

New Thai training

THE Tourism Authority of Thailand has today launched five new modules in its Amazing Thailand Specialist program. Consultants who complete the additions by 18 Jun will be in the running to win flights to Thailand - see **page seven** for details.

Virgin plots 7-Eleven pact

VIRGIN Australia's Velocity loyalty program is set for a tie-up with fuel and convenience retailer 7-Eleven, under the terms of a wide-ranging application for cooperation lodged with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

The proposed deal would see Velocity members able to earn points at both franchised and company-owned 7-Eleven outlets, while the companies are also considering the potential for redemptions of Velocity points at the retail operations.

VA Chief Executive Officer Jayne Hrdlicka said "Our 10 million Velocity members love being able to earn points on everyday purchases as a way of maximising the benefits of the program.

"We're excited by the potential to partner with a brand like 7-Eleven as we continue our journey to write a new chapter

for Virgin Australia and Velocity Frequent Flyer," Hrdlicka added.

The ACCC application notes that without authorisation it might be possible for Velocity or 7-Eleven to breach prohibitions on "exclusive dealing conduct," and to be seen as operating a cartel if franchisees in a particular geographic area cooperated in a Velocity promotion.

If approved, the partnership will operate in the same manner as typical consumer loyalty programs, whereby program members can earn points for making eligible purchases or taking part in other eligible activities, and then redeem those points in exchange for various benefits.

Virgin Australia previously had a wide-ranging loyalty deal with rival fuel retailer BP (**TD** 06 Jul 2016), but was ultimately supplanted in that arrangement by Qantas (**TD** 04 Sep 2019).

7-Eleven CEO Angus McKay said Velocity was a "great brand and cultural fit for 7-Eleven".

The companies are seeking a five-year approval for the deal, as well as interim authorisation to allow them to proceed while a final determination is made.

QF lounge update

QANTAS will host an event at Sydney Airport on Thu morning, with QF CEO Alan Joyce and Accor Pacific chief Simon McGrath to make a joint announcement about Qantas lounges.

Joyce will also provide an update on QF's domestic recovery.

News TRAVEL NETWORK CONSUMER TRENDS FORECAST

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News Corp Australia

French flight ban

THE French Government has voted in favour of banning select domestic short-haul flights in a bold move to minimise the carbon footprint of the country's aviation sector.

The decision will mean permanently suspending air routes that can be travelled directly by train in less than 2.5 hours instead, effectively ending short domestic departures from Orly Airport to destinations such as Nantes and Bordeaux.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news including our PUZZLE page plus a full page from **Tourism Authority of Thailand**.

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COMING SOON

Module 8 | New Viking Ships (20 Apr)

VIKING





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Reho to "rehome" agents

MELBOURNE-BASED Reho Travel has opened up its St Kilda head office as a place for the industry to "rehome" its leisure, corporate or group clients.

CEO Karsten Horne said the new Rehome offer works similar to other travel consultant broker models, "with the added benefits of aligning with a purpose-driven business you can trust will support you and enhance your client relationships".

"If you currently run a small travel agency and want to unburden yourself by removing the overheads, contracts and leases and just focus on your clients, or you used to work for a business that has recently closed down, then Rehome could be the right solution for you," he said.

Horne said there had been a trend in recent years for consultants to walk away from the traditional office and choose to work from home.

"However the experience of several months of lockdown during 2020 has highlighted something that we all knew - humans have a fundamental need to socialise and be part of a community," he said.

Reho has a strong reputation in the industry, regularly highlighting its credentials as the only Travel Management Company in the world to achieve B Corp accreditation.

Rehome is offering three different tiers: an "Independent" model for consultants who just want a good home; a "complete" solution for those needing added support or technology; and "host" which provides all the benefits of running your own agency without the overheads or contracts.

Members will benefit from partnerships with Helloworld Business Travel and GlobalStar - to inquire see reho.com.au.

AAT esky is back

AAT Kings is set bring back its Bushfire Relief Giveback Experiences to support local communities affected by last year's disaster, in partnership with Empty Esky.

Having been developed in conjunction with local communities, the first trip kicks off in Gippsland on 28 May.

With a Friday pick-up in Melbourne, guests will be driven into the Victorian landscape to explore small towns and support local business, featuring a few stops along the way.

Staying at The Esplanade Resort & Spa in Lakes Entrance, the three-day break gives support to some of the region's towns, such as Bairnsdale and Paynesville, and includes koala-spotting on Raymond Island.

All Bushfire Relief Giveback Experiences will see AAT Kings transport guests and their empty esky to visit local markets, cafes and stores.

Kiwi snow tours

ACTIVE Adventures has announced the launch of four new New Zealand tour itineraries, including Powder Days, the first-ever Active Adventures ski trip.

The tour operator aims to maximise time in a destination and tick off both hidden gems and bucket list items, with Aussies who book any Active Adventures trip from now until 31 Dec 2023 able to purchase a \$250 travel voucher and receive double the amount (\$500) - [CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

Wine pours in more

AUSTRALIAN wine tourism businesses can now amplify their online presence after Wine Australia invested almost \$1m in the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse.

The cash injection will make it easier for wine businesses to market their tourism experiences and expand their customer reach.

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In search of Finnair

FINNAIR has recently updated its travel agent portal to improve its functionality, including the ability to search for content exclusively within the Finnair Easy advisor platform.

The new Finnair Easy portal also allows the airline to be faster in launching updated live content.

Country Manager for Australia and New Zealand, Arnaud Michelin, confirmed Finnair will be introducing new local content in the market down the track, such as updated fare sheets, new products and new routes, with more details to be revealed at a later date.

Access the refreshed Easy platform at: <https://easy.finnair.com/au-en>.

Skal hosting lunch with City of Melb

CITY of Melbourne and Skal Melbourne are gearing up to host an industry lunch this Thu.

From 12-3pm (AEST), guests will dine at Charcoal Lane at Gertrude Street & Little Napier in Fitzroy.

Special guest speakers will include City of Melbourne Director Tourism and Events Louise Scott and City Marketing Team Leader Lucia Perera - **EMAIL HERE** to grab remaining tickets.

Singapore interest spike

GOVERNMENT murmurs regarding a possible travel bubble with Singapore has led to a significant surge in outbound travel interest, according to new figures compiled by data intelligence agency Adara.

Australia topped the list of nations showing an increase in travel interest to Singapore, with local searches rising by 32% between 15-28 Mar when compared to the previous two-

week period.

The surge in Aussie travel interest directly followed the commencement of preliminary talks of a green lane between the two countries last month.

Outbound Aussie interest to Singapore was also found to be significantly outpacing the global average number of searches for Singapore, with that figure decreasing by 2.1% between 15 and 28 Mar.

Only last Fri, Prime Minister Scott Morrison labelled Singapore as the logical next step in international travel deals, with talks ongoing and pending criteria around the vaccine rollout.

TruTravels' new tours & categories

TRUTRAVELS has launched an expanded range of trips and new categories of experiences to the market.

The company's new experiences are intended to meet post-pandemic demand for sought after travel needs such as "active trips" and "private accommodation".

TruTravels believes it is now easier for travel advisors to connect travellers to the right kind of trip via its four new categories of travel style: the original Classic, FitVentures, Flashpacker and SailVentures.

CLICK HERE for further information on the experiences.

New Viking training

MODULE seven of Viking's Warrior of Wisdom agent education series regarding Rewards by Viking is now available to access - **CLICK HERE**.



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Window Seat

LONDON lingerie brand Playful Promises has taken a deep dive into the top destinations associated with the Instagram hashtags #holiday, #travel and #vacation to find the most-tagged travel locations - and the undisputed queen is Italy.

The southern European country leads the way by far when it comes to hashtag metrics, boasting 138 million in the last year.

She is distantly followed by India and Indonesia, which recorded 116 million and 114 million respectively.

Thailand and Greece rounded out the top five, with 71.3 million and 39.1 million each.

Italy and India also lead the way in landmark hashtags, with The Colosseum and the Taj Mahal topping the category.



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Smartflyer plans ahead



GOLDMAN Group's Smartflyer Australia travel agents recently gathered at Crown Sydney for a special group work session to share stories about their challenges and successes over the past 12 months and what to look forward to in the future.

Group discussions included the opportunity to work together on bookings and brainstorming new and exciting Australian-based holidays and experiences.

Smartflyer Australia revealed it had witnessed a steady increase in leisure bookings over the last two to three months, as well as the recruitment of new independent contractors who are attracted to its business model.

Supplement scrap

HURTIGRUTEN has waived its single supplement on Antarctica and Central America expeditions until the end of the month.

The offer is valid on new bookings, and for travel on selected departures, such as the 18-day Antarctica, Chilean Fjords and Falklands - Great Explorers and Wildlife, as well as the 12-day Highlights of the Frozen Continent Antarctica voyage.

"A voyage to Antarctica for example unifies the group on board with that spirit of adventure," said Managing Director APAC Damian Perry.

Pictured enjoying the networking day are Brent Wallace, Stuart Reay, Ariana Wong and Anthony Goldman, while **inset** the brains trust is at work during the ideas session.

Go big in the Med

PONANT has released almost 60 new Mediterranean cruises for next year, departing between Mar and Oct 2022.

The cruises span from seven to 14 nights and will showcase a diversity of destinations, including Corsica, Croatia, Egypt, France, Georgia, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Malta, Montenegro, Spain, Turkey, and Ukraine.

"From Gibraltar to Athens, Venice to Corsica, enjoy the many facets of the Mediterranean and nearby seas," said Ponant Commercial Director Asia Pacific Deb Corbett.

"Transit the ancient Straits of Messina, where mythical monsters preyed on passing mariners or squeeze through the historic narrows of the Corinth canal connecting the Adriatic and Aegean Seas," she added.



The April issue of *travelBulletin* is out now. Read about how Qatar Airways has continued flying during COVID and discover the new destination of AIUIA.

CLICK to read

AFTA UPDATE

from the Australian Federation of Travel Agents

IT SEEMS to be the case that every time we make a small step forwards, it can feel there's at least one setback, this time with the vaccine rollout, and sometimes more.

It can be hard not to get

discouraged given the enormity of the challenge but we need to stay focussed on what we can control and the wins that we do still manage to achieve.

This past week has seen another win with the approach taken on round 2 of the Federal Govt's COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support Grant another step in the right direction.

We are very grateful for the ongoing support of Tourism Minister Dan Tehan. AFTA, along with CATO and ATEC, have made multiple representations and had countless detailed conversations and briefings across and with Ministerial offices and Departments.

It's very clear that there is definite political intent for the \$258 million for 6 months Jan to June 21 inclusive so far invested in this grant program to get to those travel agents and businesses that need it and for that to happen quickly.

This will see more support for many of our smaller members with overall support via the program for businesses with turnover from \$50,000 to \$20m.



afta
AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION
OF TRAVEL AGENTS

Turnover for the purposes of the grant is total business income. The increases in lower tiers were actively negotiated by AFTA, to increase support for family businesses.

It must be acknowledged that more work needs to be done to achieve support for all travel businesses over the \$20m revenue (total business income) who are yet to receive any funds.

These businesses also support a significant percentage of staff employed across our industry.

We also continue to push for faster resolution of appeals. With the resumption of international travel slipping further away, and with members still facing the reality of revenue falls of 90%-plus, we are also continuing our push for support in the Federal Budget and beyond to sustain members' businesses through at least the first half of the 2021/2022 FY.

Please know that AFTA is fighting for our members and our sector each and every day.

The AFTA Board and team have and will continue to invest considerable time in making sure Govt and Govt bodies understand what needs to happen.

We have made great strides in boosting their awareness and we have built a solid bridge of understanding with Government.

AC ticks debt relief

AIR Canada and the Government of Canada have concluded their agreement on a new liquidity program which will see the airline able to access up to C\$5.879 billion in financing through debt and equity sources.

Syd skills shortage

A CRITICAL skills shortage across roles such as chefs and admin is "biting the hospitality industry hard" in Sydney, Tourism Accommodation Australia believes, this despite ongoing record low occupancy rates.

Wear PJs to Work day



IT IS fitting that Wear your Pajamas to Work Day falls on a Fri, as sleepwear definitely fits more in the category of casual rather than business attire.

The celebration is on 16 Apr and unsurprisingly was started by a pajama company in 2004 who wanted to reward those working late on taxes.

Supposedly there are health benefits to wearing your jammies

to work - apparently employees can be more productive, but it also helps create a relaxed environment in the office.

Feel free to celebrate Wear your Pajamas to Work Day this week, although if you're having to go into the office, you may want to double check with the boss if you have any meetings that day - but certainly if you do it will make quite the impression.

Pub quiz

- Which London street is often used to refer to the British press?
- Which European city is nicknamed Superbissima, Latin for "proudest"?
 - Paris, France
 - Valletta, Malta
 - Rome, Italy
- What famous landmark was known in ancient times as Cecropia?
- airBaltic is the flag carrier of what country?
- The Twelve Apostles in Victoria are part of what national park?
- What is the river that runs through Munich?
- Tunnel View is a scenic viewpoint looking out over what national park?
- The river running through the Grand Canyon is what?
- Snowdon is the highest point in which country?
- What is the highest point in the contiguous United States?

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.

E	G	I
T	N	L
N	G	E

Good – 14 words

Very good – 21 words

Excellent – 28 words

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

Famous faces



THERE are three different faces that make up this picture.

They are a mixture of famous celebrities and travel names.

Can you figure out who the

eyes, nose and mouth in this picture belong to?

And don't worry if you can't guess them all, two out of three ain't bad!

ANSWERS 12 APR

Where in the world: Kings Bridge, Launceston, Tasmania

Pick the nation: Tanzania

Whose mascot is this: Otto the Orange - University of Syracuse (all athletic teams)

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



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Travel Daily

Rathbone moves on

LONG-TIME Webjet Marketing Manager, Hayley Rathbone, has moved on from the business to take up a position with email marketing company Taguchi.

Before her departure, the Melbourne-based Rathbone had been with Webjet for close to 10 years in various marketing and communication roles.

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Day 2 questions:

1. Sir David Attenborough labelled this location as one of the top four most important fossil deposits in the world. What is it called?
2. Which 3 x States meet at Cameron Corner?



Talaroo springs for tourism



TROPICAL North Queensland is set to have a new indigenous tourism attraction soon with the Talaroo Hot Springs scheduled to open up to the public from May.

The 65-million-year-old geological spring (pictured) will open up alongside a host of new tourist infrastructure to help incentivise visitation, including private soaking pools, a new boardwalk to view the springs, a caravan park and campground, an on-site cafe called the Yarning Circle, a firepit, as well as tours led by the Ewamian traditional owners.

Warm water is fed to the spring by a water flow that travels from the Newcastle Ranges, and by the time it reaches the springs bathers can take advantage of 53-63°C temperatures, with the main bathing pools typically being a cosy 35°C all year-round.

The Talaroo Hot Springs is located about 4.5 hours' drive

from Cairns along the Savannah Way or alternatively via rail on the Savannahlander train.

NT tourism splash

THE Northern Territory Government has awarded \$220,000 in funding to help support 14 tourism projects as part of its ongoing Aboriginal Tourism Grant program.

Funds will be channelled towards creating and revamping business plans, bush camp facilities, training programs, and introducing new cultural tours.

One of the grants includes a \$20,000 injection for the Menge Aboriginal Corporation in central Australia, where money will support the development of a tourism connect hub and Aboriginal training facility in the West MacDonnell Ranges, which will include accommodation, art and education components.

Qld Easter injection

QUEENSLAND cities have topped the list of the most sought-after destinations for tourists from New Zealand.

The boost comes off the back of airports, airlines and tourism booking platforms having all enjoyed strong surges in demand from travellers looking to book Queensland holidays in the past week, showing positive signs for the industry's ongoing recovery.

Close to 150,000 people flew into Queensland's major airports over the Easter long weekend.

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.760

THE Australian dollar has managed to remain steady ahead of the US Government releasing new data on its ongoing inflation concerns.

The AUDUSD has made minimal gains as the pair remained near one-week lows, while the Aussie was weaker in most other markets, with the AUDEUR down 0.1% and the AUDGBP losing 0.3%.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.760
UK	£0.553
NZ	\$1.077
Euro	€0.638
Japan	¥83.29
Thailand	฿23.83
China	¥4.931
South Africa	11.03
Canada	\$0.951
Crude oil	US\$63.28

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