn’t appear to be a major hotel on the Gold Coast that has a pool ramp or hoist. Go to Hawaii and there isn’t a hotel that doesn’t have one. Chair hoists take up little space, can be operated by the pool filter and retail for around \$7000. Older guests often struggle from getting in and out of the pool, so these facilities would

also be of benefit to the elderly travel market.

Come on Australia, let’s try harder to make holidays easier and more enjoyable for the disabled and elderly.

*** Opinions expressed are those of the author.*

Comments are welcome, please email corporatechatter@traveldaily.com.au



Linda Brettell is the joint Managing Director of Sanford International Travel and suffers from Multiple Sclerosis. The industry veteran has been traveling in her mobility scooter for over 15 years.

Sudoku

BEGINNER

THE aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Each number can only be used once in each row, once in each column, and once in each of the 3x3 boxes.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | | | 4 | | 7 | 9 | 5 |
| | 6 | 8 | 2 | | | | 3 |
| | | 9 | | | | 2 | |
| 9 | | 5 | | 4 | | 6 | |
| | 7 | 8 | 6 | | 2 | 9 | 5 |
| | 5 | | 3 | 9 | | | 8 |
| | 1 | | | 8 | | | |
| 2 | | | 5 | 3 | | 8 | |
| 5 | 8 | 7 | | 6 | | | 9 |

www.sudokuoftheday.com – visit them and get a new Sudoku every day!

Pub quiz

- Which lake is both the largest freshwater lake in the world by volume, equivalent to all five of America's Great Lakes combined, and also the world's deepest?
- Which city is sometimes known as the Athens of the South, due to its large number of education institutions?
- True or false: Some of Richard Branson's 'Virgin' named companies include two airlines, a cruise line, hotels, trains, an aerospace company and a hot air balloon company?
- Outside of EU countries, which nation produces the most cheese?
- What Australian city was known as Palmerston until 1911?
- The artistic masterpiece, *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* by Hubert and Jan van Eyck, which can be seen in Ghent, Belgium, is famous for what reason?
- What is the capital of Morocco?
- What name is given to the popular holiday destination located between Marseille, France and La Spezia, Italy?
- Which cruise line is the largest privately owned cruise company?
- In which month is Oktoberfest most likely to start in Germany each year?

shout out to...

SUPPLIERS, have you had an agent go above and beyond? Agents, maybe one of your clients has recognised your hard work? Or have you had a supplier pull out the stops for you? In these tough times we want to give recognition to those who are working so hard through it all. Send us your shout outs to shoutouts@traveldaily.com.au. The person who has gone the furthest above and beyond each week will win a \$50 voucher (as will their the person who nominates them) thanks to Quark Expeditions.



Alice Ager from Uniworld Boutique River Cruises wanted to acknowledge all the hard work done by Kathy Pavlidis from Travel Associates Kew:



"I would like to give a shout out to the legendary cruise travel agent Kathy Pavlidis from Travel Associates Kew in Melbourne.

Kathy has been a huge support to us during the chaos of the past few weeks singlehandedly managing our communications between our cruise line and Travel Associates. She has been a huge support on all our affected bookings and has proactively made contact with us weekly to check in and see if she can do anything to support us."

Where in the world?



THERE are many architectural wonders around the world, but this one is particularly spectacular for something that's not in this image of it. Check Monday for the answer.

ANSWERS 16 APR

Pub quiz: 1 True, 2 Greece, 3 Abu Simbel, 4 The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, 5 1964, 6 Oasis class, 7 Rhode Island, 8 *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge*, 9 Indonesia, 10 Singapore Airlines, 11 Great Barrier Reef (grate + bah + rear [rearview mirror] + reef [knot])

Whose flag is this: Samoa

Unscramble: demo, demon, doer, dome, done, dorm, dour, drone, dunno, euro, mode, modern, more, morn, mouse, mound, mourn, mourned, muon, neon, neuron, node, none, norm, noun, omen, redo, rode, rone, roue, round, undo, undone, UNMOURNED

Sell your way to wellness!



THE Tourism Authority of Thailand's (TAT) Sell Your Way to Wellness Famil & Agent Incentive has been extended, with Olivia Trimboli from iTravel in Griffith (**pictured**) securing the first spot on the trip.

Run by Health and Fitness Travel with TAT, the program now runs through to 31 May 2021, with the famil to take place later that year.

Winners receive return Economy flights and private accommodation at the award-winning Kamalaya in Koh Samui,

Boeing to restart

BOEING has announced a phased return to commercial production of its widebody aircraft in Washington.

From next week manufacturing will ramp up, with COVID-19 measures including staggered shifts, mandatory face coverings & signage to maintain separation

with more inclusions to be revealed at a later date.

To win one of the six remaining spots, agents must upskill themselves as a wellness travel advisor.

Access the training **HERE**.

Air NZ 777 crew cut

AIR New Zealand has confirmed it expects its Boeing 777 long-haul fleet to be grounded for the next 12 months, with cabin crew numbers to be cut by 950 as demand plummets due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The carrier has 16 777s in its fleet, and is currently assuming a "relatively slow return of demand to international travel".

Staff will be offered unpaid leave and redundancies, with the airline's Chief Revenue Officer Cam Wallace confirming that forward bookings are currently at just 1% of capacity.

What has been the impact of COVID-19 on the events sector? Read more in the April issue of *travelBulletin*.

CLICK to read
travelBulletin

McEvoy takes Saudi Arabia role - TTF

FORMER politician Bruce Baird is back as acting Chairman of the Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF), replacing Andrew McEvoy who has departed to take a "new international tourism role based in Saudi Arabia".

It's unclear exactly what McEvoy's new position entails, with Sealink Travel Group still listing the former Tourism Australia MD as its Chairman.

Baird's career highlights include his tenure as Minister for Sydney's Olympic Bid for 2000, and has also served as Minister for Transport, as well as spending time as Deputy Liberal Leader.

He was previously TTF Chair between 2008 and 2014.

"In this environment I think I can make a contribution to what is a really great and always resilient industry that is fighting for survival," Baird said.

Tauck goes direct

TAUCK has extended the global suspension of its touring and cruise operations until 30 Jun, and has also announced the launch of a toll-free number for Australian travel agents to deal directly with its US-based reservations centre.

The curious move has been described as "disappointing" by Andrew Millmore of Travel the World, which continues to maintain a local support centre for Tauck after working with the company for over 40 years.

Millmore confirmed that TTW was continuing to look after existing bookings impacted by COVID-19, as well as supporting the recently appointed Tauck Australia team including David Clark, Helen Eves and Sarah-Louise Scales (**CW** 26 Feb).

The new Tauck hotline is available between 9am and 1pm AEST Mon-Fri, with any bookings made to be managed in the USA.

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

No increase in 2021 safari rates and free inter-camp air transfers are available all year with **Great Plains Conservation**. Air transfers will be included in all safaris travelling from 11 Jan next year, and for further details, e-mail reservations@greatplainsconservation.com.

The Northern Territory's **Metro Advance Apartments & Hotel Darwin** on Cavenagh Street is offering heavily discounted deals ideal for long stays. Valid for 14-night stays, the deal includes a welcome breakfast hamper, free car parking and more from \$899.

Book a long stay with **Ovolo**, with a range of inclusions. Valid for stays up to 14 nights, the package includes free continental breakfast every day, free mini-bar every day, extended happy hour every day, high-speed wi-fi, and flexible cancellation and checkout. Call +61 2 9331 9000 to book.

Got a confidential tip? Contact *Travel Daily* via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click **HERE**