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## Air NZ losses mount

AIR New Zealand has quadrupled its losses before other significant items for the 2021 financial year, reporting a NZ\$440 million loss for the period, a decrease of NZ\$353m on the prior corresponding year.

Operating revenue also dropped by 48% to NZ\$2.52 billion on the back of ongoing border restrictions, with capacity down 55% on the prior year.

However, there were some bright spots including the company's net losses after tax showing improvement, with the airline posting a 36.3% rally to -NZ\$289 million, while operating cash flow also recovered by 40.4% to NZ\$323 million.

**MEANWHILE** Air New Zealand has revealed plans to phase out its fleet of Boeing 777-300 aircraft in exchange for Dreamliners.

The carrier revealed the jets would be retired over the course of the next six years and replaced exclusively with Boeing 787s.

## Qantas flags resumption

**QANTAS** has this morning unveiled bold restart plans for international travel, announcing ambitions to fly to "COVID-safe destinations" from mid-Dec, so long as vaccination rates continue towards 80% (**TD** breaking news).

The carrier stated its restart would take off in the first instance to destinations such as the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, Canada, Singapore, New Zealand and Fiji, with these plans dependent on Federal Government decisions in the coming months, including future quarantine requirements.

Qantas' reboot strategy would see flights between Australia and New Zealand go on sale from mid-Dec on the assumption of the two-way bubble restarting.

The blueprint would also involve five of its A380s returning to service ahead of schedule, flying between Sydney and LA from Jul 2022, and between Sydney and

London (via Singapore) from Nov 2022, and extending the range of its A330-200 jets to operate trans-Pacific routes like Brisbane-LA & Brisbane-San Francisco.

Flights to Hong Kong are also flagged to restart in Feb, while the rest of the Qantas and Jetstar international network is planned to open up from Apr 2022.

**MEANWHILE** Qantas' latest financial results show a significant impact from travel restrictions, posting a statutory loss before tax of \$2.35 billion and a 67% drop in total revenue to \$5.93 billion from \$14.26 billion in FY20.

The airline managed to reduce its net debt in H2 to \$5.9 billion, while total liquidity for the business at FY21 was \$3.8 billion.

### Today's issue of **TD**

*Travel Daily* today has six pages of news including **Business Events News**.

## Princess Partners

**PRINCESS** Cruises has launched a new edu-series called Princess Partners designed to give agents up-to-date information as the line prepares to relaunch globally.

Special presenters will include Princess' Senior Vice President, North America Sales & Marketing John Chernesky, who will provide his insights into the resumption of cruising, fresh from sailing aboard the line's maiden Alaska voyage on board *Majestic Princess*.

The session will take place 31 Aug at 11am AEST - register **HERE**.

## UK and US bubbles

**FEDERAL** Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Dan Tehan told Parliament yesterday that travel bubbles with the UK and US will be possible once 80% of Aussies are fully vaccinated.

Singapore and Japan were also listed as possible green lanes once the country achieves herd immunity, Tehan added.



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## FC dark before the dawn

**THE** latest financial results released by Flight Centre this morning show the full extent of the COVID impact, with the travel company revealing an underlying pre-tax basis loss of \$507 million, in line with guidance given in May (**TD** breaking news).

Group TTV also plummeted by \$11.358 billion for the FY21 to \$3.945 billion, while Flight Centre's operating revenue of \$396 million was also down from the \$1.897 billion figure posted in the previous year.

While the bottom line figures were grim, the company did manage to trim its underlying costs by 59% on FY20, with the bulk of expenses in the last 12-month period comprised of employee benefits, depreciation, marketing costs and one-off payouts such as redundancies, employee retention plans and the return of select JobKeeper payments received on behalf of

stood-down staff.

Encouragingly, Flight Centre did experience some respite toward the end of the reporting period, with the recovery led by a resurgent market in the United States and an increase in corporate travel bookings.

The company also noted it enjoyed "strong and immediate rebounds" in periods where restrictions were lifted, and also revealed it had undertaken multi-million dollar investments in technology to capitalise on market share opportunities as travel returns, headlined by new "game-changing" FCM and Corporate Traveller platforms.

"FY21 was another challenging year for our sector but conditions have slowly started to improve," CEO Graham Turner said.

The report also showed that Turner received a total remuneration package of \$750,000 for the year.

## SIA's loyalty cruise

**THE** worlds of aviation and cruising have united following news that Singapore Airlines will launch a two-night cruise experience exclusively for its KrisFlyer loyalty members.

The chartered cruise on board Dream Cruises' *World Dream* will set sail on 17 Nov, with KrisFlyer members able to use their reward miles to book the experience.

Members can also earn KrisFlyer miles on all regular Dream Cruises bookings from mid-Sep.

## Fiji takes its shot

**TOURISM** Fiji has launched a new campaign to encourage all locals to get vaccinated so that the country can once again welcome international visitors.

The marketing push will run predominantly on social media and also includes a toolkit for the Fijian tourism industry, so they can join in encouraging Fijians to support the drive to get the jab.

## Parliament petitions

**THE** need for Australians to visit family and friends overseas featured prominently in 12 separate petitions presented to the Federal House of Reps this week, all arguing for a clearer pathway to international travel.

Among the demands listed were the lifting of incoming arrival caps for relatives living overseas to visit, creating dedicated quarantine facilities to cater for higher volumes of travellers, setting specific dates for reopening borders based on vaccine coverage, and mandating easier terms for fully vaccinated Australians returning from overseas, such as two days in hotel quarantine and a follow-up COVID test after a short period of home isolation.

Mental health concerns were also cited by most petitions as a primary driver to draw up a clearer road map to easing border restrictions, with missing family proposed as the major cause.

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## Window Seat

**LOOK**, it's perfectly fine to be enamoured with the wonders of nature when visiting a zoo, but clearly some visitors can make their affections felt a little too deeply by the residents.

That was certainly the case for a 38-year-old Belgian woman who developed such a close bond with a chimpanzee that the zoo banned her from entry.

Antwerp Zoo made the call after Adie Zimmerman's regular visits to see Chita the chimp had caused him to curtail his bonding with fellow primates.

"I love that animal and he loves me," Zimmerman said in a recent interview, adding "we're having an affair, other visitors are allowed to make contact, so why not me?"

The *Travel Daily* team can think of...thousands of reasons.



## If you never go, you Jeddah know



**EXPLORE** Worldwide, represented in Australia and New Zealand by TTC's Adventure World Travel brand, has expanded its range of tours to Saudi Arabia for the first time.

The operator's new 12-night Explore the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia adventure includes four-wheel-drives in the desert, visits to the bustling camel market at Buraidah, and explorations of the mountainous region of Al Bahah.

"It's not every day that we're able to launch a brand new destination, so we're really excited to introduce our new Kingdom of Saudi Arabia tour,"

Explore's Managing Director, Michael Edwards said.

"The birthplace of Islam, it has a rich cultural history, and is jam-packed with historic sites but it's also a country of surprising natural diversity, from vast deserts to perhaps less-expected mountain ranges and lush, verdant valleys," he added.

The tour also features walks down the twisting alleyways of Jeddah's UNESCO-listed old town, the 600-year-old marble village of Thee Ain, as well as an overnight stay in a desert camp at the historical AIUla.

Prices lead in from \$7,040 per person and include 10 nights' accommodation, two nights' camping in fixed tents, most meals and expert guides.

See more details [HERE](#).

**Pictured:** Jeddah's seafront.

## A very active merger

**QUEENSTOWN-BASED** tour operator Active Adventures has announced a merger with Austin Adventures of Montana in the USA, enabling both companies to broaden their respective ranges of off-the-beaten track tours.

The agreement will mean Austin Adventures tours are now available to book on the Active Adventures site, adding a range of product in the USA, Canada, and Central America, including specific family departures.

Benefits to travellers will include over 100 combined adventures to choose from, more departure dates, flexible trading hours and more customer service staff.

## WA approves NZ

**THE** Western Australia Govt has reclassified New Zealand as a low risk, meaning flights from Auckland to Perth can resume.

Travellers from New Zealand to Perth will be required to self-isolate on arrival for 14 days and have a COVID-19 test within 48 hours of arrival and again on day 12 of their visit.

The decision by the WA Government coincides with New Zealand recording 62 new cases in the community yesterday, taking the country's total cases linked to the outbreak to 210, including 12 in Wellington.

## Not right now please

**HAWAII'S** Governor David Ige has warned tourists to stay away from the US state for now as it grapples with an escalating number of Delta cases.

"I encourage everyone to restrict and curtail travel to Hawaii as it's not a good time to travel to the islands," Ige said.

Cases of COVID-19 cases in Hawaii have risen 36% in the last two weeks, while hospitalisations have surged by 78%, *The New York Times* reports.

In a bid to discourage tourists from arriving, Ige has restricted access to rental cars & eateries.

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The August issue of *travelBulletin* is out now. Read about how businesses are facing up to the climate change challenge amidst the ongoing pandemic pause.

**CLICK to read** *travelBulletin*

## Plunging toward profits

**ADVENTURE** tourism business Experience Co has made solid progress towards profitability, posting a \$4.8 million loss for the 12 months to 30 Jun.

The result was a marked improvement on the \$39.7 million loss recorded during the same period last year, with CEO John O'Sullivan stating the core life signs of the business showed cause for optimism for the future.

"We continue to see domestic demand exceed expectations when we are able to operate, and pleasingly this demand accelerates as markets reopen," he said.

"Seeing out the FY21 year without a need to raise capital while maintaining the earnings capacity of the business is an achievement of which we are extremely proud."

In terms of the business's liquidity, the latest financial reporting shows the company has

\$13.3 million of cash in the bank, while its outstanding \$2.8 million of net debt was also reduced by 70% on FY20 volumes.

Experience Co was also buoyed by the future growth prospects of recent acquisitions Wild Bush Luxury and The Maria Island Walk (*TD* 20 Apr), purchases the company believes have improved the depth and quality of its asset portfolio in the domestic market, tipped to be fastest to recover when travel resumes.

Revenue from its Great Barrier Reef brands saw \$14.2 million generated, while the company's skydiving arm brought in \$28.8 million, both divisions down by around half on the previous corresponding period.

Looking forward, Experience Co said it anticipates its earnings to be impacted by Delta in Q1 of 2021/22, while its summer peak's success will depend on the timing of eased travel restrictions.

## QF loyalty performs

**QANTAS'** loyalty division continued to perform well over the 12 months to 30 Jun, generating over \$1 billion in gross revenue and an underlying EBIT of \$272 million despite a full year of travel restrictions.

Momentum was shown to be gathering pace throughout the reporting period, with earnings in the second half greater than the first half, and Qantas indicating there was also an "extremely strong demand" to redeem points when borders were reopened.

Between Jan and Jun, redemption levels on domestic flights were noted to be 30% higher than the same period pre-pandemic, while the total number of new Frequent Flyer members grew by almost 200,000 during the year to reach 13.6 million.

The airline rolled out a number of member acquisition campaigns in the last 12 months, signalling plans to offer more ways for members to earn points in 2022.

## Arden makes gains

**ARDENT** Leisure's 2021 fiscal year statutory results improved significantly despite the full year being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the company recording a net loss after tax of \$86.9 million, compared to \$131.9 million in the prior year.

While revenue was down \$7.6 million for the year, EBITDA was up \$24.9 million over the prior period, excluding specific items, which included valuation & impairment losses on assets, and restructuring & other non-recurring items.

Theme parks continued to be challenged by border restrictions and snap lockdowns, with revenue down \$18.5 million, and EBITDA excluding specific items showing a slight decrease of \$2.6 million on the prior period.

However, strong annual pass sales, a lower cost base, and a more disciplined approach to capital expenditure have mitigated its impact.

## Did you know?

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## MARSHALL DISBANDS COUNCIL

**SOUTH** Australian Premier Steven Marshall has made the call to axe the Events Advisory Group (EAG), a committee set up in Nov last year to help drive more event wins to the state.

The group was chaired by Business SA's Nikki Govan (pictured) and included a slew of high-profile members including actor Hugh Sheridan, Art Gallery of SA Director Rhana Devenport and Lord Mayor of Adelaide Sandy Verschoor, with the body's primary objective to fill the vacuum left by the Adelaide 500 which was cancelled by the South Australian Tourism Commission in Oct 2020.

Despite the abrupt closure of the advisory group, the SA Government was glowing in its assessment of the EAG's brief achievements, with a spokesperson stating SA would "continue to benefit from the outcomes of the EAG as it works through the remaining ideas and proposals".

However, South Australia's Opposition Leader Peter Malinauskas lashed the Marshall Government over the axing, claiming it shows the state has



no plan in place to attract new events capable of replacing the now-defunct Adelaide 500.

"It beggars belief that Steven Marshall made a decision to axe the Adelaide 500 without a plan to replace it, but now it's even more startling that he's canned the plan to replace the dumped event," he said this week, adding that the recently launched Bloom Festival brand was an inadequate replacement.

Bloom was unveiled by South Australia earlier this month, a pastiche of events including a Barossa food and wine festival, concerts at the Adelaide Oval,

nature-based festivals, as well as some revamped motorsport events including an expanded Adelaide Rally - a concept put forward by the EAG.

Marshall thanked the advisory body this week for their contributions to the planning of new ideas for events following the government's call to end the Adelaide 500, stating they had done "excellent work and put forward great ideas for the South Australian Tourism Commission".

"There are many other things that were suggested that we're going to continue to follow up," Marshall added.

### It's our best shot for biz events

**TOURISM** Australia has launched an industry vaccination initiative called "It's our best shot for events", encouraging Australians to support the events industry by getting vaccinated against COVID-19.

Download the industry toolkit [HERE](#) to access assets to share the message.

**MEANWHILE** Tourism Australia's Business Events Bid Fund Program has revealed 45 globally recognised events have been secured with the help of its funding, with new business worth \$367 million to the country's economy.

Recent wins include the 2023 World Conference in Ecological Restoration in Darwin and the Int'l Congress on Neuromuscular Diseases 2024 in Perth.

### Darwin on top

**DARWIN** Convention Centre has made the global top 10 for the prestigious International Association of Convention Centres' (AIPC) APEX Award.

The AIPC global awards recognise the best convention centres in the world, based entirely upon client ratings, independently assessed by global market research company Ipsos.

### NZ event canned

**NEW** Zealand's leading hotel & accommodation industry conference Maximum Occupancy has been postponed due to a lockdown in the country.

A date will be confirmed later this year, and for those who have already purchased tickets, the organisers are offering the option of a full refund or to apply the purchased ticket to the new date.

### WA funding offer

**REGIONAL** event holders in Western Australia are now able to access new government funding through the 2022/23 Regional Events Scheme, with grants between \$5,000 and \$40,000 on offer for events held between 01 Jul 2022 and 30 Jun 2023.

The \$1 million pool of funds includes \$150,000 dedicated to the Regional Aboriginal Events Scheme to support events that showcase Aboriginal activities and experiences through the leadership and participation of Indigenous people.

Applications close on 19 Oct - for details [CLICK HERE](#).

### Thai venue completes total makeover

**THE** new Queen Sirikit National Convention Center (QSNCC) in Thailand will be open next year, with a space five times larger and capable of accommodating more than 100,000 visitors daily.

The space will also feature an additional retail zone and fully equipped tech, with parent company TCC Assets Director Panote Sirivadhanabhakdi stating QSNCC's long-term investment and remodelling plan was able to be fulfilled despite the pandemic.

"This fulfils our vision and aspiration to transform the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center into the

leading world class convention centre in Asia," he said.

"We believe that Thailand's strategic location will benefit our stakeholders – organisers, exhibitors, customers and visitors – with a highly competitive ecosystem of the supply chain for endless business opportunities, great accessibilities, a good variety of destinations and hospitality.

"We are confident that these strengths will enable the QSNCC to capture the interests of leading int'l MICE and event businesses, promoters as well as operators, and to be known as Thailand's inspiring world class event platform for all."

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## GC woos Brisbane

**DESTINATION** Gold Coast has launched a new digital campaign targeting residents in Brisbane and its surrounding suburbs to visit the beachside city and enjoy its many experiences.

The campaign will be run across social media channels and digital billboards in high-traffic areas across Brisbane, promoting the Gold Coast's 110 experiences in places like the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, Movie World, SkyPoint Climb or Tallebudgera Creek.

The four-week billboard campaign will be visible to an estimated one million people each week until 12 Sep.

## Tassie events boost

**THE** Federal Government has pledged more than \$360k in investment to help spur Tasmania's tourism sector, announcing this week the funding of four new festivals that will attract more visitors.

The quartet of new events will include the Beaker Street Festival, the Bruny Island Bird Festival, the Great Eastern Wine Week and the Junction Arts Festival.

"We are supporting exciting new Tasmanian festivals because the best thing our govt can do for tourism businesses is to get tourists back travelling and spending money," the govt said.

## A decade with no regrets



**GLOBUS** Family of Brands Senior Marketing Coordinator Jessica Evans recently celebrated a major travel milestone - 10 years with the company.

With so many memories to savour working in the exciting world of travel, it was difficult for Evans to choose just one highlight, however she said one cruise experience in particular was very hard to top.

"Working on the shoot with the *Today Show's* Sylvia Jeffreys for a seven-day Budapest to Nuremberg trip on our Magnificent Europe cruise was an amazing, eye-opening experience," Evans enthused.

"It was great to see all the work that goes on behind the scenes to make those special TV moments happen," she added.

When reflecting on her decade with the Globus brand, Evans was gushing her appraisal of the work culture at the business.

"It's the people first and foremost but also the product,"

she explains.

"I have made so many long-lasting friendships here, we definitely know how to pick them and it also helps that we have fantastic brands to promote and are so proud to stand by them."

**Pictured:** Evans enjoying a European adventure.

## APPOINTMENTS



**WELCOME** to Industry Appointments, *Travel Daily's* Thursday feature which has the latest job appointments from across the industry. If you have just appointed someone to a new position and would like to update the industry email appointments@traveldaily.com.au.

Hilton has named **Dario Fiorino** as the Executive Chef of Hilton Brisbane. He will be responsible for overseeing the hotel's culinary team, including its extensive banquet operation, in-room dining, and Vintaged Bar + Grill.

Azamara has appointed **Michelle Lardizabal** as Chief Sales Officer, North America. She joins the cruise line with over 25 years of experience in tourism and cruising. Most recently she served as Senior Vice President and Commercial Sales Officer for MSC Cruises in the United States.

**Svetlana Monastyrsky** has taken on a new PR Manager role with Aurora Expeditions. She joins the cruise line after two-and-a-half years with Destination NSW, where she most recently served as PR Manager International.

**Hyatt Regency Phuket Resort** last week announced four key leadership team members have recently joined General Manager Pravin Kumar to reopen the line's first branded resort on the resort island, after the property's extensive renovation. **Ranjeet Viswanathan** joins as Director of Sales & Marketing, **Gennaro Avagnale** will serve as Executive Chef, **Ganesh Mathur** will be Director of Finance, and **Weena Kuankid** has been named Human Resource Manager.

## Venice faces charge

**ONE** of Europe's most popular tourism destinations is set to introduce an entry fee for tourists in a bid to help fight the adverse effects of overtourism.

According to local Italian newspapers, Venice will introduce a fee of between €3-10 from the middle of 2022, depending on the season, and will require visitors to book in advance and enter the city via electronic turnstiles.

The decision by Italian lawmakers follows high-profile battles with large ship cruise lines in recent years over concerns that too many visitors are being permitted into the city at once.

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