



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has nine pages of news including our **PUZZLES** page, plus a two-page **open letter** to the industry from a concerned **Travel Daily** reader and a photo page from **Atout France**.

Intrepid's new RAP

INTREPID Travel today announced its second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), with CEO James Thornton saying "thousands of customers travel in Australia every year with Intrepid, and it is crucial we acknowledge the rich histories and cultures of Australia's First Peoples, the custodians of this land".

Intrepid launched its first RAP in 2019, and is the first global tour operator to achieve Innovate RAP status, with a range of commitments including ways of procuring goods and services to support First Nations businesses.

The company will also establish an internship program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people interested in sustainable tourism, and partner with the travel industry and other like-minded businesses to promote reconciliation.

Intrepid will formalise a new partnership with an Indigenous organisation via the Intrepid Foundation, review recruitment procedures to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation, and introduce an Acknowledgement of Country by the tour leader on all of its Australia tours.

Cooks off NZ boil

NEW Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has shut down talk of a possible travel bubble between NZ and the Cook Islands, after the issue was raised by one of her ministers yesterday.

Ardern said "any speculation at this stage would be very premature," adding "no one wishes to be responsible for COVID entering into the Pacific".

FCTG Livn partnership

EXCLUSIVE

FLIGHT Centre is set to completely rework the way its consultants book day tours and activities, under a major new partnership with Australian technology firm Livn Group.

The new solution is set to be rolled out globally across all Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) verticals from Sep, including Travel Associates, Flight Centre, Liberty Travel and Infinity.

Livn CEO Mark Rizzuto told **Travel Daily** the platform will enable the automation of existing manual processes, helping Flight Centre navigate the world of travel beyond COVID-19.

"In Flight Centre we have found a like-minded partner set on replacing inefficient practices with technology that does not fail, works 24/7 and delivers multiple layers of value at all of its touchpoints," Rizzuto said.

Globus small groups

GROUP experiences with Globus and Cosmos are becoming even smaller, with the launch of a new range of Small Group Discovery tours on all 2021 departures in Central & South America, Asia and Africa.

The trips will have an average of 20 guests, promising "room to roam while getting up close and personal to fascinating places," said Globus Family of Brands MD Australasia Gai Tyrrell.

The company is also offering a 2021 Peace of Mind Travel Plan for all new bookings at no extra cost, giving the flexibility to move holidays to any other 2021 or 2022 date, destination, itinerary or brand in the portfolio before the final payment date.

Globus' SafetyNet Protection is also available for \$95 per person, giving the ability to cancel without penalty up to 30 days prior to departure, or make amendments up to 24 hours in advance of the trip.

The live connections also mean Flight Centre customers will gain access to real-time availability and pricing of day tours and activities while on their trips, providing new opportunities for experiences in-destination.

Livn is providing its platform to FCTG in a "software as a service" model which sees a small flat transaction fee charged for each booking, rather than a commission - meaning Flight Centre is able to maintain its existing commercial agreements with suppliers across the globe.

The Livn technology will enable and manage B2B connectivity via its secure API-based technology providing deep integration with tour operator reservation systems - in contrast to current platforms which see Flight Centre staff make bookings for tours and activities via individual supplier websites or by phone and email.

"With manual handling totally removed, Flight Centre and its preferred global day tour operators will have full accuracy on all their transactions, eliminating room for error, while enjoying lower operating costs by streamlining procurement workflow," Rizzuto added.

The full migration is scheduled for completion by 31 Dec.

Travelport adds new C19 plugin

TRAVELPORT has today added a new COVID-19 Smartpoint Plugin, giving travel agencies the latest information on government restrictions, lockdowns and safety measures across the globe, all within the agent workflow.

The new plugin is available free of charge to all Travelport customers globally using version 8.2 or above, and can be downloaded directly from the Travelport Marketplace.

Content is sourced from global travel safety intelligence provider Safeture, and is updated daily.

What do you want?

THIS week our sister publication **travelBulletin** is asking readers for their opinions of the monthly magazine and e-newsletter.

The brief poll asks which sections you like, how you prefer to read the magazine, which sections are popular, the relevance of industry commentary and what topics you'd like us to cover in the future.

It's anonymous and free, so help shape the content in upcoming editions by **CLICKING HERE**.

TripADeal appoints

FORMER Helloworld Travel Destination & Procurement Manager Samantha Waldron has been appointed as Contracting & Partnerships Manager at TripADeal.

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Tweed Heads agency ceases trading

THE owners of Tweed Heads-based DP & C Ryan Pty Limited trading as Global Travel & Cruise have resolved that the company be wound up, with the appointment of Steven Kugel of The Insolvency Experts as liquidator.

The former Helloworld member traded from within the Twin Towns club complex, with the first meeting of creditors scheduled to take place in Sydney on 31 Jul.

The company's directors include Rebecca Collins, Dallas Ryan, Cecile Ryan and Jason Collins.

Alliance new route

ALLIANCE Airlines has announced it will launch seven weekly flights between Brisbane and Moranbah from 17 Aug.

The new services will be operated by its 80-seat Fokker 70 aircraft, with earlybird prices of \$139 one way available for a limited time, a saving of \$60 on the regular price.

"We believe the speed, comfort and reliability of the Fokker 70 jet will make Alliance an attractive option for residents and resource workers," said Alliance Chief Executive Officer Lee Schofield.

MEANWHILE, parent company Alliance Aviation Services Limited has successfully closed its share purchase plan, raising \$3.8 million from 304 shareholders, a participation rate of about 8.4%.

"Agent of Last Resort" urged

EXCLUSIVE

THE Australian travel industry needs to seriously consider the prospects of shutting down, according to a downbeat discussion paper prepared by a **Travel Daily** agent reader.

The open letter suggests agents and suppliers should face the reality that it will be some time before borders open, and only businesses which are able to either reduce expenses to almost zero or provide significant capital injections in the meantime will have a chance of re-emerging in the post COVID-19 world.

The document highlights the unique position that the industry is placed in, with uncompleted refunds, live travel credits and existing bookings complicating the process of any graceful business shutdowns.

"Who can I pass these



outstanding obligations to, that can be trusted, and at what cost?" the paper asks.

Facing the grim reality, the writer argues, it could involve AFTA receiving Govt funding to create an "Agent of Last Resort" which would take on the management of any outstanding refunds, credits and live bookings, as well as administer grants and training to help re-establish the Australian retail and corporate travel industry once borders open and demand resumes.

The full discussion paper is included from **page 8** of **TD** today.

We welcome further input via feedback@traveldaily.com.au.

Hurtigruten safety video

HURTIGRUTEN has released a new health and safety video aimed to help boost confidence in its cruising product.

The video demonstrates the protocols on all Hurtigruten ships, covering every aspect of the cruise line's processes.

"Confidence in cruising will be key to the return of a sustainable cruising industry," said Managing Director APAC Damian Perry.

"Any guest watching our new Hurtigruten health and safety video will know that our protocols will keep them, and our crew and staff, as safe as possible...they can feel confident booking and travelling with us."

CLICK HERE to view the video.

\$2.37m shortfall in Balmain closure

THE shutdown of travel agency Global Travel Directors in the Sydney suburb of Balmain (**TD** 02 Jul) has seen creditors owed a total of \$2.37 million, according to a report released by the company's Administrator Adam Farnsworth.

The formal listing shows 134 affected customers who are collectively owed \$1.24 million, with Farnsworth saying he had been advised that these are "balances after taking into account payments made by the company to wholesale travel suppliers".

Other creditors include the Australian Taxation Office, owed \$38,000, as well as the ANZ Bank (\$49,000), NAB (\$273,000) and Paypal (\$152,000).

Director Leon Smith is also claiming a debt of \$645,000.

Beyond Scandi in 21

BEYOND Travel has released a range of new risk-free Scandinavia tours for 2021.

Offering savings of up to \$1,000 per person, a select number of tours are covered by Beyond's \$49 risk-free deposit and COVID-19 guarantee when bookings are made by 31 Aug.

The new range of itineraries features a trip from Oslo to Bergen, including a cruise along the Sognefjord, village visits and more - for details, **CLICK HERE**.



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Q: WHERE IN THE WORLD IS FLANDERS?

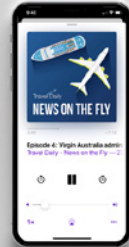
A: A fantastic region in Europe with gorgeous medieval art cities, history & culture, cycling, fries, beer, waffles, chocolate, fries, beers, waffles, chocolate, fries, beers (repeat).

VISITFLANDERS





Travel Daily



NEWS ON THE FLY

Episode 4: Virgin Australia admits 'Travel Daily' - News on the Fly

Catch up on the news of the week

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

Change.org petition

A **PETITION** has been launched on the Change.org website urging support for an extension of JobKeeper support for the struggling travel industry.

Almost 2,500 people have already joined the push, highlighting the heavy impact that border closures are currently having on travel.

See [change.org](https://www.change.org) to support.

Expedia training

EXPEDIA Group has launched a complimentary education program for the travel industry designed to help displaced or furloughed members of the industry expand their skillsets, develop professional networks & find new career opportunities.

The new online learning platform, Expedia Group Academy, offers learning modules and include webinars, online training, activity guides and downloadable resources, led by Expedia Group executives and other industry experts.

Visit the training site [HERE](#).

NSW skis to benefit

NSW ski resorts such as Thredbo and Perisher are set to benefit from an increased number of visitors following the closure of the Victorian border until late Aug.

The latest Roy Morgan figures show that 322,000 Australians plan on visiting one of the NSW snowfields in the next two years, with more than three-quarters of prospective visitors (249,000) from NSW/ACT, including 180,000 from Sydney.

The report also showed that there are 60,000 Australians from the rest of country (Qld, WA, SA, NT and Tas) who have said they plan on visiting a NSW snowfield over the next two years.

The ongoing COVID-19 spike in Vic has seen the temporary closure of Falls Creek and Mt Hotham until late Aug.

Tour Atlas search engine

TOUR Atlas has launched a white label tour search engine called go touring, which allows agents to select the brands they want to show up in their search engines.

Agents can choose from the Tour Atlas database of over 50 suppliers, they can also add their own brands and tours using the Tour Atlas API technology.

The search engine, like the Tour Atlas agent platform connects with the suppliers to book direct, meaning agents keep 100% of their commission on booked tours.

Tour Atlas co-founder Alex Obleshchuk hailed the technology as an "absolute game changer for the future of travel businesses."

"For the first time, agencies big or small can create a tour search engine that is suited to their client base."

"This means there won't be generic look-alike touring content

on every agency website."

The go touring search engine can be quickly installed and offers logos, headers, footers and colour schemes, all of which are included in the subscription cost which starts at \$99 per month.

"With most of us spending 20% more time online since lockdown and 50% of baby boomers visiting 4-9 websites when researching travel and spending an average of 27 hours per week online researching travel, improving websites and going digital is vital for travel businesses in the new post-COVID era," Obleshchuk said.

Fairmont Qld plan

A **NEW** \$300 million five-star resort is set to be constructed in Port Douglas by early next year.

Property developer Chiodo Corp has forged a new hotel management deal with Accor to create the 253-room hotel which will operate under the Fairmont Hotels and Resorts brand.

Amenities will include rooftop bars, pools, & conference rooms.



Window Seat

HOW would you feel about attending a new visitor attraction where all of the art was literally going for a steal?

Well, mark down Japan's Stealable Art Exhibition in your diaries for the future, an inaugural art event which actually encourages its visitors to knock off its art after hours.

Exhibition organiser Tota Hasegawa told local media the haven of kleptomania was intended to be "an experiment" which alters the relationship between artists and visitors.

Not surprisingly, several artworks appeared on online auction sites only hours after the opening night - way to steal the concept's thunder guys.



Spirit ready in Sep

TT-LINE will commence taking bookings for sailings on board *Spirit of Tasmania* from 01 Sep at the earliest, following the state's recent decision to delay the opening of its borders due to the threat of COVID-19.

For any travel prior to this date, bookings will only be accepted from Tasmanian residents returning home or pre-approved essential travellers.

China ups warning

CHINA'S Ministry of Foreign Affairs has advised its citizens that travellers to Australia could have their property seized and be arbitrarily searched, as diplomatic tensions between the two countries continue to rise.

The latest warning is the third upgrade in travel advice from China this year, with its Government most recently claiming Chinese students may be the victim of racist attacks if they visited Australia.

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DL big revenue dip

DELTA Air Lines has delivered an operating revenue of US\$1.47 billion for the three months to Jun, a US\$11.06 billion plunge when compared to the corresponding period last year.

The diminishing revenue figure was coupled with a sharp drop in net income as well, with the carrier revealing a US\$5.72 billion loss for the Jun quarter.

You deserve a trip

DESTINATION Gold Coast has today launched the third and final video instalment of its social media campaign aimed at encouraging interstate visitation.

The latest video tells families they "deserve a holiday", and features the SkyPoint Observation Deck and Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary & more - watch **HERE**.

Rudd drums up support



NEWLY appointed Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) CEO Darren Rudd has continued his strong engagement push since taking on the role, this week linking up with the Shadow Minister for Health Chris Bowen to meet several travel

agencies in Greater Western Sydney, including Flight Centre Merrylands and Helloworld Travel Merrylands.

Rudd has been active in embarking on AFTA's grassroots strategy with the travel industry, meeting and working with local members of parliament to ensure their concerns are being heard at the Federal level.

AFTA recently noted it was crucial that the "hopes of ATAS travel agents have a clear and uninterrupted voice to all levels of government, irrespective of political persuasion".

Bowen took to Twitter to thank Rudd for taking the time to meet with agents doing it tough in his electorate, throwing his support behind further government assistance for the sector.

"Any idea that they can do it without JobKeeper from the beginning of Oct is ridiculous," Bowen said.

Pictured: Rudd and Bowen meet with Helloworld Travel Merrylands' Abraham Khoury.

Testing times in Qld

TOURISTS in Queensland will have greater access to COVID-19 testing facilities with the State Government revealing plans to establish pop-up testing clinics in targeted locations.

Tests will be free for visitors and will be set up across several locations, including a select number of drive-through sites.

THE HOME BASED ADVANTAGE

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What is a 'Host Agency'?



If you're considering starting a new home-based agency, or moving your existing business, you

will need to consider the right partner to align your agency with.

You can join a consortium, a home-based group or a host agency. Understanding the benefits of each will ensure you make the right choice for your unique circumstances.

An increasingly popular option is a host agency, which allows agents or 'independent contractors' to operate under their own brand, with their own trading name, logo, email and website.

The main advantage of this is that the agent is truly building their own business, with the host agency working in the background to help its agents grow and prosper.

It's a model that's proving a real hit in the US, where it's estimated that more than half of US travel agents are independent contractors, and there's a growing number here too.

The level of services, support and specialties you can expect from host agents can vary so be sure to research all the options before making the move.

Find out more about becoming a home-based agent at:

www.join.yourtravelcentre.com.au

Les Farrar, Managing Director,
Your Travel Centre



ACCOMMODATION

WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



Dignified custodians of one of Sydney's most important heritage buildings, the **Fullerton Hotel Sydney** is beginning the final phase of remediation work on one the city's most iconic clock towers, located at the top of the accommodation. Having recently been acquired by Fullerton Hotels & Resorts late last year, the hotel is located in the General Post Office building, with the program to be completed by Oct.



Iconic Hotels by Geocon is set to open **Abode Belconnen**, located in Canberra's northwest. The new 152-room property is on track to open in Sep, delivering stylishly appointed rooms ideal for guests travelling for work or leisure, with several room types

available to accommodate all booking types. The hotel is part of Geocon's Republic development, a mixed-use precinct set to be home to more than 3,000 residents, food and beverage venues.



Farlam Hall, a boutique country hotel house, is set to welcome back guests after a major refurbishment. The luxury accommodation is set amid the English countryside, near Brampton in the country's north west. The hotel bills itself as ideally

situated for guests to explore the Lake District, Hadrian's Wall and more, and is now furnished with pieces from design experts Ghyll House Upholstery & Design.

BUZZ'tille Day by Atout France

ANNE Boillon, French Consul-General in Australia, with Patrick Benhamou, Regional Director at Atout France, organised an intimate Bastille Day dinner to bring travel industry honchos out of social Siberia. There was fine cuisine by the talented Guillaume Brahimi and each course was paired with an exclusive Champagne.

The guests celebrated the 70th anniversary of Club Med as well as the Tour de France in Aug and the French Open in Oct. Australia is in the list of the 14 countries allowed to travel to the European Union, so naturally, guests raised their glass of Laurent-Perrier to the reopening of the international borders.



ANNE Boillon, French Consul General in Australia and Phillipa Harrison, Managing Director Tourism Australia.



PATRICK Benhamou, Regional Director Atout France and Caroline Desaulle, Brand Ambassador Laurent-Perrier.



RACHAEL Harding, General Manager Club Med and Julie Primmer, Head of Retail Helloworld.



ANTHONY Laver, General Manager Scenic and Claudia Rossi, General Manager Mary Rossi Travel.



BRETT Jardine, Managing Director CATO and Trudy Witbreuk, State Director DFAT.



NEIL Perry and Guillaume Brahimi.



LAURENT-PERRIER Champagnes were served during the three-course dinner.



THE famous French truffles soup VGE was served in Le Creuset bowls.

Whose flag is this?



THE initial design of this country's flag had the same colours but in uneven stripes but it was scrapped after discovering that it was too similar to Tanzania's flag.

Instead the designers chose

these diagonal divisions.

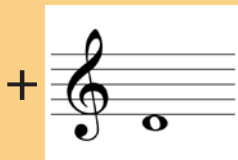
In addition, by selecting these colours for the flag they made it one of only two in the world not to use red, white or blue.

Do you know whose flag it is?

Check tomorrow for the answer.

Pub quiz

- In which year did Ireland join the European Union?
 - 1973
 - 1969
 - 1961
 - 1978
- Which part of the UK is said to be the home of the mythical King Arthur?
- Was the founder of Porsche and Volkswagen car companies German or Austrian?
- Which country claims to have invented chips?
- Cuba is home to the world's smallest what?
- Cricket is India's most popular sport, but what is the nation's official national sport?
- The world's longest straight stretch of highway is 478km long and located in which country?
- True or false: Japan has the second-most number of McDonald's, after the USA?
- Where is the oldest rainforest in the world located: Australia or Malaysia?
- Which countries are a part of the Benelux Union (often just referred to as Benelux)?
- What country is this collection of pictures spelling out?



Sudoku

BEGINNER

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

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

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

Funnies Flashback



WE'VE trawled through the **TD** Window Seat archives to give you a blast from the past. Here's some gems from 01 Jul 2013:

LOYALTY has really gone to the dogs, in a major Virgin Australia initiative unveiled this morning by celebrity vet Chris Brown.

VA's Velocity scheme says it's "breaking new ground in the loyalty space" with the expansion of the program to include travel for pets.

Effective immediately Velocity members can now earn 300 points every time their dog or cat flies on Virgin Australia's domestic network - and even more for silver or gold members.

Velocity Frequent Flyer CEO Neil Thompson officially launched the innovation, saying the carrier flies almost 30,000 pets each year around the country.

"We are delighted to make their flying experience even more rewarding by unleashing Australia's first frequent flyer program for pets," he said.

Brown was similarly enthusiastic, saying "now, not only will our dogs and cats give back to us in the form of unconditional love, but also in the form of our next holiday or retail purchase through points".

ANSWERS 14 JUL

Pub quiz: 1 Belfast, 2 Mongolia, 3 The Terracotta Army, 4 Busselton in WA, 5 Antarctica, 6 South Africa, 7 Coffee, 8 Princess Charlotte of Cambridge, 9 The Euro, 10 2011

Unscramble: bluing, blur, bugling, bulging, bung, burgling, burin, burl, burling, burn, glug, gluing, glum, grub, GRUMBLING, lignum, lung, luring, mung, numb, ruin, ruing, ruling, rumbling, rung, ugly, unrig, urging

Where in the world: Louisville Slugger Factory and Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, USA

Auckland lounge refurb



AIR New Zealand has unveiled its refreshed domestic lounge at Auckland Airport today.

The newly updated facility can cater for 375 guests at any one time and features revamped beverage stations and wider spacing between customers.

"We have redone the bar and barista station to provide more space for customers to enjoy a coffee or drink while taking in views of the runway," said the airline's General Manager Customer Liz Fraser.

Further enhancements include additional showers for those wanting to freshen up pre-flight.

Air New Zealand boasts two lounges at Auckland Airport, with the refreshed domestic lounge supporting its regional lounge located by the gates at the far end of the domestic terminal for customers catching a flight on its smaller turboprop aircraft.

"Both lounges have the same food and beverage offering and

plenty of space to relax or get some work done before flying," Fraser said.


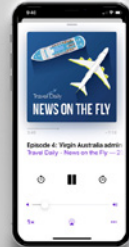
The refurbishment of the Air New Zealand domestic lounge in Auckland commenced in Jan and paused during the country's Alert Level 4 following COVID-19 concerns, before restarting again last month.

Pictured: The refurbished lounge.

Thai domestic boost

DIGITAL travel platform Agoda has announced a new partnership with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) which will see its services support the Thai Government's subsidised domestic tourism program.

The deal will help simplify the reservation process for locals wishing to book inter-provincial holidays between 18 Jul and 31 Oct, with the govt pledging to subsidise rates by up to 40% across five million rooms.

Catch up on the news of the week

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

Wyndham Thai push

DESPITE the challenging conditions in the travel sector, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts has announced plans to open four new properties in Thailand.

Slated to be located in Bangkok's CBD, all four will open their doors in the next two years.

The properties include the 150-room Wyndham Bangkok Queen Convention Centre, the 185-room Wyndham Garden Bangkok Sukhumvit 42, the 200-room Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Bangkok Sukhumvit 48, and the 200-room Ramada by Wyndham Bangkok Sukhumvit 87.

Final Explorer arrives

PONANT has taken delivery of the final vessel in its Explorer series, with *Le Jacques Cartier* emerging from Fincantieri's Vard shipyard and completing a rapid rollout out of similar ships over the last 24 months.

Designed for luxury ocean expeditions, the latest vessel features 92 staterooms and suites, as well as the multi-sensory underwater lounge called "Blue Eye", allowing passengers to access sub-aquatic views through two large portholes.

Call 1300 737 178 for bookings.

More details in **Cruise Weekly**.



WIN A CRUISE FOR 2

This month Travel Daily has partnered with Celebrity Cruises to give you the chance to WIN a free cruise for two people onboard *Celebrity Solstice* departing Sydney.



In 25 words or less, tell us your favourite cruise port along the East Coast of Australia and why, and you could WIN!



Email celebritycomp@traveldaily.com.au to enter.

An open letter to AFTA, the Australian travel industry and whoever else will listen...

A concerned **Travel Daily** reader, who wishes to remain anonymous, has posed some tough questions which we have agreed to publish in the form of a discussion paper. We welcome your input, so let us know what you think at feedback@traveldaily.com.au.

Questions to consider in relation to the present and future - a discussion paper

SINCE early Mar the Australian travel industry has been operating in an environment of zero revenue. Truth be told, due to the refunding of tickets etc. and the recall of GDS segment rebates, the industry as a whole has been working in an environment of negative revenue.

The reality is, in this writer's opinion, that the Australian travel industry is no longer economically viable. JobKeeper is unfortunately a measure that has concealed the collapse of the overall industry, the businesses engaged in this sector have no ability to generate any meaningful revenue/income while the Australian international borders are closed. Numerous entities are trying to remain engaged and relevant via a variety of programs with their long-term clients, but this appears to be more an act of desperation or insanity than dealing with the orderly shutdown of their businesses.

In the last week of Jun Alan Joyce, CEO of Qantas sent the strongest message to the industry that no international aviation of any substance is likely for at least a year. He may even be sugar-coating the situation to make it more palatable for his employees, shareholders and associated travel industry. Minister of Trade and Tourism Simon Birmingham has also been making statements that the international borders would not reopen until 2021 at the earliest.

This means at a minimum we have more time ahead when we are shut down than has already passed since we entered hibernation, yet the general economy is already opening up.

Would any fair minded Australian believe it is appropriate to open the Australian borders prior to a vaccine or treatment being available? To date Australia has gotten off lightly in relation to infections and the death rate is relatively low due to the early actions taken by our Federal Government.

In a previous editorial from the Editor of **Travel Daily**, the issue of JobKeeper was discussed as being only one of several elements required to sustain a travel industry in Australia. The recent **Travel Daily** business survey also demonstrated that few travel agencies could survive a 12-month period with little to no revenue. To this point most agencies have had negative to no revenue for four months

The Australian travel industry is made up of businesses that in general have no hard assets. Even the large players only have their brands that represent an asset that may, long term, have some value. It generally means travel companies in Australian do not have substantial/strong balance sheets. Most participants only have access to personal resources to obtain additional injections of capital into their businesses.

The situation is exacerbated by financial commitments and employee entitlements. Any company that has more than 14 employees has redundancy issues that will suck precious capital from their balance sheets. Any company that has a lease, sometime in the next few months must start paying rent and commence paying back the deferred rent that has been capitalized. The industry overall generates income via "clipping the ticket" so to speak. Irrespective of whether you are a home-based agent, a franchised group, a consolidator, a GDS or a back-office accounting systems provider, ultimately all revenue is derived from "clipping the ticket". These are just the companies that are front of mind.

Every part of our economic ecosystem generates revenue based on a flow of consumers. No consumers, no revenue, no business, no ecosystem! Consumers are the Australian travel industry's lifeblood.

Is there hope? Honestly not much. Is there a nice way to say this that won't upset many? NO!

What hope is there?

Those that are able to reduce expenses to almost zero have a chance of reemerging in the post COVID-19 world.

- How long must you hang on?
- What sort of balance sheet do you have and how much of your funds are you prepared to consume while you wait?
- What will be left of the industry distribution ecosystem that will be able to assist you in the post COVID-19 world?

“
Is there hope?
Honestly not
much.
Is there a nice way
to say this that
won't upset many?
NO!
”

Open letter to AFTA, the Australian travel industry and whoever else will listen... (continued)

I AM of the opinion that in the initial reactivation stage activity will be severely subdued. Any business will require capital to cover reactivation costs until activity increases to a point that a business becomes economic.

Big question... all businesses have clients that we have obligation to see through existing transactions completed.

- How many uncompleted refunds are still outstanding, which despite your best efforts you cannot complete?
 - How many of your clients are holding credits on transactions that you undertook on their behalf?
 - Does anyone have outstanding live bookings for travel commencing sometime in the future, that your clients do not wish to cancel at this time? Who would have thought that future business would be a liability?
 - If you close your doors, how will these bookings, refunds and credits be handled to completion for your clients?
- Who can I pass these outstanding obligations to, that can be trusted and at what cost?

Introducing... the Agent of Last Resort

Has Armageddon occurred? Based on the recent *Travel Daily* survey, a possible conclusion is that Armageddon has already occurred (it's not what I thought Armageddon would look and feel like) and JobKeeper is just kicking the can down the road.

Even if JobKeeper is extended, how many are willing to risk precious capital on extended hibernation without other significant financial assistance that will not create future obligations?

How long is the travel industry's piece of string?

How many destinations, or better selling skills webinars can you bear?

Note: The Administrators of Virgin Australia have stated that \$100 million in outstanding Australian travel industry created credits exist. How large are the outstanding refunds, credits and live bookings across the entire industry?

AFTA's role in creating the Agent of Last Resort

I am calling on AFTA (as no commercial organisation can be trusted or relied upon to be here in the post COVID-19 world) to request funding from the Federal Government to create and fund the Agent of Last Resort and to:

1. Establish offices in all states and territories.
2. Provide funding to operate the Agent of Last Resort for a period of 3 - 4 years.
3. Obtain additional funding to provide grants and training to employees to assist with reestablishing the retail and corporate Australian Travel Industry.
4. To have grants available to businesses that have made it to the other side to assist with providing wage subsidies for expansion and traineeships while trading is subdued.

The Agent of Last Resort would maintain a core skill base of individuals who will be the entrepreneurs and employees of the new travel agencies post COVID-19. Think of it like the seed bank that exists post any apocalypse to provide food for the world. I know this sounds dramatic, yet what is the alternative?

The Agent of Last Resort will at no cost take on the management of any outstanding refunds, credits and live bookings. This will allow agents to effectively shut up shop without exposure to potential litigation from former clients in relation to outstanding issues. It would also not become a distributor of sales in the recovery, but be purely a warehouse to deal with resolution of legacy issues - because those agencies that make it to a post-COVID world must not be competing for new transactions against a government-resourced competitor.

This outline is intended to form the basis of a dialogue that needs to commence within the Australian travel industry immediately. If we accept this is a reality, the next step is not just an orderly shutdown of businesses. The discussion must include assistance for all those who have worked and owned businesses in the industry, which can no longer feasibly operate in the current economic climate due to ongoing border closures.

The Australian travel industry has been destroyed not by misadventure or excessive risk taking, but by a pandemic!

AFTA must lobby the Government to also provide a safeguard for the financial and mental health of industry participants during a transition period. Very few if any other industries, to a person, have been wiped out as the Australian travel industry has by this pandemic.

Over to you AFTA.

PS. Please stop the meaningless and endless destination and selling skill webinars ASAP and start talking to the Australian travel industry like we are grown-ups. We are big enough to handle the truth!