

SQ refund success

SINGAPORE Airlines has thanked the industry for its patience in recent months as it dealt with massive refund volumes, confirming that all agent Refund Applications submitted up to and including early this month have now been processed.

SQ GM Agency Sales Greg McJarrow said "I am also pleased to advise that our current RA processing time in Australia is within two-three business days".

The update is a stark contrast to the situation with Qantas which this week confirmed it was still working on some refund requests from back in Mar (**TD** 09 Sep).

MEL hikes security tax 450%

EXCLUSIVE

MELBOURNE Airport has confirmed a significant increase in its security charges for international passengers, with the Melbourne Safety and Security Tax increasing more than fourfold from \$6.22 to \$29.76.

The impost started rolling out in GDS fares yesterday, with carriers noting the jump applies to all ticket sales effective immediately, for travel on or after 12 Oct 2020.

A spokesperson for the airport said the ongoing impact of international border closures and domestic travel restrictions

had become "deeper and more prolonged" as a result of Victoria's second wave of COVID-19 infections.

"International security is charged on a pass-through, cost recovery basis meaning we make no profit from the fee.

"Given the closure of international borders to control the spread of COVID, our cost recovery is now spread across a far smaller number of passengers which unfortunately leads to increased charges," the spokesperson noted.

"We do see this as a temporary measure, and we will recalibrate the charges lower as the increase in passenger numbers allows".

The airport said it had been discussing its concerns on the issue with government for some months, to no avail.

"Were we to receive some government support for the funding of its mandated program, we would naturally revisit the charges accordingly."

Accom merger?

TALKS are underway between Accommodation Association of Australia (AAOA), Australian Hotels Association and Tourism Accommodation Australia to create a united voice for the struggling sector.

AAOA President Julian Clark said a party representing all of the associations had been working on a "new model" with one voice.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has seven pages of news including our PUZZLE page and a full page from **Tourism Malaysia** and **Travel Daily Awards**.

Congrats nominees

AS The *Travel Daily* Awards voting continues, today we honour the almost 700 individuals and industry businesses who were nominated - see **page nine**.

QF fills VA's boots

QANTAS will boost its rural presence with a new Brisbane-Port Macquarie service, announced just hours after Virgin Australia cut its flights to the New South Wales city (**TD** yesterday).

The airline will launch the flights as Queensland's border opens to New South Wales, and will be operated up to five times weekly with its Q400 turboprop aircraft.

Meanwhile, Qantas has also issued a new call for common ground on border openings.

The airline is calling for decisions "based on medical risk assessments and a common definition of what constitutes a COVID hotspot", encouraging its employees to sign its 'Safely open our borders' petition.

The company has also written to state and federal MPs who represent tourism-dependent electorates in states which did not agree to develop a road map out of hard border regimes last Fri (**TD** 07 Sep).

Voting closes Monday

TRAVEL DAILY AWARDS

VOTE FOR THE FINALISTS NOW!

There have been a massive number of nominations for the Travel Daily Awards and voting for the finalists in the supplier categories is now open until 14 September.

Vote now for those who you believe deserve to be recognised for their support.

Click here to vote for the finalists now

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692 DEPARTURES

Ocean Cruises



133 DEPARTURES

Mississippi Cruises



33 DEPARTURES

Expedition Cruises

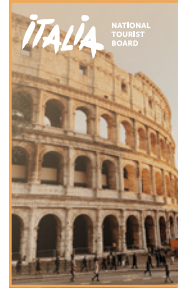


10 DEPARTURES

[CLICK HERE](#)

Travel Daily

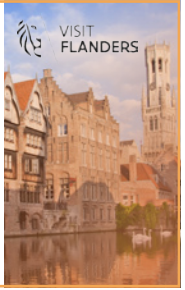
Friday 11th September 2020



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Travel Daily



TA COVID portal

TOURISM Australia (TA) this morning debuted a new "Australian COVID Travel Portal" which brings all the key safety information, travel restrictions and guidelines from across the country into a centralised resource for the industry and travellers.

TA MD Phillipa Harrison said the new portal aimed to give consumers the confidence to plan and book an Australian holiday and help them travel around the country safely.

"One of the significant changes that we've seen in consumer behaviour as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak is, unsurprisingly, a heightened awareness around health concerns, hygiene and physical distancing," she said.

"As Australians begin to travel again, it is crucial that travellers feel confident to holiday safely."

Harrison said the initiative also demonstrated how Australian tourism was putting in place the highest standards and stringent measures to ensure customer health and safety.

The portal gives information on where people can and cannot travel around the country, including state and territory border restrictions, with an initial focus on domestic intra- and interstate travel.

However, the initiative will also extend to visitors from overseas once Australia's international borders reopen.

The new page is now live at www.australia.com.

Wendy revamps Japan

WENDY Wu Tours (WWT) has introduced its 2021/22 Japan brochure to the market, featuring a new range of cultural experiences, new tours and exclusive solo departures.

Speaking with **TD** about the launch this week, WWT Australia's MD Andrew Mulholland said the brochure would be the first of six rolling out over the coming weeks, with Japan a great first candidate as it has continued to receive strong interest from Aussies despite the challenging conditions.

"Japan has been a hot destination for many years and that has continued during this bizarre year we are having, and a lot of the enquiry and the bookings of late have been skewed towards Japan," he said.

Mulholland added the brochure now caters to solo travellers more than ever before, with solo incentives in place such as chauffeur transfers from Australia, private car transfers, lounge access and the option of attending a cocktail function on the first night to get to mingle with other solo travellers.

"We've noticed that the representation of solo bookings and enquiries has been disproportionately high when compared to previous years, we put that down to the fact that cabin fever has probably hit these guys the hardest through the lockdown...so they are definitely overrepresented at the moment," Mulholland contends.

"These solo travellers are skewed towards females and are in that sweet spot age group for us of 50 plus," he added.

The trade has also been earmarked as an important component of the operator's forward planning, with a new website set to launch on 22 Sep and content and functionality to be refreshed, such as agents being able to pay deposits through its payment gateways, as well as part payments.

"The way we engage with the trade will be radically revamped and we are using CRM systems to power that and make sure we are calling on them about the right things," Mulholland said.

To mark the launch of the Japan brochure, WWT is offering a return upgrade to Business class flying Singapore Airlines for only \$999pp, available on select departures for a limited time.

Check out the latest Japan brochure by **CLICKING HERE**.

Virgin cuts a third

VIRGIN Australia will reportedly return a third of its Boeing 737 aircraft to lessors as part of the financial strategy implemented by new owners Bain Capital.

The carrier has successfully renegotiated terms with Boeing for 56 of its 85 737s, with the remainder to exit its fleet, a spokesperson for the airline said.

However, Virgin Australia also added that once global travel demand returns to normal levels it would look to grow the fleet once again to an estimated 75 Boeing 737s.

EY loads Tel Aviv

ETIHAD Airways has released published fares from Australia to Israel for the first time ever.

The move follows the historic normalisation of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (**TD 20 Aug**) which is expected to see flights commence from Abu Dhabi and Dubai to Tel Aviv.

AIR NEW ZEALAND

We're proud to be an airline category finalist in the 2020 Travel Daily Awards.

Don't forget to vote and support the industry that we all love.

Good luck to all the finalists.

VOTE

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Thanks for your support

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HURTIGRUTEN





QR speeds it up

QATAR Airways is now offering the largest number of aircraft in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa equipped with high-speed broadband.

The airline is celebrating the launch of its 100th aircraft to feature “super wi-fi” connectivity, with passengers able to receive up to one hour of free access.

Guests are also able to purchase full-flight access.

ANA ups SYD-HND

ALL Nippon Airways (ANA) flights between Sydney and Tokyo Haneda will be temporarily increased from Oct.

Currently flying thrice-weekly, the Star Alliance member from 01 Oct will fly five times weekly from Sydney to Haneda.

The return NH879 service will still operate three times a week.

ANA has also adjusted frequencies at CDG, HNL, IAH, JFK and MEX.

Two can play that game

EXCLUSIVE

THE combined forces of Malaysia Airlines and Tourism Malaysia have today launched an online training platform for agents in Australia and NZ.

Built via the **Travel Daily** Training Academy, the website showcases the latest in content from the airline and destination spanning a series of modules, lessons and quizzes with ample prizes including flights, accommodation and vouchers on offer to help motivate agent participation.

This is the first joint partnership between the two on such an activity, with MH's Regional GM AU & NZ Giles Gilbert saying “we have been wanting to develop a platform specifically to educate our trade partners on our product and services, including the recently introduced Branded Fare Family, and I am pleased to be able to launch this platform

in conjunction with Tourism Malaysia.

“During this uncertain time, this portal will continually keep agents up-to-date on the safety measures that Malaysia Airlines has introduced to ensure the health and safety of our passengers and also the latest updates on our policies that agents can easily access with information updated regularly,” Gilbert added.

Tuan Razali Tuan Omar and Rosli Reshid Mohd Saini, Directors for Tourism Malaysia, in a joint statement said “we want to take this opportunity to remind agents that Malaysia is a beautiful and culturally diverse country with many fascinating celebrations.

“We look forward to welcoming Aussie and Kiwi travellers again once the borders open.”

To register and complete the first three of eight modules on offer - **CLICK HERE.**



Window Seat

LOCKDOWN has seen many of us expand our culinary expertise with sourdough, meatballs and of course cocktails - but Helloworld Travel's Rohan Moss has taken it to the next level.

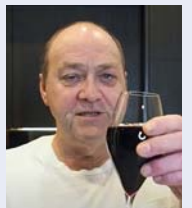
He's launched his very own YouTube cooking show, called Big Roh's COVID Kitchen.

Melbourne-based Moss said being in Australia's COVID capital “there's not much we can do at the moment”.

“We can cook, we can eat, we can drink, we can go to work, and that's just about it”, with the channel

garnering hundreds of subscribers just in the last few days -

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Where is the voice of the independent agent?

OPINION

Justine Sealey is the MD of Ramsgate Travel Service, and sent this letter to the Editor on behalf of herself and Kirsty Eccles, owner of Meridian Travel.



Got an opinion to share? Let us know in up to 400 words via email to feedback@traveldaily.com.au.

THERE has been a lot of negative feedback from travel agents about the appointment of Webjet to the Board of AFTA.

We are disappointed by this development too, but to us, it simply highlights the need more than ever for truly independent travel agents to have a voice at the table.

We realise that most existing AFTA Board members have some non-branded agents as members of their corporations but one

thing is very clear to us, the majority of the AFTA Board have a primary responsibility to their shareholders, not to their agent members.

It is a simple fact that in listed travel companies, agent members are there to generate a return for the owners or shareholders.

This is also true of non-listed travel companies represented on the Board as well.

It may be claimed that decisions are made in the best interests of travel agents, and that is probably true, provided it is in the interest of shareholders as well. These statements are not opinions or

criticisms: they are facts!

Moreover, Helloworld and Flight Centre currently hold multiple positions on the Board, which means the voice of the truly independent agents is a whisper at best.

But there is an answer.

We are both members of the Australian Travel Agents Co-operative (ATAC) which is Australia's only travel co-operative. Every single one of our fellow members are independent travel agents and we are all equal owners - we share in almost 100% of the profits

we generate. It's a low-cost operation and is well placed to ride out the pandemic.

We don't pay membership fees or marketing levies. In fact, we are still receiving our overrides.

Our directors are all running travel agencies as well, and every

decision they make **MUST** be in the best interest of the members - all of us!

Our General Manager Michelle Emerton has nominated to join the AFTA Board and we are 100% behind that.

Not only has Michelle run a travel agency in the past, she is working with members like us every single day to help us all prosper.

In fact the ATAC tagline is "Partners in Your Prosperity".

We love that, because it's not a marketing line, it's how the place is run.

We are supporting Michelle to be elected to the AFTA Board and encourage everyone who is unhappy with the Webjet appointment to vote for a truly independent travel agent voice.

Michelle won't just speak for ATAC members, she will also be the voice for all independent travel agents across Australia.

As Darren Rudd says, "it is time to be united". We agree and that starts with an AFTA Board that represents ALL agents.

“
The majority of the AFTA Board have a primary responsibility to their shareholders, not to their agent members
”



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LH flags A380 cuts

LUFTHANSA may retire its fleet of Airbus A380s, as well as a range of other jumbos, in line with a new COVID-19 restructuring plan.

Also in the firing line is Lufthansa's Airbus A340s and Boeing 747-400s.

The move would be in addition to Lufthansa Group's previously announced plans to retire 100 aircraft across its airlines, which include Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, Eurowings, Lufthansa and Swiss International Air Lines.

As of the end of Jun, the Lufthansa Group flew eight A380s, 43 A340s and 27 747s, however many of these airplanes are already parked indefinitely.

QF, AF and BA have all ceased flying A380s during the pandemic.

HAL Europe 2021

HOLLAND America Line (HAL) is set to sail five ships in Europe in 2021.

Rotterdam, Nieuw Statendam, Westerdam, Zaandam and Zuiderdam will all cruise Europe from Apr through to Nov, offering itineraries ranging from seven to 35 days, as well as Collectors' Voyages of up to 29 days.

The ships will visit the Baltic, British Isles, the French and Spanish rivieras, the Iberian Peninsula, the Mediterranean and Northern Europe.

European departure options include Amsterdam, Barcelona and Civitavecchia, Piraeus and Venice, while HAL will also offer trans-Atlantic crossings from Fort Lauderdale, and a Voyage of the Vikings option, sailing roundtrip from Boston.

CORPORATE UPDATE

Amex GBT cuts UK staff

AMERICAN Express Global Business Travel has confirmed significant staff cuts in the UK, but has disputed reports the workforce will shrink by 30%. Trade media in Britain is reporting the reductions based on a number of social media posts, with the TMC currently believed to have more than 2,200 UK staff. A spokesperson for Amex GBT said despite the company's "very strong financial position," it was necessary in the current environment to reset its cost base to more closely align with

demand. "We have taken measures to protect as many jobs as possible, including the use of government support schemes where available, voluntary retirement and voluntary severance programs, and introducing new flexible working options. "There are some areas where unfortunately those measures alone are insufficient," the spokesperson added, with the company undertaking to "continue to consult with and support affected colleagues throughout this period'. The company wasn't able to respond to a request from **Travel Daily** before today's deadline about whether similar restructuring is likely in the Amex GBT Australian operation.

SIA rationalisation

THE Singapore Airlines Group yesterday announced the "difficult decision" to cut about 4,300 positions across its airlines, with employees in Singapore and overseas stations included in the radical restructure. The airline cited the "long road to recovery for the global airline industry due to the debilitating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic", as well as the urgent need for its operations to adapt to an uncertain future.

Relative to other carriers, SIA is in an even more vulnerable position because it does not have a domestic market to help drive early recovery. "In order to remain viable in this uncertain landscape, the Group's airlines will operate a smaller fleet for a reduced network compared to their pre-COVID operations in the coming years," the carrier said.

After taking into account a recruitment freeze, natural attrition and the take-up of voluntary departure schemes, the potential number of staff impacted is reduced to about 2,400 across the globe. "Having to let go of our valuable and dedicated people is the hardest and most agonising decision that I have had to make in my 30 years with SIA," said CEO Goh Choon Phong.

US drops screening

ENHANCED COVID-19 screening of inbound passengers to US airports will be suspended next week, with the Transportation Security Administration saying that just 15 out of 675,000 passengers arriving from high-risk destinations to designated airports had been positive for coronavirus infection. The procedures, in place since Jan, had included temperature checks and requirements to provide medical history, health status and contact information.

WA tenancy update

THE West Australian Government yesterday announced a six month extension to COVID-19 commercial tenancy laws which will now be in place until 28 Mar 2021. The move means existing measures including a moratorium on evictions, rent increase freezes and the code of conduct for small business commercial lease rent relief negotiations will be in place for businesses which continue to qualify for JobKeeper.

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Travel Daily

\$50m business events lifeline

PRIME Minister Scott Morrison last night announced a \$50 million injection to help restart Australia's business events sector.

Under the initiative businesses will be assisted with the costs associated with running meetings, conferences, exhibitions and events, with Morrison saying "getting business events up and running again will be a critical part of the recovery of our tourism industry".

He said there would also be "huge flow-on effects throughout the entire economy," with the funding aiming to not only support event companies and venues but also be a shot in the arm for accommodation providers, caterers, cleaners and technology suppliers.

Federal Tourism Minister Simon Birmingham noted the massive impact of COVID-19 on the sector, with about 95% of business events for 2020 either cancelled or postponed.

"Our business events sector is doing it incredibly tough at present and getting events back into the calendar will help this

key part of our tourism industry, which supports around 230,000 jobs, turn the corner," he said.

The program will fund the Business Events Exhibitor Grants program, which will allow Australian businesses taking part in an approved business meeting, convention, conference or incentive event in 2021 able to apply for upfront grants to cover up to 50% of their costs, ranging from \$10,000 to \$250,000.

The announcement follows extensive government engagement by the Business Events Council of Australia (BECA) which will now lead the industry's work on the design and implementation of the program.

"Our goal is to get money flowing throughout the supply chain as soon as possible," said BECA Chair Dr Vanessa Findlay as she thanked the Government for its support.

"We can now look to rebuilding business confidence and kick-starting momentum across the entire business events supply chain," she added.

For more info **CLICK HERE**.



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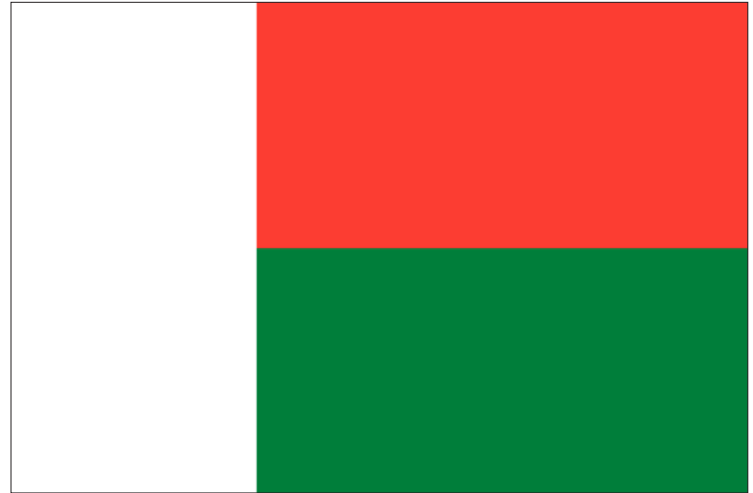
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Pub quiz

1. The Silk Road began in which imperial dynasty of China?
2. Europe's longest river is the Volga, but which is its second-longest?
3. New York City is home to the most billionaires in the world, but where is home to the second-most?
4. Which airline features an image of a smiling Eskimo on its tail?
5. Aged 33, Sebastian Kurz is which country's Chancellor, and the youngest head of a government in the world?
6. To the nearest 10 years, how long has the Royal Queensland Show, or 'Ekka', been around for?
7. Which world-famous building recently proposed a hike to the licensing fee of its image, potentially forcing sports teams featuring it in their logo to rebrand?
8. Tel Aviv is located on the coastline of which sea?
9. Which eastern Caribbean island once switched between British and French rule so often it became nicknamed the Helen of the West Indies?
10. Which country is home to more elephants than any other?

Whose flag is this?



THE traditional colours of this country have always been red and white and they have been used by many previous rulers. At one point they named their nation the kingdom of Menabe, which means "great red".

The country later came under French rule, but the flag doesn't show any influence of that, with the green colour added when the nation became independent. Do you know whose flag this is? Check Monday for the answer.

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.

G	T	R
A	E	G
V	A	A

Good – 11 words
 Very good – 15 words
 Excellent – 21 words

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

ANSWERS 10 SEP

Know your brands: 1 Chanel, 2 LG Electronics, 3 Tourism Australia, 4 Tour de France
 Where in the world: La Rambla, Barcelona, Spain
 Whose animal is this: Bull - Spain

Funnies Flashback



WE'VE trawled through the **TD** Window Seat archives to give you a blast from the past. Here's some gems from 14 Oct 2013:

THE newest heart-stopping attraction to debut in Las Vegas is a zip-line ride where guests dangle more than 150m above the ground.

Set to launch at the Rio Hotel & Casino, the zip line will connect the two towers of the all-suite hotel, travelling from the VooDoo Steakhouse on the 50th floor of the Masquerade Tower to the adjacent 20-storey Ipanema Tower.

Riders will fly downwards 500m at a breathtaking 53km/h, and then make the return trip travelling backwards at 32km/h.

The ride will accommodate two people at once and provide fabulous adrenaline-fuelled views of the Las Vegas strip.

And there's no need to worry about queues - the VooDoo Zip Line will "allow patrons to dine, gamble and enjoy the property" while waiting for their reserved ride time, with an alert sent to their mobile phone when it's time to take the plunge.

WE'VE heard of a bull in a china shop, but this is ridiculous.

Hotel guests at the Best Western Metro Maypole Hotel in Birmingham in the UK were somewhat bemused on the weekend when a runaway horse charged into the lobby.

The confused animal knocked over some plants and even briefly entered the hotel lift before it was recaptured by police and returned to its owner.

Glen kicks a huge goal



A WINNER has been announced for *Travel Daily's* A-League tipping competition run in conjunction with Etihad Airways.

Glen Macalister was this week presented with a signed Melbourne Victory team shirt, as well as two return Economy class tickets flying Etihad to Manchester in England and two

tickets to a Manchester City football game - subject to timing.

Pictured: Etihad Airways General Manager Australia and New Zealand Sarah Built and State Sales Manager NSW Neil Ager present Captain Cook Cruises Social Media Coordinator and winner Glen Macalister with his prestigious prize this week.

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

Savings of up to 40% are available on selected 2021-22 *Ocean Endeavour* departures with **Chimu Adventures** with its Antarctica Flash Sale. Savings are available on bookings made in Sep - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

InterContinental Hotels Group is offering a There's More For You sale. Guests can receive up to 35% off when booking three nights or more, including free breakfast and 20% off other meals - call 1800 468 357.

Book an Antarctica voyage with **Intrepid Travel** and save up to 40%. The offer is valid for travellers who pay in full and ends 30 Sep. For further information, call 1300 304 974.

Oceania Cruises has released an exclusive upgrade sale when booking select itineraries before 15 Sep. Guests can stay in a Penthouse suite for the same price as a Concierge Level Veranda. Call 1300 355 200.

Keep AFTA in mind

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) has brought together 1,380 advisors as part of its Resilient Mind Program.

The four-week scheme began on Mon, with the almost 1,400 participants coming from across nearly 300 businesses.

Mind Body Brain Performance Institute Director Paul Taylor kicked off the challenge with a webinar that outlined the Program's scientific approach to enhancing resilience to stress and creating healthy coping mechanisms.

The Program runs until 04 Oct, with AFTA Chief Executive Officer Darren Rudd adding how fitting the timing of the launch week was given yesterday's R U OK Day.

"While the numbers demonstrate AFTA's Resilient Mind Program is a huge success, it's also a sobering reminder of how many of our members are in need of support," he said.

HTA appoints CEO

THE Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) has appointed John De Fries to be its new President & Chief Executive Officer.

The HTA Board of Directors unanimously agreed to the recruitment during the 27 Aug board meeting, with De Fries formally starting in the position on 16 Sep.

Born and raised in Waikiki, De Fries previously led the County of Hawaii's Department of Research and Development, and noted his enthusiasm for the state's pathway to economic recovery.

Auckland appoints

GATE 7 has won the PR account for Auckland Tourism, Events & Economic Development.

The tourism marketing agency will represent the destination marketing organisation in Australia, delivering its communications strategy.

QT gets Grounded

QT HOTELS & Resorts' in-room meditation practices, *Get Grounded, Gorgeous*, is now rolling out.

Streaming nationwide in partnership with Soul Alive's Chief Soul Officer, Luke McLeod, the meditations were recorded in response to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on mental health and wellbeing.

The guided practices are split into three categories: Recharge, Relax and Kickstart, and are designed to be listened to from a bed or bathtub.

The practices cater to "zen enthusiasts" of all levels.

Win and dine with Journey Beyond Cruise Sydney

Journey Beyond Cruise Sydney offer a true epicurean discovery of New South Wales. Featuring seasonal and regionally sourced ingredients paired with a range of complimentary wines from some of the state's most prestigious wine regions. Dining experience is best described as personal, stylish and distinctly Sydney, whilst showcasing our iconic harbour. Christmas Party bookings now available!

Journey Beyond is giving away two prizes, the first being a luncheon for 2 (valued at \$238) with the second prize a dinner for 2 (valued at \$350).

To win, send us your answer in 25 words or less to journeybeyond@traveldaily.com.au

Q: Tell us what makes an experience on Journey Beyond Cruise Sydney so unique?



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TRAVEL DAILY AWARDS

Travel Daily would like to acknowledge everyone in the travel industry for their efforts during these unprecedented times. We would also like to congratulate all those who have been nominated for the 2020 Travel Daily Awards.

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