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Three new 2021 departures now available!

Australia's Iconic Kimberley

Darwin - Broome / Broome - Darwin | Departs 30 June & 10 July 2021 aboard *Le Soléal*
11 days / 10 nights | From \$10,260 per person*

- Witness Montgomery Reef emerge from the sea
- Get up close to the Twin Falls, WA's tallest falls
- Enjoy the thrilling Horizontal Waterfalls in Talbot Bay
- Learn about Wandjina and Gwion Gwion-style rock art
- Witness migrating humpback whales

TWO NEW DATES ADDED!



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Darwin - Broome | Departs 10 September 2021 aboard *Le Soléal*
13 days / 12 nights | From \$10,920 per person*

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*All advertised prices are based on the Ponant Bonus fare per person, in Australian Dollars (AUD), based on a double occupancy in a Superior Stateroom, including port taxes and transfer (port to Broome town/airport), yield managed, correct at time of writing - 14/12/2020. Prices are subject to availability and can be changed at any time. 1) Price based on 30 June 2021 departure. ^ Ponant Bonus discount subject to change based on availability. # End of Year Sale: 5% off discount offer is per booking, valid on any PONANT or Paul Gauguin voyage currently available to book. Quote the code XMAS20 to redeem the discount. Book by 5 January 2021. This discount is combinable with PYC benefits/discounts, 'Join the Club' second cruise discount, Sponsor (not Sponsee), sales onboard, back to back discount and PONANT Bonus discounts. Offer is not redeemable for cash, not retroactive, and not combinable with the Welcome Offer or any other offer or discount unless specified. Offer is valid for new bookings only, can change or be withdrawn at any time and is subject to availability. Refer to au.ponant.com for full T&Cs. Photograph: © PONANT Nick Rains. ABN: 35 166 676 517.





NZ signs on to Aussie bubble

HOPES of a trans-Tasman travel bubble became slightly brighter yesterday after NZ Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced an “in principle” agreement for quarantine-free travel from Australia sometime in the first quarter of 2021, subject to coronavirus case levels here staying low.

Ardern declined to specify a date for the move, saying more information would be revealed in the new year “once remaining details are locked down”.

She also flagged a similar timeline for a travel bubble between NZ and the Cook Islands.

Virgin Australia reacted swiftly to the trans-Tasman news, noting it currently has over 70 weekly services to NZ on sale for travel from 28 Mar 2021.

Hurtigruten cyberattack

HURTIGRUTEN Cruises is urging the industry to contact it by phone today, after confirming it was hit by an “extensive cyberattack” on the weekend.

“Several key systems are currently down,” the company said, with Chief Digital Officer Ole-Marius Moe-Helgesen describing it as a “serious attack on Hurtigruten’s global IT infrastructure” in the form of a so-called ransomware virus.

To contact the cruise line in Australia call 1300 322 062.

AFTA JobKeeper 3.0 push

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents has welcomed the opening of applications for the Government’s travel industry-specific \$128 million support package (**TD** yesterday), saying it hopes the measure is “the first of a number of support mechanisms including the tailored evolution of JobKeeper for our sector”.

The application portal for the grants scheme was overloaded for some time yesterday as agents and tour operators began the process of registering for the program which provides tiered support based on Business Activity Statement turnover.

Clearly some in the industry expected the payments to be related to TTV, with some online forums exploding with frustration as agents realised they had overestimated the amounts they were expecting to receive.

However today the most virulent posts and commentary have been taken down, as calmer heads prevail.

Simon Mustoe from Destination Specialists Australia was one of the first to go through the

Uluru industry deal

VOYAGES Ayers Rock Resort is offering unprecedented special travel industry rates starting at just \$90 per room per night including free wi-fi, airport transfers, in-resort activities and more - for details see **page seven**.

application process, and has helpfully prepared a step by step guide through the complexities which requires participants to set up profiles on various Government online platforms - see destinationspecialists.com.au.

AFTA CEO Darren Rudd issued a statement hailing the package and confirmed the Federation was “continuing to press the case for additional support, including JobKeeper 3.0 for the travel industry.”

“This work will form the basis of AFTA’s pre-Budget submission to be lodged in Jan,” he said.

Virgin expands loyalty offensive

VIRGIN Australia has upped the ante again in the ongoing airline loyalty wars, offering a status match for frequent flyers with all 13 oneworld partner airlines as well as Emirates and Air NZ.

Originally offered to top tier QF Frequent Flyer members (**TD** 07 Dec), the expanded eligibility follows “an overwhelming number of requests from members of oneworld airline partners”, according to Virgin Australia.

The offer date has been extended to 04 Jan 2021, and under the Virgin deal, eligible members will receive Velocity Gold membership for 12 months as well as a free companion membership after taking just one eligible VA flight and earning 80 status credits.

VA has also today reopened its lounges in Melbourne and Sydney, with Perth, Adelaide and the Gold Coast to follow shortly.

Today’s issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news including our PUZZLE page, a front full page from **Ponant** plus full pages:

- Voyages industry offer
- CLIA member bonuses
- Skal International Sydney

Ponant additions

PONANT Yacht Cruises and Expeditions has opened up more availability for 2021 Kimberley expedition cruises, with two new Australia’s Iconic Kimberley departures and a new Kimberley and Rowley Shoals itinerary.

Savings of up to 30% are on offer for early bookings, as well as an additional 5% under an End of Year offer - see the **cover page**.

The year in review!

THE intrepid team at **Travel Daily** have compiled the annual Year in Review of the travel sector, looking back at the good, the bad and the ugly in 2020.

To view the special edition in a flipbook view online, **CLICK HERE**, or alternatively as a PDF version by **CLICKING HERE**.



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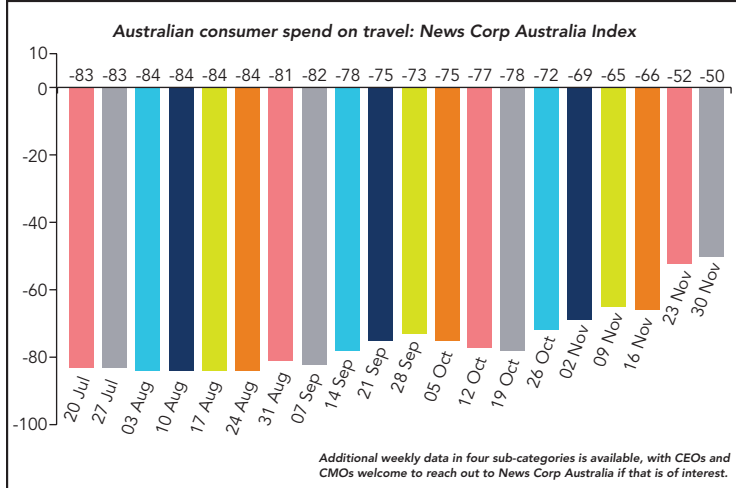


Merry Christmas!

from Fontelunga Hotel & Villas, Tuscany



Accommodation is UP YOY



ACCOMMODATION was up last week on prior year figures - a first since the pandemic hit - as overall spend continues to improve.

Now up 13% year-on-year, the buoyed numbers have followed the usual consumer behaviour of booking flights first, with accommodation following.

More broadly, consumer

confidence across the travel industry is also improving, with this week's spend (down 51% year-on-year) another best result since the pandemic.

The result has been helped by a number of positive factors around the country, such as Western Australia announcing the opening of its borders to NSW and Vic.

More aviation aid

THE Australian Government will further support aviation with the extension of the Domestic Aviation Network Support program through to 28 Mar.

Professor Patrick Murray will also chair a new Future of Aviation Reference Panel, consulting industry on the issues facing the sector.

FC court case starts

BRISBANE'S Federal Circuit Court today heard Flight Centre pressured five former employees to attend after-work functions and do unpaid overtime.

The case is being brought by the Together Union on behalf of the plaintiffs, who claim they were underpaid a total of \$200,000 over five years because Flight Centre breached the *Fair Work Act* and failed to pay annual leave and overtime.

Flight Centre denies the allegations, the trial continues.



Window Seat

BEING stuck in hotel quarantine doesn't exactly sound like a Kodak moment, but at least one Kiwi artist is determined to salvage some interesting memorabilia from the wreck.

Artist Ruby Jones has partnered with Accor NZ to create a collection called Thanks from Iso, offering fascinating visual insights based on the experiences of thousands of returned travellers.

NZ PM Jacinda Ardern even shared the collection with the world, see what she said [HERE](#).



FEEL FREE TO GET IN THE *holiday* SPIRIT

Test your Norwegian Spirit knowledge and you could WIN one of five daily prizes!

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CATO's Catalan Christmas



ALL challenging years must come to an end, and the Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) marked the impending moment in festive style last week, gathering at The Travel Industry Hub in Nth Sydney for its annual Christmas party extravaganza.

The evening was sponsored by the Catalan Tourist Board, making for a very delicious Spanish theme which saw a Catalan chef prepare aromatic pans of paella in front of guests.

Combination wine tasting was also on offer for attendees, as well as a live cross via Zoom to watch a pair of Spanish chefs prepare some food from their patios in Barcelona.

"It was wonderful to feel that sense of 'travel' again, and to deliver a proper Christmas gathering for such a positive group of people who have really

had a difficult 2020," said CATO Managing Director Brett Jardine.

"We are all looking forward to 2021, though we're under no misgivings about the likely timelines of a return to pre-pandemic travel.

"The CATO community is resilient and will be ready to take Australians to the world's most wonderful places as soon as they're ready to travel."

Pictured: CATO's Dennis Bunnik & Brett Jardine cook up a storm with the Catalan culinary team.

QF appoints partner

QANTAS has appointed Swissport Australia to handle its ground handling services at the airports of SYD, MEL and CBR.

The news follows a decision to outsource ground handling at a number of hubs (**TD** 26 Aug).



LOVE  NSW

Book your client a memorable cultural experience in NSW.



AFTA UPDATE

from the Australian Federation of Travel Agents

APPLICATIONS for the government's \$128 million cash grant for eligible travel agencies and tour arranging service businesses are now open.

Under the COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support

Program, eligible businesses can now apply for a taxable grant and payments are scaled based on the turnover (gross income) of the business.

Eligible businesses have until midnight 13 Mar 2021 to claim, and whilst the website stipulates that the applications will be open until this date, or until monies are fully allocated, AFTA would like to reassure the industry that extensive modelling has been done to ensure that there are sufficient funds to pay all eligible travel agencies, tour operators and wholesalers.

Austrade has developed a helpful FAQ to help businesses



understand the eligibility criteria and how the cash grant will be allocated. We encourage you to please read the FAQs **HERE** to ensure you understand how the Program works.

Businesses need

to make an online application using the Services Australia **BUSINESS HUB** and if you need further guidance around the application process please contact Services Australia by calling 1800 560 774.

AFTA is hosting a member webinar this Wed at 2pm (AEDT) to address questions around eligibility, funding tiers and the application process and whilst registrations have been exhausted, the webinar will be recorded and a copy will be sent to members.

To learn more about the Grant Program or to apply **CLICK HERE**.

Tesla travel chance

TRIPADVISOR and Tesla have teamed up to offer one lucky winner the chance to score a \$9,000 NSW road trip in the summer as part of a joint campaign to encourage Aussies to travel safely and sustainably this holiday period.

To score a chance to win the road trip on one of three specially curated itineraries, to be explored in a new Tesla Model 3, respondents need to choose their dream NSW road trip and explain why they want to embark on the journey in 25 words or less.

The prize also includes accommodation, experiences expenses and meals, with the competition closing on 23 Dec.

For more info on how to enter, and to view the three trip options in more detail, **CLICK HERE**.

Jetstar busts pre-COVID levels

JETSTAR is gearing up to operate more than 850 return weekly flights across 55 domestic routes by Mar, exceeding its local capacity offered before the pandemic struck by 10%.

The airline will ramp up local routes using its fleet of Airbus A320s, aircraft that would normally operate overseas routes to places like Bali and Singapore.

The decision to increase domestic volume follows a study recently conducted by Jetstar, which showed that 86% of Aussies intend to travel domestically in 2021.

More than half of the 1,500 people surveyed by the carrier also indicated they plan to visit domestic destinations they've never been to before.



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Become a Malaysia Travel Expert with our online training program created jointly by Malaysia Airlines and Tourism Malaysia. Visit www.mhmalaysiaexpert.com and register today.

Register Now!



Sixty years of Skäl International Sydney

LAST Fri's traditional Christmas Gathering of the Skäl Club of Sydney was an extra special celebration, with members and guests taking the much-anticipated opportunity for an in-person get-together as they commemorated the club's 60th birthday. Founded in 1960, Skäl International Sydney was the 200th Skäl Club across the globe and the first in Australia, and has since then marked many milestones including hosting the 71st Skäl World Congress in 2010.

About 60 people were able to attend the event at the Four Seasons Sydney, with an afternoon of conviviality including a new member induction, a group quiz and even a sing-along to a video produced by the club's Committee, showing that even in lockdown there is plenty of value in being part of a networking organisation like Skäl - see the video [HERE](#).

Club President Melinda Brown also took the opportunity to welcome a legion of past presidents of the club, as well as Santa Claus who made a personal appearance during the event which featured the Skäl Toast of "To fellow Skälleagues everywhere: Happiness! Good Health! Friendship! Long Life! Skäl!" presented by Past President Bruce Morton (1985).

For more pics see [facebook.com/traveldaily](https://www.facebook.com/traveldaily), and for details on how to become part of Skäl see sydney.skäl.org.au.



SKÄL Sydney President Melinda Brown and "the real travel industry Santa" presented a contribution of Socks and Jocks from members to Amanda Ford-Asbeck from the club's charity partner Wayside Chapel.

THE impressive line-up of current and past Skäl Sydney Presidents - surely the luminaries of the Sydney travel and tourism community.



THE one and only Past World President Max Kingston with Past Sydney Presidents Verniece Irvine and Sue Francis.



CLUB President Melinda Brown wore the ceremonial chains as she inducted Donna Meredith as the newest member of Skäl Sydney.



WALTER Nand from Heritage Cruises pulls a cracker with Francis Cochrane.



EVERYONE wants a photo with Santa!



SKÄL Sydney Committee Members Mike Lillie and Walter Nand bump elbows with Santa.

Cat Herders Day



HONESTLY, we're as baffled as you are as to why National Cat Herders Day, celebrated annually today on 15 Dec, even exists.

Luckily the day doesn't actually celebrate real cat herders (because they don't exist) and is more a recognition of those whose life or job is like herding cats - just when you think one problem is solved another pops

up elsewhere.

For those in the travel industry this probably rings very true, but you've managed to solve clients' issues with grace and dedication.

So celebrate this bizarre day by picking your favourite internet cat meme, have a cat drawing competition or just give a shout out to those who are overworked and underappreciated!

Pub quiz

1. Kunayi is the local name of what Australian mountain?
2. Perth is named after a city of the same name in what country?
3. Which is the only American state to be triply landlocked?
4. What other country also has a theme park named Dream World?
5. From which three cities can you catch a flight to Lord Howe Island?
6. Bright, Victoria, is located at the south-eastern end of which valley?
7. The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was located in which city?
8. What country occupies almost all of the Anatolian peninsula?
9. When did the Indian Pacific begin journeying across Australia?
 - a) In the 1950s
 - b) In the 1960s
 - c) In the 1970s
10. Lake Itasca is considered the source of what river?

Unscramble

HOW many words can you make out of these nine letters? Every word needs to include the centre letter, have four letters or more and not be a proper noun or a plural. You can only use each letter once.

I	G	O
T	P	R
H	C	Y

Good – 15 words
 Very good – 23 words
 Excellent – 30 words

NOTE: We've used Chambers Dictionary to decide what words are acceptable.

Where in the world?



STANDING at 74.5m high, this interesting architectural marvel is the highest church in this country, and one of the tallest structures in the nation.

The building is named after a national poet and clergyman, who wrote 50 poems about the Passion narrative (from where Jesus enters the garden of Gethsemane to his death and

burial).

The church is one of the city's best known landmarks and is visible from many different points.

It was designed in 1937 to resemble the rocks, mountains and glaciers of the country's landscape and took over 41 years to build, starting in 1945 and finishing in 1986.

Do you know where this is?

ANSWERS 14 DEC

Whose flag is this: Sweden

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



ADL opens northern concourse

ADELAIDE Airport has opened its northern international departures terminal and retail concourse to the public today.

The new international departures hall is three times the size of the old facility, with departing travellers now entering security screening and emigration processing on Level 1 via escalators at the northern end of the terminal.

Once passengers complete emigration processing, they will move back up to Level 2 to access the international departure gates.

New Albany hotel

A LANDMARK new hotel will be constructed at Albany's Middleton Beach in Western Australia, with plans confirmed for a four star-plus property featuring between 80-100 rooms.

The sale of the 3,700m² site to a consortium comprised of Pacifica Developments and Ausglobal Group will see Seashells Group appointed the role of hotel operator, and construction kick off in the middle of 2021.

The WA Government believes the hotel will underpin an important tourism rejuvenation of the whole Middleton Beach area and help drive visitation.

Star Alliance locks in Amazon

STAR Alliance has announced it is migrating all of its IT infrastructure to Amazon Web Services in a bid to reduce costs and enhance performance.

The decision will see the airline network move its data, platforms, and business-critical applications to Amazon's cloud, reducing its infrastructure total cost of ownership by 25%.

Whitsundays events

THE Whitsundays is eyeing business events as part of its overall tourism recovery strategy, with Tourism Whitsundays releasing a content creation tender in a bid to lure a bigger portion of the \$35.7 billion business events market.

Part of the pitch to attract more events will include the launch of virtual reality site inspections and business events specific destination marketing videos.

View the full tender [HERE](#).

Como gift vouchers

COMO Hotels and Resorts has introduced new customisable e-gift vouchers this week, with guests who purchase them able to enjoy wellness treatments, dining, or stays at any of the company's resorts globally.

The vouchers start from US\$100 and can be bought with a customised personal message and be sent via e-mail or SMS.

Como currently operates one property in Australia, Como the Treasury located in Perth, and 15 properties internationally.

Purchases can be made [HERE](#).

MONEY

WELCOME to Money, *TD's* Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US\$0.754

THE extension of Brexit talks earlier in the week gave the Aussie dollar an early boost, however, with discussions over fishing rights derailing dialogues between the UK and EU, the local currency could start to feel the pinch and soften soon.

The Aussie has found itself up marginally against the greenback, but fell away from the British Pound as the UK currency jumped sharply.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.754
UK	£0.565
NZ	\$1.063
Euro	€0.620
Japan	¥78.45
Thailand	฿22.69
China	¥4.939
South Africa	11.323
Canada	\$0.962
Crude oil	US\$49.97

Short and sweet

THE chance to win a Haighs chocolate hamper comes to a close this week, so make sure you don't delay sending in your best poem or rhyme reflecting on 2020 or looking forward to 2021.

This year has been gloomy enough already, so make sure your poem looks at the bright side!

Send your entries to

christmas@traveldaily.com.au
before 16 Dec.

Today's entry comes from Shari Pallisier from Clean Cruising:

What a year it's been, this 2020.

It's left quite a few of us, angry and empty.

But we will not be defeated, by this Covid-19.

Because the human race together, are stronger than we seem. With our heads held high, and our hearts joined together.

There are very few things, we cannot weather.

So when the clock strikes midnight,

and all is said and done.

The world will shout

together, Bring on 2021!

Sydney hotel now on the market

THE Four Points by Sheraton Sydney, Central Park may soon have a new owner, with current proprietor Jerry Schwartz reportedly seeking to off-load the 4.5 star property.

Schwartz bought the hotel back in 2017 for \$156m, with expectations the property could fetch as much as \$180 million if sold by early next year.

For confidential tip offs, connect with *Travel Daily* via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click [HERE](#)





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