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Maria Rosa Travel

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## Emirates extends

**EMIRATES** has announced the extension of its booking waiver for travel through to 31 May 2022, bringing the airline's total ticket validity since the pandemic began to more than 24 months.

Since Mar 2020, Emirates has now offered more than two million customers multiple date, destination changes, or ticket exchanges for vouchers which can be utilised for future travel.

## South Africa summit

**THE** Department of Tourism and South African Tourism are gearing up to host the first ever Africa's Travel and Tourism Summit, set to take place from 19 to 21 Sep and coinciding with Tourism Month in South Africa.

The event will be hosted in a hybrid format with delegates having the option of attending virtually, with registrations now open - stay tuned **HERE** for further details.

## \$107m Hunter tourism hub

**A NEW** purpose-built outdoor amphitheatre and tourism precinct is set to open in the NSW city of Newcastle in 2023 after investment firm Winarch Capital purchased one of the Hunter Valley wine region's most premium development sites.

The firm's newly-founded Cedar Mill Group plans to spend \$107 million to construct the major tourism hub, which will include a 100-bed hotel, wine museum, vineyard club and 22,000 person concert venue.

When completed, the new Pokolbin property located on the corner of Broke and McDonalds Roads and situated alongside the Hope Estate winery will aim to attract high-end travellers to the area by creating a raft of surrounding premium experiences, such as boutique dining options inspired by local agricultural heritage, winemaking, distilling and craft

beer brewing.

The slated project is anticipated to bring 68,045 additional visitors to the region and inject an extra \$33 million a year into the local economy, according to modelling conducted by REMPLAN.

Conference and events organisers will also be catered for, with venues planned to provide space for large-scale functions.

"This is...an exciting step towards our plans to have outdoor venues coupled with exciting tourism concepts in the best locations in Australia and New Zealand," Cedar Mill Group GM Kyle McKendry enthused.

## Camplify performs

**CAMPLIFY** has recorded \$8.4 million in revenue for the 2021 financial year, continuing its strong growth trajectory as users continue to embrace local travel.

The campervan sharing community's gross transaction value also grew 170% over the prior corresponding period, and its commission rose to 25.7%.

Despite lockdowns continuing across Australia's eastern states, Camplify still saw an increase of 128% in total bookings.

The business performed particularly well in the British market, which saw a 523% growth in revenue.

The impressive result was achieved despite the United Kingdom being in lockdown from 30 Sep 2020 to 08 Mar 2021.

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today has five pages of news.

## Vax passport flaw?

**FORGERIES** of the Federal Government's new COVID-19 vaccine digital certificate can be made in under 10 minutes using free products, a software engineer from Sydney claims.

Richard Nelson told the ABC the flaw was "very basic" and was surprised the app had nothing in place to mitigate the problem.

"I don't think it's a good idea to get it out there among the anti-vax crowd," Nelson said, adding that people who don't have a valid certificate can fairly easily present one if the flaw is not addressed, and the results would be "left up to the imagination".

## Alitalia is reborn

**THE** successor brand to the grounded Alitalia has been granted permission to commence flying after the Italian Civil Aviation Authority awarded the carrier an operator's certificate.

Italia Trasporto Aereo (ITA) plans to launch to the skies in Oct this year with an initial air fleet of 52 aircraft, before growing that number to 78 by 2022 and 105 by the end of 2025.

Italy's aviation sector is pinning hopes on the new national carrier playing a crucial role in restarting the country's troubled industry, helping to overcome the issues caused by the pandemic.

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## Club Med reno plan

**THE** parent group of French tourism operator Club Med has revealed plans to renovate 12 resorts internationally by mid-2024, based on an “upscale” investment strategy.

During Fosun International’s latest financial reporting, the company said Club Med resorts had rebounded strongly in China over the first six months of 2021, however the wider property network had seen volumes decrease by 64.2% year-on-year.

As of Jul this year, 41 Club Med resorts had resumed operations, with overall capacity increasing by 104.3% when compared to Jul 2020, and recovering 73.2% of pre-pandemic levels.

Fosun also acquired Thomas Cook last year (*TD* 22 Sep 2020).



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## Tourism green shoots: TRA

**THE** outlook for Australia’s visitor economy has “improved significantly” throughout 2021, a new report from Tourism Research Australia claims, suggesting the country’s national economy is presenting a stronger than expected recovery.

The *Australian Tourism in 2020* report also showed Q1 2021 saw total domestic overnight and day trip spend amount to \$22.9 billion, 19% higher than the \$19.6 billion spend noted in the preceding quarter in 2020.

Further life signs for the tourism sector were seen in the final quarter of 2020, with employment rising by 5.1% on the preceding period, well above the seasonal increase in tourism job creation typically seen between each quarter.

Investment in future tourism infrastructure for the period 2019/20 is also being maintained for the most part, the report stated, with Australia having an investment pipeline of \$43.6 billion across 255 projects, compared to a similar \$45.3 billion in the previous corresponding period.

## Jetstar Asia reboots European links

**JETSTAR** Asia has reintroduced its partnerships with Air France, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and British Airways at Singapore Changi Airport.

The agreements will carry connecting passengers to 10 cities in Southeast Asia from 25 Aug.

Bangkok, Clark, Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Penang, Phnom Penh, Phuket and Surabaya will now all be accessible to passengers of the flag carriers for France, the Netherlands and the UK.

The trio of airlines join Emirates, which was the first 3K codeshare partner to recommence transiting passengers via Singapore, doing so from 15 Apr this year.

As of Mar, aviation performance was also shown to be performing strongly, with 2.8 million domestic passengers carried on flights, just short of the 3.1 million travellers noted in Mar 2020, but almost twenty times as many as a low point in Apr 2020.

The report also found aircraft were being better utilised by airlines, with the 67% load factor for Mar 2021 up four percentage points on the corresponding month a year earlier.

However the areas of the country riding out the pandemic most successfully have undoubtedly been regional areas, which continue to recover much faster than Australia’s major cities on the back of urban-based travellers deferring planned international travel to head off on trips to provincial areas.

In the period from Jan to Mar, domestic overnight spend in regional Australia exceeded pre-pandemic levels (comparative to months in 2019), however the story is very different in built-up areas, with international border closures and a significantly reduced business travel segment leading to a continued drop in domestic overnight spend.

## Amadeus inks Ctrip

**CTRIP** has gained access to an increased volume of hospitality content through a renewed partnership with Amadeus.

The multi-year strategic partnership supports the technology innovation needed for Ctrip’s expansion of its operations across Asia Pacific.

The corporate online travel agency’s customers can now shop and book hospitality content via the Amadeus Travel Platform, and benefit from working on the same platform used by more than one million properties internationally, including hotel chains, aggregators, and other accommodation providers.



## Window Seat

**BRITISH** cuisine has, to put it mildly, a poor international reputation, but in classic English style, the country will be damned if they don’t export it to parts of the world where it may not be fully appreciated.

Britain’s traditional Sunday roast will take to the skies as part of British Airways’ new Best of British menus.

The roast will feature three-week aged British beef served with roast potatoes, Yorkshire pudding and vegetables.

Unfortunately, this is not for the plebs, and will only be available in First class.

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## Delta links with Travelport

**DELTA** Air Lines has signed a multi-year global content distribution agreement with Travelport that the carrier believes will give travel retailers such as agents an enhanced and more simplified access channel to its enriched content.

DL said that by operating through the Travelport+ platform, it will be able to upgrade its retailing capability and present the trade with improved ways to understand, compare and customise offers for clients.

"Delta's omni-channel, customer-centric approach invests across all channels to provide consumers with an elevated shopping experience within their preferred channel," the airline said this morning.

"This emerging approach to retail transformation will create value for all stakeholders in the ecosystem."

Meanwhile Travelport hailed the

new deal as a sign that aviation products continue to be more accessible for travel advisors.

"This new agreement emphasises the shared commitment of both Travelport and DL to improve the way airline products are retailed and make it easier for agents to help travellers choose offers that deliver the most value to them," Travelport's Chief Commercial Officer Jason Clarke said.

"We look forward to continually evolving and delivering the tools that DL and all of our travel partners need to effectively reach and engage the entire spectrum of buyers," he added.

The news follows a commercial tie-up between Emirates and Travelport last month to allow Travelport-connected travel agencies to avoid the carrier's new surcharge on bookings via global distribution systems (*TD* 02 Jul).

## Stacey is Uber happy

**STACEY** Baker from The World @ Braeside Travel in Victoria has scored herself a \$100 Visa gift card for her winning caption entry in Tourism Solomons 'Hapi Isles' photo caption competition.

Baker's winning entry for the pic mused "Getting an Uber – Solomons Style".



## Samoa site refresh

**SAMOA** Tourism Authority has launched its new Beautiful Anticipation site - a central hub for travellers, industry and trade partners to rediscover everything the country has to offer.

The website will also feature the latest on Samoa's travel preparations - visit the site [HERE](#).

## Alpine winter help

**THE** Victorian Government has topped up its support for alpine tourism businesses in the state that continue to be adversely affected by travel restrictions.

The \$11.2 million injection into the Alpine Resorts Winter Support Program will provide payments of \$5,000, \$10,000 and \$20,000 per week depending on business type and location.

Victoria's alpine region attracts more than one million visitors in a typical year but visitation is well down in 2021 due to the latest Delta outbreaks causing snow park closures in peak periods.

## Bonjour to Kimpton

**KIMPTON** Hotels & Restaurants is bringing luxury to Paris with the opening of the 149-room Kimpton St Honore Paris.

The hotel is a first for the brand in the French market, and is located inside an early 20th century Art Nouveau building.

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## It's bliss learning from the Swiss



**SWITZERLAND** Tourism's first ever Virtual Switzerland Travel Experience 2021 saw more than 150 advisors from Australia and New Zealand attend a two-day event last week, where they were updated about the latest travel experiences on offer in the land of chocolate and cheese.

Agents were also treated to live interactive entertainment by SongDivision, which encouraged creativity and networking, as well as a panel discussion on sustainability hosted by Switzerland Tourism's Executive Vice President Urs Eberhard.

Rewards were also handed out including the grand prize of a return flight to Switzerland with Swiss International Air

Lines worth \$1,500, which was awarded to MTA's Tina Johnson.

Meanwhile Travel Associates Brad Sward won a Victorinox suitcase valued at \$500.

### CDC cruise warning

**IN ANOTHER** blow for the cruise sector, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated its guidance to recommend people with an increased risk of severe illness to avoid travel on cruise ships, regardless of vaccination status.

The CDC stated that even double jabbed pax of any age with certain underlying medical conditions are more likely to get severely ill if they get COVID-19.

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## AFTA UPDATE

from the Australian Federation of Travel Agents



**IT'S** that time again. We know it's hard. We know it's challenging to keep the fight for support going especially now with so much of Australia in lockdown and with the seemingly

never-ending incoming surge of cancellations and changes as a result of restrictions and border closures. But now is the time to rally once more. The last time we mobilised the AFTA membership base we had one hell of an impact. Our updated Member engagement toolkit will help us do that once again – this time at a state and territory level as well as federally.

We are also proudly continuing to press our case for support through mainstream media as reinforcement of our lobbying.

In addition to pressing the need for faster and wider take-up of COVID vaccination and the ever-present call for ongoing and wider support for our entire sector, we continue to join other peak industry groups in the need for support anchored to businesses as well as individuals.

There are so many measures Government can and should introduce including following the Victorian Government's lead on mandated commercial rent relief.

AFTA is also concerned with the indications at a state and territory level from some of our leaders that they are prepared to step back from the National Cabinet agreement on the vaccination thresholds that will see domestic and then international borders reopen. There is a National Roadmap to Recovery in place which National Cabinet has agreed to. That agreement

was reached on a framework formed by the best scientific and medical advice in this country as to how we move to a more normal way of living safely. Stepping away from that

agreement is counterproductive on so many levels. It kneecaps consumer and business confidence. There is a robust plan in place and we need our leaders to continue to follow the expert medical advice.

AFTA continues to engage in media opportunities which both highlight the need for more Australians to #GetTravelReady & #GiveTravelAShot.

A huge thank you to our many members who continue to make themselves available for short-notice media interviews and background briefings.

We also support Tourism Australia's ongoing work in this space with its industry vaccination initiative for both leisure and business events via the "It's Our Best Shot For Travel" and "It's Our Best Shot for Events" campaigns.

AFTA members will receive an update at this Wed's member webinar which they can register for **HERE**.

Last but not least, there is an upside to so many of us being in lockdown – it means the federal/state govt disaster packages kick in for many more of our members to help offset some of the devastating impact of what has effectively now been 18 months of hard lockdown for our entire sector. Grant 3 work continues irrespective, with direct Govt dialogue and the shaping of a new agreement.

### Floriade shrivels

**AUSTRALIA'S** biggest celebration of spring will not proceed in Canberra this year due to ongoing COVID-19 outbreaks.

Originally scheduled to take place from 11 Sep through to 10 Oct, the Floriade festival presents 60,000 flowers in bloom.

### RSSC sales surge

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) celebrated the largest booking day in its 29-year history when the line's 2023/24 Voyage Collection opened on 18 Aug.

The milestone surpassed RSSC's previous booking record by 15%, set on 21 Oct 2020.

## Did you know?

Travel & Cruise Weekly's fortnightly consumer magazine called Keep Dreaming is specially designed for agents to send their clients.



## IATA Euro progress

**THE** European Union and the United Kingdom's vaccination passports are now recognised by the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) Travel Pass.

The European Union's Digital COVID Certificate and United Kingdom's NHS COVID Pass can now be uploaded into IATA Travel Pass as verified proof of vaccination for travel.

Passport holders can now access accurate and up-to-date COVID travel information.

## Greater Bay readies for take-off



**HONG** Kong startup carrier Greater Bay Airlines is gearing up to launch its inaugural flight in early Oct, with more details about its initial flight network detailed for the first time this week.

The airline intends to operate three services in the Asia-Pacific region, connecting Hong Kong with Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport (BKK), Thailand's island Phuket, as well as flights into Singapore's Changi Airport.

Although final government approval and traffic rights are still to be confirmed, the airline, founded by Chinese property entrepreneur Bill Wong Chobau, stated it was confident

of securing its air operating certificate later this month from the Hong Kong Air Transport Licensing Authority.

**Pictured:** Greater Bay Airlines flight staff complete their latest round of training.

## Sensing more India

**RESERVATIONS** for stays at the Six Senses Fort Barwara in India are now open, with the luxury resort boasting 48 suites, two palaces, a private spa sanctuary, three restaurants and two bars.

The opening slated for mid Oct will represent the debut for the brand in India, with each of the property's suites designed in a contemporary Rajasthani style to complement the historic backdrop to the fort.

Sustainability is also a prominent theme at the hotel, with the property engaging in waste water treatment and the cultivation of an organic farm to service its restaurants.

Guests can also attend daily fitness classes, group activities, wellness programs, as well as a full range of spa treatments.

## MONEY

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

**AU\$1 = US\$0.721**

**THE** AUD rebounded strongly overnight with most other key markets also recovering from last week's bumpy ride in the global financial markets.

Shares in the United States recovered strongly with the Dow Jones up 0.6% and the technology focused Nasdaq also increasing by 1.5%.

Fears were also eased that the US Federal Reserve will reduce its money printing program.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.721
UK	£0.525
NZ	\$1.047
Euro	€0.632
Japan	¥79.13
Thailand	฿23.98
China	¥4.667
South Africa	10.921
Canada	\$0.912
Crude oil	US\$65.18

## NT issues vouchers

**THE** Northern Territory has revealed round four of its \$5 million tourism voucher scheme is set to launch in Oct, offering \$200 credits to residents who travel more than 400 kilometres in a one-way trip to encourage longer-range domestic holidays.

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