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VA holds out on NZ

DESPITE labelling the establishment of a trans-Tasman quarantine-free bubble a "step in the right direction", Virgin Australia has revealed it will not be resuming flights between Australia and New Zealand until at least 31 Oct.

"While the airline remains committed to trans-Tasman flying when the market fully recovers, we are mindful of evolving border requirements which add complexity to our business as we push ahead with plans to grow our core domestic Australia operations," the airline said in a statement yesterday.

"New Zealand remains a key part of our short-haul int'l network and we look forward to re-entering the Trans-Tasman market later this year."

VA noted it was now working with Air New Zealand to provide impacted travellers with alternative flight options and also stated it would also be contacting customers directly.

The airline will still offer a limited schedule for flights to and from Queenstown which will depart from 18 Sep.

It's gettin' Scot in here

ROAD trips are the perfect way to experience everything Scotland has to offer, as detailed by Visit Scotland in today's informative product profile.

With so much to explore, Visit Scotland has made life easy by developing a range of road trips around the country, divided into scenic routes, themed routes, compact historical cities, and off-the-beaten-track - explore further on the **back page**.

New Zealand is back baby!

AFTER more than a year of delays, New Zealand and Australia will finally have a two-way, quarantine-free travel bubble operating from 19 Apr (**TD** breaking news yesterday).

NZ's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern confirmed the highly anticipated news yesterday afternoon, stating that while reciprocal travel would be a major boost for both nations, specific COVID protocols would still apply to travellers while the threat of the virus remains.

"Travel will not be what it was like pre-COVID...those undertaking travel on either side of the ditch will do so under the guidance of 'flyer beware'," Ardern cautioned.

The bubble will operate on a "continue, pause or suspend" contingency basis, with cases linked to quarantine not likely to disrupt any travel plans, however, in instances where a COVID case is diagnosed and the origin cannot be identified, this may lead to a short pause in travel for specific states.

In extreme cases of multiple identified cases, it may lead to a total suspension of trans-Tasman travel until case numbers are brought back under control.

Ardern added that travellers will be advised to follow all health guidelines issued and should be prepared to pivot their holiday plans if the situation changes during their trips, for example monitoring for symptoms in mild scenarios and isolating for 14 during more serious clusters.

The news was received positively by both Qantas and Air New Zealand, with both airlines

releasing revised frequencies for crossing the ditch.

Qantas and Jetstar will operate up to 122 return flights per week to and from New Zealand and service all pre-COVID routes, including two new services direct from Auckland to Cairns and the Gold Coast.

The airlines' 15 total routes will offer 52,000 seats each week.

Meanwhile Air New Zealand announced it will ramp up flights between Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown and eight of its Australian ports, adding up to 36 flights a week from Auckland alone, as well as up to 21 services a week from Wellington, 24 from Christchurch and 15 from Queenstown.

"Pre-COVID-19, Australia was the largest tourism market for both our airline and New Zealand," said Air New Zealand CEO Officer Greg Foran.

"We know a lot of tourism operators have been feeling the lack of international visitors so we're looking forward to playing a role in New Zealand's recovery."

The trans-Tasman route is Australia's busiest international aviation market, normally seeing around seven million people a year travel between the two countries.

To find out more about the allure of New Zealand's great outdoors, see the **front page**.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news including our **PUZZLE** page plus a front full page from **Tourism New Zealand** and product profile from **Visit Scotland**.

Singapore accepts

THE Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore has signed off on travellers being able to use the IATA Travel Pass from 01 May.

The decision means passengers travelling to Singapore will be able to use the IATA Travel Pass to share their pre-departure COVID-19 PCR test results upon check-in with their airline, as well as on-arrival at the immigration checkpoints at Changi Airport.

More than 20 airlines are now trialling the IATA Travel Pass.

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Travel Daily on location aboard The Ghan

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Journey Beyond, which is taking us on a special The Ghan departure from Darwin to Adelaide.

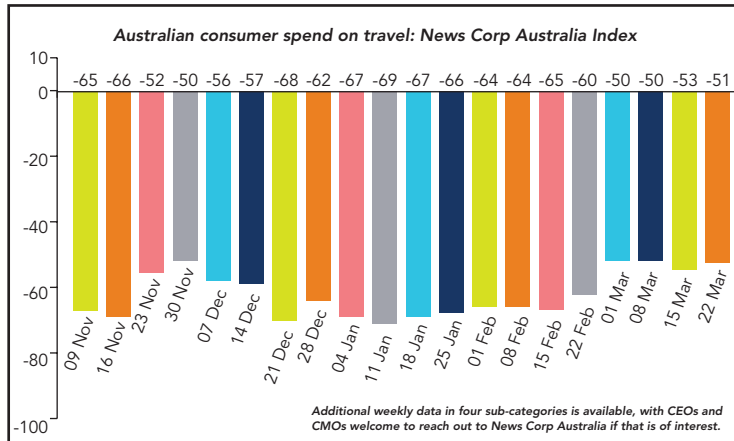
TODAY we boarded The Ghan Expedition and set off from Darwin Berrimah Rail Terminal.

Our first stop is Katherine, NT, where guests can choose between a relaxing cruise through the stunning Nitmiluk Gorge or a day of discovery at a nearby cattle station.

Back on board for dinner this evening we will be treated to an all-inclusive menu complete with wines and beers, before falling asleep in our twin Gold Service cabin to the soothing sound of the rails beneath.

Tomorrow we look forward to a big day in Alice Springs.

Spending up two points



EXCLUSIVE

ALL categories in consumer travel spending except for cruise improved week-on-week in the latest News Corp Australia index (pictured), but any improvements were minor as consumer confidence continues to teeter.

Accommodation was the biggest mover, jumping 5 points, followed closely by Airline spend over \$350 which was up 3 points.

The Travel Agent and Touring Category saw a 1% improvement, while Cruise only dipped 2 points.

"Nothing to shout *Ever Given* with angst about, however we should see continued recovery in the coming months," said News Corp Travel chief, Dwayne Birtles.

Next week's data coincides with the snap Brisbane lockdown which led to cancellations due to uncertainty about its extension.

A&K new air safari

ABERCROMBIE & Kent has launched a new air safari product between Adelaide and Hobart, hopping over a 12-day period to Port Lincoln, Kangaroo Island, King Island and the Freycinet Peninsula aboard a privately chartered Fokker 70 VIP Jet.

A total of 18 guests can participate, with the itinerary planned for 20-31 Oct and priced from \$29,999ppts - see abercrombiekent.com.au.

Viking UK sellout


VIKING Cruises' new UK domestic voyages aboard the *Viking Venus* have sold out in less than a week, with the company adding two additional Jun departures.

The company has also opened reservations for planned *Viking Orion* voyages out of Bermuda, as well as a new *Viking Sky* Iceland program, while discussions are underway about planned sailings in Greece, Turkey and Malta.

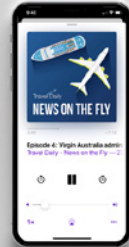
KIWIOUS ABOUT OUR NEW ZEALAND TOURS?

CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE TOURING RANGE

GLOBUS COSMOS



Travel Daily



Catch up on the news of the week

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

NRMA lands management deal

NRMA Parks & Resorts has secured the management contract for Wilpena Pound Resort in South Australia.

The new agreement has been signed after months of negotiations with traditional owners council the Adnyamathanha Traditional Lands Association, resort owners Indigenous Business Australia, and the Government of South Australia, to ensure a mutually beneficial partnership.

The Flinders Ranges-based resort became part of the NRMA Parks & Resorts collection at the beginning of the month, having just completed a soft refurbishment (TD 31 Mar).

Welcome back, bro

THE Sunshine Coast is preparing to launch a major multi-channel campaign targeting Kiwi travellers in a bid to capitalise on the new trans-Tasman bubble and restore one of its biggest visitors markets.

Prior to the pandemic, New Zealand was the region's number one international market with 84,000 annual visitors, amounting to 650,000 room nights and an economic value of \$110 million.

"We know there is huge pent-up demand in New Zealand for international travel and have been working in the background to prepare for the borders to reopen," said Visit Sunshine Coast CEO Matt Stoeckel.

The Ghan lights up



JOURNEY Beyond and Tourism Northern Territory have collaborated with NT Major Events Company and AGB Events to transform one of Australia's great rail journeys into an amazing piece of moving art.

Three carriages of Journey Beyond's The Ghan have been wrapped with the help of Aboriginal artist Chantelle Mulladad, to commemorate the 2021 Parrtjima - A Festival in Light which kicks off in Alice Springs later this week.

The collaboration also features an immersive light installation inside one of The Ghan's carriages, featuring the voice of Aaron Pedersen taking viewers on a journey through Country, the kinship system and language.

Tourism NT Executive GM, Tony Quarmby, said the project aimed to "creatively integrate the

Parrtjima Festival into one of our unique Northern Territory holiday experiences that delivers on the NT's promise of being different in every sense".

The festival runs from 09-18 Apr, activating the desert landscape of Central Australia using the latest technologies in vision and music to showcase Indigenous culture.

Journey Beyond Chief Commercial Officer, Peter Egglestone, said travelling on The Ghan was an ideal way for travellers to immerse themselves in the culture and stories of the regions visited by the train.

"We take great pride in supporting local communities and curating unique experiences, and without hesitation we were thrilled at the opportunity to support Parrtjima and collaborate for the event," he said.

NT Major Events Company CEO Tim Watsford said since its launch in 2016, Parrtjima has "come of age as an event of national significance," with thousands of interstate visitors expected to travel to the Red Centre for this year's event.

Pictured this morning in front of one of the carriages wrapped in Mulladad's *Crossroads* at Darwin Railway Station are, from left: Isabella Mellios, Tourism NT; Melanie Truman, Journey Beyond; and Alice Bowden & Kathleen Rayment, Tourism NT.

Window Seat

GREAT news adrenaline junkies, the longest head-first zipline racing track in the United States is about to swing open its services to visitors.

The new 10-storey Soar Like an Eagle attraction plunges riders deep into the forests along the Wisconsin River, where aerial participants are flung at high speeds down more than 600 metres of parallel ziplines.

The attraction, located in Wisconsin Dells, also boasts the Canyon Pass Course which includes 12 ziplines and four aerial bridges, as well as The Berry's Landing Course featuring five zipline and four rope courses from between five to 40 feet in the air.

The attraction opens 31 May.



Bunnik offers more

BUNNIK Tours is extending its small group touring range to include a selection of shorter, land-only tours in Europe.

Highlights of the new itineraries include experiencing snow-covered alpine forests abound with huskies and reindeers on the Winter in Finland tour, and traversing the Emerald Isle in the Icons of Ireland experience.

All tours have no more than 20 travellers and include all sightseeing, accommodation, many meals, and more.

Guests can also enjoy confidence in booking with Bunnik's new terms and conditions, and confidence in travelling with the WTTC and CATO COVID-Safe Travel Protocols that Bunnik has adopted.

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Travel Daily

Pub quiz

- Which road in London is recognised as the centre of the Government of the United Kingdom, containing departments such as the Cabinet Office, Horse Guards and the Ministry of Defence?
- Halti is the highest mountain in which country?
 - India
 - Russia
 - Finland
 - Kyrgyzstan
- Which destination is host to the shortest Formula One motor race?
- Which city became the permanent home to TED Conferences in 2014?
- The longest jetty in the southern hemisphere is said to be located in which Australian town?
- Willy Brandt was the head of state of which former nation?
- Washington DC is located on what river?
- Charlottenburg Palace is located in which city?
- You could attend Salamanca Markets in which Australian city?
- Which Australian town's indigenous name is Walyalup?

Sudoku

MEDIUM

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.

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

Seen it at the movies



HUGH Jackman's enviable rig was overshadowed by the incredible mountainous scenery of Otago, New Zealand in this blockbuster action flick.

Hugh (and his rather sharp blades) were backed up by an all-star cast for this film, including Ryan Reynolds and Live Schreiber. Can you name the movie?

Funnies Flashback



WE'VE trawled through the **TD** Window Seat archives to give you a blast from the past. Here's some gems from 17 Jul 2014:

TRANSPORTATION Security Administration officers at Orlando Airport in the USA are set to undergo some special geography lessons, after one of them demanded a passport as identification from a traveller based in Washington, DC.

Apparently the official thought that the District of Columbia was based overseas, and didn't accept the passenger's drivers license as a form of ID.

Unfortunately the incident gathered significant attention in the media, because the traveller in question happened to be a newspaper reporter.

ANSWERS 06 APR

Celebrity faces: Celebrity faces: Eyes - Barbra Streisand, Nose - Matthew McConaughey, Mouth - Bruce Piper, Business Publishing Group

Pub quiz: 1 The Strand, 2 Mount Kosciuszko, by about 100 metres, 3 Thailand, 4 Iceland, 5 Busselton, 6 160th, 7 Adriatic Sea, 8 Buffalo, 9 Nova Scotia, 10 Both

Unscramble: atop, clap, clip, clop, opal, optic, optical, pact, pail, pall, patio, pica, picot, pill, pilot, plait, plat, plot, politic, POLITICAL, poll, topi, topic, topical

QR fully vax flight

QATAR Airways yesterday operated its first fully COVID-19-vaccinated flight.

QR6421 departed Hamad International carrying only vaccinated passengers and crew members, with guests also greeted by fully vaccinated staff at check-in and boarding.

QR said the flight showcases the stringent measures the airline has put in place to ensure the highest standards of safety and hygiene of everyone on board.

Thredbo passes out

THREDBO'S winter lift passes, rentals and lessons for 12-25 Jun are on sale now ([CLICK HERE](#)).

The ski resort is staggering the release of its winter products to ensure it can provide the best experience for guests.

Products for 26 Jun-11 Jul will be released on Fri, product for 12 Jul-01 Aug will be released on Tue, product for the remainder of Aug will be released 16 Apr and product for Sep and 01-04 Oct will be released 20 Apr.

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.



Incorporating Valrhona, one of the world's finest chocolate brands, into its offerings, the **Sofitel Sydney Darling Harbour** has announced a Month of Chocolat gastronomy package during Apr. The Month of Chocolat experience starts in the

Champagne Bar, where Manager Jarod Senior has created a tantalising Chilli-Chocolat Manhattan, after which guests can enjoy the hotel's quintessential three-course Chocolat menu in Atelier by Sofitel - resistance is futile!



Reviving the spirit of the Roaring Twenties in Hanoi's Old Quarter, **Capella Hanoi** has opened its doors. Located just steps away from the Hanoi Opera House, the hotel has been designed by American architect and interior designer Bill Bensley, who has

envisioned it as a "petite auberge" – a rendezvous spot for opera singers, composers and artists of the glamorous bygone era.



Marriott Executive Apartments City Center Doha recently opened its doors to the public, offering sophisticated longer stays in the heart of the city. Owned by Al Rayyan Tourism Investment Company, it is the brand's debut in Qatar. Marriott

Executive Apartments City Center Doha features 254 modern residential apartments, across a range of spacious one-, two-, and three-bedroom offerings.

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Travel Daily



VIKING



APT bags more admirers



BACKPACKS 4 Kids Victoria was greeted by a pair of philanthropic travel executives from APT Travel Group (ATG) last week, with OneTomorrow Charitable Fund Manager Madeleine Curtain and Strategic Partnerships Manager Katrina Mackay ([pictured](#)) dropping by to meet and learn more about the charity's team.

"It was such a pleasure meeting the team from Backpacks 4 Kids, and to hear first-hand about the incredible work that they do," Mackay said.

"Super impressed with this grass-roots organisation and the difference they make to so many lives," she added.

Last year ATG provided Backpacks 4 Kids Victoria

with hundreds of brand new backpacks as part of the company's ongoing commitment to charitable initiatives.

SIA ups client focus

SINGAPORE Airlines Group (SIA) has picked Salesforce to develop and implement a major revamp of its customer case and knowledge management system.

The new system, 1Point, will be deployed across SIA's contact centres and customer feedback units globally from later this year.

1Point will offer a contextual and holistic view of customer interactions through a single interface, and will mean SIA's service agents will no longer need to toggle between systems.



Take a road trip: Scotland style!

Road trips are the perfect way to experience everything Scotland has to offer. But a Scottish road trip means you'll want to stop every 5 minutes to take a photo of a stunning view, explore a picturesque fishing village along the way, linger at the café offering home bakes or freshly caught seafood, or visit a castle or two!

With so much to explore, Scotland has made things easy by developing a range of road trips around the country – there's scenic routes (think North Coast 500, South West Coastal 300);

themed routes (Malt Whisky Trail, Castle Trail) or itineraries to take you from our compact historical cities to off the beaten track (film & TV locations; island hopping trips).

What's more Scotland is such a compact country, it's easy to get around. Our two major cities Edinburgh and Glasgow are only one hour apart. Loch Lomond is only 40 minutes north of Glasgow; and Inverness, capital of the Highlands only 3 hours further north.

At VisitScotland we can give you

the inside track to develop the most memorable itinerary for your clients – and we've got a wealth of itineraries to give you ideas, as well as imagery and videos – not least our Guide to Driving in Scotland video!

LEARN MORE

Find out more at: <https://www.visitscotland.com/campaign/discover-scotland-agents-2021/>