

Step back in time

VINTAGE Rail Journeys is inviting travellers to step back in time and travel in style on board a fleet of newly resorted 1960s ex-Southern Aurora sleeping carriages on the Riverina Rail Tour.

Departing on two dates (06-10 Oct and 20-24 Oct), the tour includes five days and four nights travelling along rail lines normally closed to the public - for more info, head to the **back page**.

HLO dips under \$2

SHARES in Helloworld Travel Limited fell below \$2 on Fri, with investors continuing to react negatively to the company's update last week (**TD** 21 Apr).

This week the slump has continued, with HLO trading at \$1.96 this morning.

Agent fraud charge

TRAVEL agency chiefs in Hong Kong are facing charges for allegedly defrauding a government-subsidised travel scheme organised by the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong.

Local reports say staff and directors at about 15 travel agencies across the city have been arrested on suspicion of forging receipts to claim rebates under the Green Lifestyle Local Tour Incentive Scheme.

The program offered tour organisers up to HK\$200,000 (A\$33,000) in incentives to help the industry pivot to domestic operations during the pandemic.

Police are continuing to investigate the program, saying more arrests could be possible.

QR to Abidjan

QATAR Airways continues to expand its global network, overnight announcing the 16 Jun 2021 debut of flights from Doha to Abidjan in Cote d'Ivoire.

Thrice-weekly Boeing 787 services will operate on the route which will increase QR's network in Africa to 24 destinations.

SIN/HKG bubble flagged

AUTHORITIES in Singapore and Hong Kong have confirmed the highly anticipated resumption of quarantine-free travel between the cities, with an Air Travel Bubble set to open on 26 May and the move seen as a blueprint for opening up of other destinations including to Australia and New Zealand.

Cathay Pacific said its services on the route would be operated by pilots and cabin crew who have all been fully vaccinated.

Travellers from Hong Kong aged over 16 must also be fully vaccinated to qualify for the flights, officials said, while Singapore-based passengers must have COVID-19 tests both before departure and upon arrival.

"With travel having been difficult for everyone over the past year, we know that our customers have been eagerly anticipating the launch of our Hong Kong-Singapore Air Travel Bubble flights so they can rediscover the joy of flying," a CX spokesperson said.

"We believe the safe and secure bubble flights will be a milestone

showcase for the opening of similar travel arrangements with other popular destinations."

Singapore Airlines will also operate services on the route, with operations to be phased in from 26 May to 09 Jun initially carrying just 200 passengers per day in each direction.

Capacity will double to two daily flights a day by each carrier from 10 Jun, the Governments said.

The bubble only applies to point-to-point travel, and transit passengers in both Singapore and Hong Kong will not be permitted to join the flights.

Previous plans to open up travel between Singapore and Hong Kong were shelved last year (**TD** 23 Nov 2020) amid a spike of COVID-19 infections.

Protocols for the new arrangement will see the bubble suspended "if the seven-day moving average of the daily number of unlinked local COVID-19 cases exceeds five," for either Hong Kong or Singapore.

Edward Yau, Hong Kong Commerce Secretary, said the framework for the Singapore-Hong Kong bubble would also be used as the basis for quarantine-free travel to Australia and NZ, flagging pending discussions with governments in both countries.

Sydney events fund

ORGANISERS of business events in Sydney can now apply for support from the NSW Government's Kickstart 2021 Sydney Business Events Fund.

The \$5.5 million program is open for applications from now until 31 May, offering \$50 per delegate for a one-day business event (up to a maximum of \$45k) or \$100 per physical delegate for longer events (up to \$90k total).

Funding must be matched dollar for dollar by event organisers - more info meetinsydney.com.au.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news including our PUZZLE page plus a product profile from **Vintage Rail Journeys**.

Inclusive/accessible tourism event

THE first ever Asia-Pacific conference for accessible and inclusive tourism will launch next week, giving travel professionals the opportunity to learn more about a widely untapped and misunderstood sector.

AITCAP (Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Conference in Asia Pacific) will operate as a virtual event across the four Thursdays in May, featuring over 40 speakers covering topics including the sector's enormous economic potential, how destinations can better attract travellers, and how businesses and individuals can take the first steps towards becoming more accessible and inclusive.

The event is the brainchild of Yasmine Gray from GetAboutAble who is herself an experienced wheelchair traveller, while the opening keynote will be delivered by Experience Co CEO and former Tourism Australia MD John O'Sullivan who said as the industry emerges from COVID-19 "it has never been more important for operators, hoteliers and airlines to be aware of the needs of accessible tourists and experience seekers".

For registration details see getaboutable.com/aitcap.

Visit Sunshine Coast and Tourism Noosa Roadshow

Inviting partners and trade media. Come along and meet with operators for the latest product updates, enjoy canapes, networking drinks and amazing prizes to be won!

Canberra - May 17
Adelaide - May 18
Sydney - May 19
Cairns - May 20

Click **HERE** to find out more and register your interest to attend.



Men more likely to travel

EXCLUSIVE

THE rebound in international travel may rest more in the hands of men than women, according to new data compiled by SMP Surveys and StollzNow Research.

The survey of more than 1,000 Australians found that 60% of males are keen to travel overseas by air when the borders are reopened, whereas only 40% of females said they felt the same.

The risk aversion between the sexes was even more pronounced when it came to cruising, with only 38% of women indicating they would take a cruise, versus 62% of male respondents.

One fifth of Aussies said they remained “uncommitted” to travel in the next 12 months, equating to about 3.5 million people who require further persuasion, a point Neil Stollznow from SMP Surveys says represents a major sales opportunity.

“That’s a huge potential segment of the market worth pursuing and would be a considerable win for industry to persuade them to become actual customers,” he said.

“Understanding this segment of fence-sitters to identify what is holding them up and which brands or types of holidays would

see them commit would be something that further research can discover and be an invaluable resource to marketers seeking to capture more demand to rebound strongly,” Stollznow added.

Overall, 24% of Australians indicated they would travel to their next holiday destination by air, while 10% said they would choose an ocean cruise in the next 12 months.

The percentages result in roughly 3.7 million people wanting to travel overseas by air on a holiday, with 1.5 million Aussies returning to the cruise sector, a number that sits above the country’s record year of cruising in 2018 (1.34 million), according to figures from CLIA.

“While this is based on intention, we can say with confidence that subject to state borders remaining open and our international one opening up in a greater capacity, then travel is on the cards for close to ten million Australians” Stollznow said.

Meanwhile just under half of respondents (47%) said they intend to travel interstate in the next 12 months, equating to around 7.3 million Australians currently planning where to take their next domestic trips.

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Gina whiz - what a trip!



MTA Travel’s Gina Edwards was thrilled to be offered one of only 70 spots on the inaugural Air New Zealand flight NZ198 from Hobart to Auckland.

The history-making flight last Thu was Hobart’s first international service in decades, with Tasmania-based Edwards saying the crew was delighted to be flying from Australia again.

“I felt honoured to be making a little bit of history...we were looked after so well during the flight and enjoyed the celebratory champagne on offer,” she said.

Edwards stayed on in Auckland for an action-packed three days including a wine-tasting day trip to Waiheke Island and a visit to the Auckland War Memorial Museum where preparations for ANZAC Day were well under way.

She’s pictured on board with the crew, of course wearing her special MTA-branded face mask!

ATG on the road

APT Travel Group (ATG) is hitting the streets once again to showcase its range of product to travel agents and their clients, with a May series of events visiting regional areas not covered in the first round (**TD** 17 Feb).

Additions to the itinerary for the 04-15 May roadshow include events in Castle Hill, Tweed Heads and Wollongong in NSW; Mornington, Williamstown and Bulleen in Vic; and Bundaberg and Hervey Bay in Qld.

The events are free to attend but each session is limited and fully ticketed, with agents urged to register their clients to help secure upcoming bookings.

Scott Ellis, GM Sales, said the demand for the last round of events in Feb was a welcome sign of positivity - see aptouring.com.au/events for more info.

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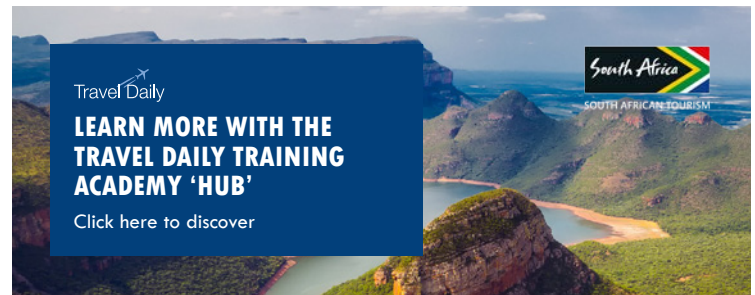
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Travel Daily

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IATA partners with Hotelbeds

THE International Air Transport Association (IATA) has launched a new partnership with global bedbank operator Hotelbeds, which is now powering the IATA “AgentExperience” platform for accredited travel agents.

The portal can be accessed by travel professionals across the world who hold an IATA/IATAN ID card, allowing them to view and book special industry offers and personal discounts on flights, hotels, car hire and attractions.

Hotelbeds is using its TravelStack technology for the system, giving IATA cardholders full access to its portfolio of 180,000 hotels in 140 countries.

“We are delighted that IATA has chosen TravelStack to provide them with a booking solution and we are confident this is just the beginning of a long and fruitful partnership,” said Hotelbeds Global Sales Director Leon Herce.

The Hotelbeds initiative is part

of a range of new value-adds for agents, with the platform also now offering US travel advisors discounts on purchases with a range of retailers including Fitbit, Foot Locker, Barnes & Noble, Sony and Bloomingdales.

“Travel agents are an integral part of our industry and will play an important role as we rebuild the travel value chain in a post-COVID-19 pandemic world,” said IATA Head of Travel & Tourism, Harsha Krishnan.

“As we are preparing for the restart we are pleased to be expanding the non-travel benefits of the program and hope that all IATA/IATAN ID card holders will soon be able to make use of the travel-related advantages once again,” Krishnan said.

IATA cards cost between US\$30 and US\$70 per year depending on the type of agency, with the revamped portal now live at agentexperience.com.

Bleak insurance view

NIB Holdings Limited CEO Mark Fitzgibbon says the company’s travel insurance operations aren’t likely to return to pre-pandemic profits until at least 2023.

After issuing an investor update on the ASX yesterday, Fitzgibbon said border openings and bringing COVID-19 under control would need to be achieved before its travel insurance products could once again become profitable.

“Realistically they won’t bounce back until COVID is behind us.

“We like to think international borders could start to open in 2022 - but 2023 is probably the year where things return,” he said.

NIB’s travel insurance division started out as WorldNomads and has since grown to encompass SureSave and QBE, all now consolidated under NIB’s banner.

The company said its strong health insurance performance was more than offsetting COVID-19-inspired weakness in its travel operations.



Window Seat

HOLIDAYS are clearly very important to a Taiwanese man, who got married four times just to enjoy 32 days of official “marriage leave”.

The bank employee wed his sweetheart on 06 Apr last year, and applied for the formally sanctioned eight days of leave.

A week or so later he divorced his new wife, before remarrying her the next day and accruing another eight days of holiday under Taiwan’s labour laws.

He repeated the move twice more for over a month’s leave, and when his employer refused to pay up the man lodged a formal complaint with the Taipei Labour Bureau.

The bank was fined and forced to honour the rules, despite the regulator agreeing that the man’s actions were “unethical”.

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FIND OUT MORE

100% PURE NEW ZEALAND



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

CLICK to read

AFTA UPDATE

from the Australian Federation of Travel Agents

ONE thing that has become even more evident over the past year is the very real value of working together towards common goals.

Right across the country, we have seen people come together to help each other out.

Travel agents helping customers and non-customers as well as each other.

Businesses which have traditionally been competitors joining forces to lobby local members and find common sense solutions.

From agents and suppliers through to industry groups within our sector and across the wider business community to trade and mainstream media coming together, we are all working hard and working together to get through this.

The AFTA Board and team proactively support this collaboration. By us all working together, we are continuing to hit the milestones that edge us closer to the outcomes we all need. This is the power of AFTA.

AFTA's focus, of course, continues to be on shaping the landscape in which we all operate and maximising government



afta
AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION
OF TRAVEL AGENTS

support for our members. Conversations with Austrade continue and we look forward to more information being released shortly. We have also

continued to work closely with Government and key bodies to press home the critical need for ongoing support.

We're also gearing up for the Federal Budget on 11 May.

The Board is meeting in Canberra that morning and Directors have a number of briefings lined up with both Government and the ALP to continue to push our case.

We also wanted to take this opportunity to say we know it's tough. There isn't a part of this sector that hasn't been torn apart by COVID.

The reality of trying to keep the doors open and the business running can be overwhelming.

If you need help, or even if you just want to talk to someone about everything that you're dealing with, please take advantage of the many resources available.

Remember, you're not alone.

A bellissimo partnership!



THE Italian National Tourist Office (ENIT) has announced an agreement with Sydney-based language school CO.AS.IT. to teach 50 Aussie and Kiwi travel agents how to speak Italian.

The initiative is part of the highly popular Travel to Italy Academy which launched last year as part of the *Travel Daily* Training Academy (*TD* 01 Jul 2020).

Emanuele Attanasio, Manager of ENIT Australia and NZ, said the language-learning plan would see the winners of a competition run through the platform, brush up on their Italian skills, with hundreds of entries received.

CO.AS.IT. GM Thomas Camporeale, who is **pictured** at right with Attanasio, said "this is a great initiative by ENIT, to encourage travel agents to upskill during these difficult times."

"It is a great pleasure to be selected by ENIT, on behalf of the Italian Government, to facilitate the delivery of this fantastic course, which promotes both Italy and the Italian language."

Attanasio said the online language lessons were set to commence early next month, and would be delivered by native Italian teachers experienced in developing communication skills through a range of listening, speaking, reading and writing activities, according to a report in the *La Fiamma* newspaper.

Crown booze tick

CROWN Sydney will be able to continue non-gaming trading after 01 May, after NSW's Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority granted an extension to the new property's liquor licences through until 31 Oct this year.

The interim approvals for the Barangaroo resort permit alcohol to continue to be sold at several bar areas and two ground-floor restaurants within the facility.

However the Authority's attitude to Crown's gambling operations has not changed, with officials continuing to consider and assess Crown's responses to the issues arising from the recent Bergin Report (*TD* 17 Feb).

Crown Executive Chairman, Helen Coonan, said the company was continuing to work through the regulatory process as it "seeks to restore regulatory confidence in its operations".

Hard Rock growth

HARD Rock Hotels has announced a major expansion program in Brazil, with plans for the development of eight new properties comprising about 3,000 rooms across the country.

Locations for the hotels will include Sao Paulo, Fortaleza, Ilha de Sol, Campos do Jordao, Foz do Iguacu, Jericoacoara, Natal and Recife, with the Hard Rock properties to be developed and owned by local real estate developer VCI S.A.

The properties are slated for completion over the next eight years, with three under way now.

Victoria Falls route

AFRICAN airline Mack Air has announced new daily scheduled flights between Kasane in Botswana and Victoria Falls.

Debuting on 01 May, the route will make it easier for tourists to experience the spectacular falls along with Botswana, Zimbabwe and other locations in a single action-packed vacation.

Fares lead in at US\$200 per person each way plus departure taxes, with more information online at www.mackair.co.bw.

DL boosts fleet

DELTA Air Lines has announced an expanded order for Airbus A321neo jet aircraft, with 25 additional planes on top of 100 already in the delivery pipeline.

The exercise of the purchase rights will further boost DL's overall fleet efficiency and allow it to grow its network during the recovery from the pandemic, with the carrier also adding options for a further 25 A321neos.

The planes are expected to start arriving in the first half of 2022.

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.

A	E	O
P	T	L
D	U	P

Good – 28 words
 Very good – 42 words
 Excellent – 55 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 26 APR

Where in the world: Lalibela rock cut churches, Ethiopia

Pick the nation: Fiji

Whose mascot is this: Sourdough Sam - San Francisco 49ers (NFL)

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

Eyes on the pies



WELCOME to our inaugural pie recipe. Pies are such versatile foods, coming in a rainbow of colours and sweet and savoury flavours.

Viking Cruises has supplied today's recipe, the iconic Mississippi Mud Pie, which you can enjoy while sailing down America's great river.

We're still looking for more pie recipes, send yours to pie@traveldaily.com.au.

xx Jenny

Jenny Piper
 Owner,
 Business
 Publishing
 Group



Mississippi Mud Pie

SERVES 20

INGREDIENTS

BASE

- 1 box brownie mix
- ##### CHOCOLATE SAUCE
- 230g unsweetened chocolate
 - ½ cup brown sugar
 - ½ cup heavy cream
 - ¾ cup cane syrup
 - 3 tbsp unsalted butter
 - 1 tsp vanilla extract

PRALINE MARSHMALLOW

CREAM

- 2 large egg whites, room temperature
- ½ cup light corn syrup
- ¼ tsp salt

- ½ cup icing sugar
- ½ tbsp praline liqueur

ASSEMBLY

- 1L butter pecan ice cream, softened
- 2 tbsp chicory coffee liqueur, such as Bittermens
- 110g Oreo cookie crumbs
- 110g candied pecan pieces

GARNISH

- ½ cup heavy cream, whipped
- 110g Oreo cookie crumbs
- 110g candied pecan pieces
- 60g white chocolate shavings

METHOD

Base: Prepare the brownies according to package directions in a 2-inch-deep baking pan; cool in pan to room temperature.
Chocolate Sauce: Melt chocolate in double boiler, stirring until smooth. Add brown sugar, cream and cane syrup; reduce heat to low; stir until smooth and blended; remove from heat. Add butter and vanilla, stirring until completely combined. Set aside.
Praline Marshmallow Cream: Beat egg whites, corn syrup and salt with an electric mixer on high 4-5 minutes until soft peaks form. Reduce speed to medium; beat in icing sugar until completely combined. Reduce speed to low; beat in liqueur. Set aside.
Assembly: In a large bowl, combine ice cream, chicory coffee liqueur and half of chocolate sauce; set aside. Spread a layer of marshmallow cream on top of brownies, sprinkle with half of Oreo crumbs and candied pecans. Spoon ice cream mixture on top about 1 inch (25 mm) thick; smooth top. Repeat layers. Freeze until firm (at least 2 hours).
Plating: Serve slices with remaining chocolate sauce and whipped cream, garnished with Oreo crumbs, candied pecan pieces and white chocolate shavings.



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Travel Daily

JAL Russian route

JAPAN Airlines has launched new non-stop services between Tokyo Haneda and Moscow Sheremetyevo, reviving a route which first operated in 1967.

The carrier said the opening of direct flights would allow passengers to make convenient and comfortable connections not only in Russia and Europe, but also to a number of destinations in Japan, Asia and Oceania.

JAL is offering passengers a common-rated fare from Moscow to Tokyo with up to two additional flights within Japan at no additional cost.

The route is operating using a two-class Boeing 787 complete with inflight wi-fi.

Still a mountain to climb



CHRONIC and unsustainable staff shortages are hampering any recovery in the hospitality sector, according to Tourism Accommodation Australia (TAA). The organisation's NSW chief,

Michael Johnson, discussed the crisis alongside Destination Sydney Surrounds North GM Glen Caldwell with GMs from a number of key Blue Mountains properties at an event in Katoomba last Fri (**pictured**).

Johnson said while regional areas were doing much better in comparison to this time last year, operations continue to be hamstrung by a lack of workers.

"This time last year, just after the bushfires and in the middle of lockdown, hotel occupancy in the Blue Mountains region was at just seven per cent," he said.

The figure has improved tenfold to now be above 70%, but hotels are unable to offer restaurant service to many guests because they just don't have enough staff to accommodate bookings.

"With no international students or working holiday makers, hotels are struggling to find food and beverage workers, chefs and other skilled staff," Johnson said.

TAA is urging the Government for immediate changes to the visa system to help with the chronic shortages.

Royal's Indian pause

CRUISE giant Royal Caribbean has temporarily cancelled all assignments for Indian crew, as a response to recent escalations of travel restrictions for India as the country deals with a massive surge in COVID-19 infections, meaning more complexity when it comes to crew movements.

The move will particularly impact about 300 Indian crew members who were set to shortly join the *Anthem of the Seas*.

More in today's *Cruise Weekly*.

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.777

THE Australian dollar has neared two-month highs as positive spending figures drive gains in commodity markets.

Iron ore and copper were both at decade highs overnight, with American shares also climbing to new all-time closing highs.

The AUDUSD closed up 0.7% as it neared the best levels since early Mar, while the AUDEUR gained 0.9%, as it neared one-month highs.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.777
UK	£0.559
NZ	\$1.071
Euro	€0.643
Japan	¥84.24
Thailand	฿24.32
China	¥4.986
South Africa	11.04
Canada	\$0.960
Crude oil	US\$65.65

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Travel Daily

All eyes are on pies!



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CRUISE WEEKLY

travelBulletin

business events news

Pharmacy Daily

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6-10 October 2021
& 20-24 October 2021



Riverina Rail Tour

An exciting opportunity has been released to market and guests who have travelled on board since its release in November 2020 have given very positive feedback. The slow rail tours are exactly what your clients are looking for, to get out away from home, meet people, and see more of their own amazing country. All without the burden of having to drive, unpack and check into hotels.

Vintage Rail Journeys have restored their fleet of ex-Southern Aurora carriages to their original 1960's styling. The fleet includes roomette (single) sleeping carriages, with brand new spacious shared bathrooms and no single supplement. Twinette (upper and lower bunk) sleeping carriages have

a typical railway ensuite to each cabin. Two Dining and two Lounge carriages are included in the 412M long, 16 carriage, shiny stainless steel train. The train will normally be hauled by two vintage 'streamliner' diesel locomotives, and accompanied by a 1947 vintage flexible clipper bus.

Vintage Rail Journeys are delighted to offer a 10% agents commission (100% of tour price is commissionable) for each travelling guest.

Please contact Travel Agent Coordinator, Tammy Adams at tammy.adams@vintagerailjourneys.com.au.

The **Riverina Rail Tour** is the Southern loop starting in Sydney;

heading to Goulburn via the spectacular South coast line; spending time in Junee, Coolamon, Griffith and Temora; and returning to Sydney via the Blue Mountains.

