

## Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news, including today's PUZZLE PAGE on p5.

## VA seeks \$1.4b

**VIRGIN** Australia today placed its shares in a trading halt, later confirming it was seeking a \$1.4 billion Government bailout.

The carrier confirmed it "continues to explore a range of options to manage through the COVID-19 crisis, including requesting support from the Australian Government in the order of \$1.4 billion as part of a broader industry support package to prepare for a prolonged crisis," according to an ASX investor update.

Virgin Australia said the proposal was only preliminary at this stage and remains subject to approval by its Board and the Government "and may or may not include conversion to equity in certain circumstances".

The airline said it was taking a range of measures to respond and manage the financial impact of coronavirus.

However, support will be necessary for the industry if this crisis continues indefinitely, to protect jobs and ensure Australia retains a strong, competitive aviation and tourism sector once this crisis is over," VA said.

Qantas has told the Government it expects a \$4.2 billion loan to "level the playing field" if Virgin receives the \$1.4 billion it is requesting, according to *Nine*.

## Agents join CT Partners

**TWO** high-profile Helloworld Travel Limited members have switched camps to join the CT Partners network.

CT Partners announced the addition of Melbourne-based Bayview Travel and Complete Business Travel (CBT) from Queensland as new members, with CT Partners GM Ian Edwards saying they were a "perfect fit".

"Bayview Travel and Complete Business Travel are strong, established businesses with solid industry reputations and a premium business mix... both Bayview and CBT value the strength of the CT Partners model," he said.

Particular attractions of the group included the close working collaboration between CT Partners members, Edwards said, along with "the full transparency of supplier payments, with 100% going back to members.

"We are delighted to welcome them to the group," he added.

Bayview Travel's Chris McGettrick said "in these unsettling times, yield maximisation, remuneration

transparency and a strong and united buying group were the principal reasons behind our decision to join CT Partners.

"We look forward to many years of fruitful collaboration," he said.

Complete Business Travel General Manager, Miriam Fois, said "As a business we yearn for collaboration between like-minded businesses and a buying group partnership aligned with our individual company culture.

"The commercial benefits of CT Partners were compelling," she added, with both agencies joining effective 01 Apr.

## Delta cleans up

**DELTA** Air Lines has launched a new Delta Clean program in response to COVID-19, with elevated hygiene measures to be in place for the long term.

Effective 01 Apr all domestic DL aircraft will use the same interior overnight fogging that the airline has been using to disinfect international aircraft in the US since Feb, and by early May aircraft will be fogged before every flight in Delta's network.

The disinfectant used in fogging is immediately safe to breathe, with DL to continue offering hand sanitiser and disinfecting surfaces across the airport experience.

## Finding it hard to know what's going on?

Visit C-19 Central on our website for the latest updates relating to the coronavirus.

Travel Daily

## Get puzzling, peeps

**TRAVEL Daily's** new puzzle page aims to provide some welcome distraction amid the doom and gloom, and is part of a host of initiatives to support the industry.

Today's puzzles are on **page five** and don't forget we are also offering free subscriptions at [subs.traveldaily.com.au](https://subs.traveldaily.com.au).



*Like the legendary Vikings before us, we know that the best way to survive the storm ahead is together. So, our message to you is one of unity. You are part of the Viking clan, and we will stand by you as we navigate these uncharted waters.*

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Travel & Cruise Weekly



## Viking Mississippi sales to open

**VIKING** Cruises has confirmed its highly anticipated US river ship program will launch in 2022, with Chairman Torstein Hagen overnight confirming that sales to past passengers of its new *Viking Mississippi* will open on 15 Apr.

Renderings of the 386-pax ship have also been unveiled (see today's issue of **Cruise Weekly**), with Torstein noting its elegant, modern design with "no paddlewheels - real or fake".

The company has confirmed a further two month extension to its global suspension of cruising until 30 Jun, with Hagen also this morning announcing the launch of a new online TV channel to keep inspiring customers to travel - see [viking.tv](http://viking.tv).



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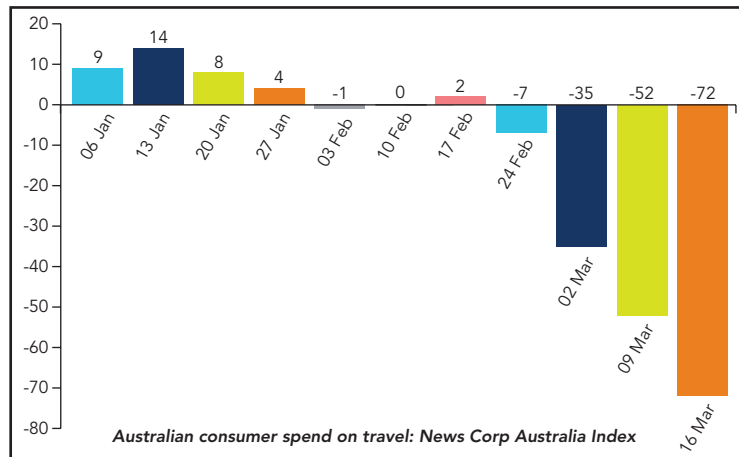
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## Travel spend off the cliff



### EXCLUSIVE

**THE** latest consumer travel spending data from News Corporation indicates the ongoing slump in demand, with the figures (pictured) now capturing the week of 16 Mar - just after the Government imposed mandatory self-quarantine for all incoming passengers.

At the start of the week Qantas and Virgin Australia suspended international flights, followed by a series of state-mandated border closures.

"Unfortunately it isn't quite the bottom: we'll certainly see

further drops in next week's data," said Omri Godjin, New Corp's Industry Head, Travel.

The tracking data, shared exclusively with **Travel Daily** and published each Tue, is an aggregation of consumer spend across major travel segments including accommodation, air, cruise, OTAs, travel agencies and tour operator.

Godjin noted the credit card-based data was part of work News Corp is doing to assist its clients to better understand the total retail travel market, with more information available for CEOs and CMOs if of interest.

## Rex shuts down Queensland

**REGIONAL** Express (Rex) will ground all its Queensland regular public transport flights at the end of today, blaming the inability to work through a funding solution with the State Government.

The announcement comes after \$298 million was committed to regional aviation on the weekend, but on terms since rejected by Qld authorities, Rex said.

Among the destinations affected are Cairns, Longreach, Mount Isa, Mornington Island, Toowoomba and Townsville.

"The Federal Government is only funding a minimum essential service of one return weekly flight per route, and this reduced schedule approach was rejected by the Qld State Government,"

the airline said, having made numerous requests to the state for funding since 19 Mar.

"While the Federal Government has announce several assistance packages for airlines, no concrete details have been forthcoming, and more important, not a single cent has been disbursed.

"With cash fast running out and no immediate prospect of a workable solution from the Queensland State Government, Rex has no choice but to declare a force majeure event for the government contract and suspend all services on Queensland regulated routes indefinitely until it has the ability to service the contract in a commercially viable manner."

## Window Seat

**TRAVEL** businesses around the world are doing their best to adapt to this brave new world, and today's example of that is at Banff National Park.

The town's famous Park Distillery Restaurant and Bar, known for its local handmade spirits and campfire cuisine, is now bottling and donating sanitiser for the town's Emergency Coordination Centre.

"We are using the same equipment for making our spirits, though adjusting our process and keeping the strength higher," said Banff Collective's Yannis Karlos, owners of Park Distillery.

The Town of Banff will distribute the sanitiser to the community free of charge.

## MONEY

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

**AU\$1 = US\$0.615**

**THE** Australian dollar hit two-week highs overnight, with American shares climbing and the AUD boosted by the Morrison Government's support package, that provides \$130 billion in wage subsidies to employers (see **page four**).

However, the focus will remain the impact of the coronavirus on the economy of the United States.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.615
UK	£0.496
NZ	\$1.018
Euro	€0.556
Japan	¥66.42
Thailand	฿19.98
China	¥4.331
South Africa	10.97
Canada	\$0.867
Crude oil	US\$22.76



Tuesday 31st March 2020

## OS touches down in Sydney



**AUSTRIAN** Airlines has this week returned to Australian skies, almost exactly 13 years after suspending its previous operations to Sydney and Melbourne in 2007.

The unprecedented COVID-19 situation has seen OS operate its longest sector ever - an 18 hour non-stop marathon from Vienna to Sydney, with the Boeing 777 aircraft (pictured) returning to VIE this afternoon carrying more than 250 Austrian and EU citizens as part of a government-backed repatriation effort.

"Carrying out repatriation flights and bringing people back home is the responsibility that Lufthansa Group airlines bear, being part of the critical infrastructure in the home countries of Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Belgium," said LH Group Senior Director for Southeast Asia and Pacific, Heiko Brix.

"I would like to thank the



authorities in Australia and the airport management in Sydney for their support in making this and possible further Lufthansa Group repatriation flights happen," he said.

Since 14 Mar Lufthansa, Swiss, Austrian and Eurowings have operated about 260 special flights back to their home countries, involving more than 50,000 holidaymakers.

A further 50 flights are already in preparation, the carrier said.

"We are all facing unprecedented times...together with the people of Australia we are looking forward to the day when regular travel will return to their country and the rest of the world," Brix said.



**QUARTER** one 2020 is over. Thank God for that.

What a time for the travel industry, a time that we just never considered could be even possible to consider and a time that we all can't wait to be over.

But a time that is going to be with us for several more months.

As the movement restrictions take a next level approach, who ever thought we would see people being held in hotels upon the return from an overseas holiday, who ever thought that people can only move in groups of two, and who ever thought that there might be more of this to come.

Every day there seems to be a new challenge, a new complex issue or situation that needs to be looked into as a result of the serious implications they are having on the industry.

Everyone in the travel value chain is facing problems that I am sure we never thought could be a problem.

This is a time when the saying "we are all in this together" has never been so true and for what it is worth, I am well aware of just how much tension is mounting within the industry.

I am feeling everyone's pain and understand everyone's perspective, everyone is right.

Solutions are not immediately easily found to many of the complexities that face the travel eco-system and this is fundamentally most serious when it comes to refunds and travel credits.

We have a cash crisis and within all of the challenges we face, this

is the most acute right now and the one that AFTA is primarily looking at government to help solve.

Nobody that has been around the industry for a while wants another Ansett to be the outcome of COVID-19.

Clearly this is on many people's minds and regardless of where a collapse at scale may come from, our collective experience should be able to guide and tell us that we need to find a pre-emptive solution before this happens.

Scale is the key here, as COVID-19 brings a next level, new level, bigger than ever before level of value to any pending drama that we face as an industry. So enough of the negativity I hear you say.

Just go and fix the problem and we can all get on with it.

We are trying very hard to bring a solution forward with the support of government and we will not sleep, we will not stop until we have tried every trick in the book to get an acceptable solution that gives confidence in the travel industry from consumers and confidence in the travel ecosystem for all stakeholders in the trade.

My hope is that in the coming weeks we will have something real to talk about that solves these challenges and I want to do a shout out to all the travel agencies, owners, managers, consultants, advisors, travel suppliers, tech companies and many others who have offered up ideas and support as we navigate this new galaxy that we are in.

Hang in there, we are working as hard as we can to find solutions to the many problems we face.

## Tahiti in lockdown

**AUTHORITIES** in French Polynesia have announced a nightly curfew from 8pm to 5am amid further strict restrictions on movement, according to an update from Smartraveller this morning.

Australians who are unable to or do not wish to leave Tahiti and its islands are urged to follow the advice of local authorities, and minimise their risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Urgent consular assistance is available by calling DFAT in Australia on +61 2 6261 3305.

## Katz gives \$2.5m

**VAIL** Resorts CEO Rob Katz and his celebrity chef wife Elana Amsterdam have donated US\$2.5 million to provide immediate support for both Vail Resorts employees and the mountain towns where the company operates.

As well as US\$1.5m in immediate emergency relief grants, Katz will give \$1 million to create a new fund within Vail Resorts' EpicPromise Employee Foundation, which helps staff respond to unpredictable events including medical setbacks.



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## Air NZ preps for downsize

AIR New Zealand will cut 3,500 jobs and is en route to becoming a "much smaller", predominantly domestic airline, according to CEO Greg Foran.

Communicating via an email to staff and customers, which was also shared with investors on stock exchanges in Australia and NZ, Foran forecast that even as far off as a year from now, the airline was likely to be "at least 30% smaller than we are today."

"No areas will be immune, whether it is our most senior leaders through to new joiners," Foran said.

"The situation we find ourselves in is nobody's fault...I am acutely conscious that a smaller Air NZ also comes with a significant impact on many of our suppliers, some of whom will probably have to reduce the size of their workforces.

"Air New Zealand is an expensive business to run with

operating costs in the billions... before COVID-19 came along and wiped out global air travel, we had annual revenue of around NZ\$5.8 billion...after paying all our bills, that saw us end the last financial year making a profit of NZ\$374 million," he said.

"We had over a billion dollars in the bank, which was our version of the rainy-day account in case an unexpected event hit our business.

"Unfortunately, COVID-19 has seen us go from having revenue of \$5.8 billion to what is shaping up to be less than NZ\$500 million annually based on the current booking patterns we are seeing...a drop of more than NZ\$5 billion dollars.

"This has the potential to be catastrophic for our business unless we take some decisive action," he said, noting that the airline's monthly labour cost alone is NZ\$110 million.

## PM announces "JobKeeper" plan

EMPLOYERS will be able to access \$750 per week per staff member from the Government, under a huge program announced by Prime Minister Scott Morrison yesterday, aiming to keep people in work (**TD** breaking news).

Details are still emerging, but payments will begin flowing in May, backdated to yesterday and based on staff employed on 01 Mar, with eligible employers having to demonstrate a downturn of at least 30% - or 50% in the case of businesses with a \$1 billion turnover or more.

The subsidy will be available for a maximum of six months, and employers can now register their interest in applying for the JobKeeper Payment via the website at [ato.gov.au](https://ato.gov.au).

Self-employed people can also apply for the payment, with monthly updates required to declare continued eligibility.

## Cruise lines extend suspensions

OVERNIGHT a host of cruise operators confirmed further extensions of the pause to their voyages due to coronavirus.

Cunard Line now plans to resume voyages on 15 May, along with other Carnival Corporation brands including Seabourn and Holland America.

MSC Cruises has extended the halt of all new cruise departures fleet-wide until 29 May, while Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings's voluntary suspension of voyages has been extended to 10 May for the Norwegian, Oceania and Regent Seven Seas brands.

Viking Cruises now plans to resume its ocean and river cruise programs on 01 Jul, while Royal Caribbean last week announced it planned to return to service on 13 May across the Royal Caribbean, Celebrity, Azamara and Silversea brands - more in today's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.



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## 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 [info@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:info@traveldaily.com.au)



Cook Islands Tourism wanted to shout out to all travel agents across Australia by appreciating particularly the efforts behind the scenes by one agent, Luke Jones from Flight Centre World Square in Sydney (pictured):

"Luke has become a self-selected extension of the Cook Islands team, supporting travellers needs above and beyond with not only his customers, but also promotional bookings of prize winners, who cannot travel due to COVID-19. This is not commissionable work for Luke, he just wants to help travellers who he knows will return to

book again, whilst sending out a message on behalf of all travel agents to respect the dedication and commitment of travel agents to keep the industry alive.

"Not only is Luke dealing with rescheduling promotional travellers to the Cook Islands, he has clients calling him from Vietnam, Turkey, Afghanistan and Santiago Chile all seeking to return home, with many other existing clients looking to reschedule and obtain credits on domestic and overseas holidays. Luke works till late hours and even takes calls on his personal mobile, citing it's just what all travel agents do!"

## Unscramble

**HOW** many words can you make out of these nine letters? Every word needs to include an 'R', have four letters or more and not be a proper noun or a plural. You can only use each letter once. There's also one word that uses all nine letters.

V	I	W
A	R	T
W	E	E

Good – 20 words

Very good – 30 words

Excellent – 39 words

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

## Whose flag is this?



**THERE** are over 190 countries in the world, all with their own individual and unique flag (albeit some do have strong similarities).

What country would proudly be waving this flag at the Olympics (if it hadn't been postponed)?

Check tomorrow for the answer.

## Pub quiz

1. What country shares Lake Titicaca with Bolivia?
2. What is the tallest mountain in Australia?
3. According to Planetware.com, what is the second highest rated tourist attraction in China?
4. How many times was One&Only mentioned in yesterday's issue (*TD* 30 Mar)?
5. What is the largest island by area in the Mediterranean?
6. In what month last year did a ban on climbing Uluru take effect?
7. Which of the Seven Wonders of the World was situated around 80km south of where modern-day Baghdad is?
8. Which island on the Pearl River delta has a name meaning "fragrant harbour"?
9. Which iconic cocktail was created at the Raffles Hotel in Singapore in 1915?
10. What is the name of Finland's most northerly province?
11. Can you guess what word this collection of pictures is spelling out?



+



### ANSWERS 31 MAR

Pub quiz: 1 Edinburgh, 2 The Great Barrier Reef, 3 Alaska, 4 The Little Mermaid, 5 BridgeClimb, 6 Greece, 7 The Grand Canal, 8 None, 9 Mexico, 10 KLM, 11 Aeroplane (air + row + plain)

Where in the world: Barcelona

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

## EY miles credit

**ETIHAD** is offering up to 5,000 bonus Etihad Guest Miles for passengers impacted by the airline's suspension of operations who redeem Etihad Credit in lieu of their current bookings.

Eligible Etihad Guest members taking the credit option will automatically receive their bonus miles within four weeks of their credit being issued, with Etihad Credit allowing customers to cancel and rebook to any EY destination until 31 Jul 2021.

## Airbnb COVID help

**AIRBNB** has launched a global initiative aiming to help COVID-19 responders by giving them "safe and convenient places to stay while they carry out their critical work".

The plan, building on a pilot scheme in France offering doctors, nurses and other health workers free Airbnb stays, aims to help house 100,000 people globally, with thousands of hosts already offering their homes at no charge via the platform.

## WIN A CRUISE TO RUSSIA



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This month Viking is giving *Travel Daily* readers the opportunity to win a deluxe stateroom on the Waterways of the Tsars river cruise.

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Contact [agents.anz@vikingcruises.com](mailto:agents.anz@vikingcruises.com) if you need assistance setting up an account



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A cruise in the Galapagos offers wildlife encounters like nowhere on earth. Read more in the March issue of *travelBulletin*.

**CLICK to read**  
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## tB's greenest issue ever

**THE** latest issue of *travelBulletin* is out and this edition is our annual green magazine, focusing on sustainability.

The April edition is greener than ever, being the first edition of the magazine published online only, and not in print, due to issues with paper supply.

In the cover story, contributor Steve Jones takes a look at the topic of flight shaming, an issue which was rather contentious before the current COVID-19 pandemic put paid to any kind of travel overseas.

Jones spoke to a number of players inside and outside the aviation industry to see how airlines are tackling the challenge of the flight shaming movement, which has grown particularly strong in Europe.

The April issue of *travelBulletin* also includes feature stories on some of the key pillars of sustainable tourism: protecting and caring for communities, oceans, wildlife and considering your carbon footprint.

Of course with the rapid escalation of the coronavirus



pandemic, it would be remiss of us not to cover how the crisis has affected the travel industry.

The magazine includes a number of articles on the impact the rising restrictions on travel and gatherings have had on cruise, land and air operators, as well as the events sector.

To read it all, **CLICK HERE**.

You can also subscribe to the digital version of *travelBulletin* by **CLICKING HERE**, and receive the issue straight into your inbox so you never miss a story.

## AirAsia on ground

**MALAYSIAN** low-cost carrier AirAsia and its affiliated airlines in Indonesia and Thailand have announced the grounding of all flights due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Operations will cease tomorrow with plans for a May resumption.

Change fees are being waived, and disrupted customers are being offered credit vouchers with a 12 month validity.

## New BKK residence

**THE** Sindhorn Midtown Hotel in Bangkok's Langsuan neighbourhood has launched a new serviced residence tower, featuring 49 private studios and one bedroom apartments.

The self-contained suites include free wi-fi, a kitchenette and smart TV, and guests can also enjoy F&B delivery service from the hotel - [sindhormidtown.com](http://sindhormidtown.com).

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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*Travel Daily* is part of the Business Publishing Group family of publications.

Produced each weekday since 1994, *Travel Daily* is Australia's leading travel industry publication.

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