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Celebs back in Aus

CELEBRITY Cruises has announced its 2022-2023 Australia season itineraries aboard *Celebrity Eclipse*.

The ship will return to the region for next year, after making her debut in local waters in 2021 (TD 18 Nov 2020), sailing a series of 19 different itineraries ranging from five to 18 nights.

Departing from Sydney, and also Auckland, the 2022/23 season will run from Sep to Apr.

Travel advisors are able to join a product training webinar on Tue to learn about the program from Celebrity's Sales Team.

See the **front page** for details.

VA halts short-haul

VIRGIN Australia has confirmed the closure of all short-haul international services to destinations such as New Zealand until at least 19 Jun, citing ongoing international border closures and government restrictions as the primary motivation for the move.

The carrier stressed that the decision is temporary and that its flexible approach to short-haul means a restart could happen quickly if conditions change.

"We are hopeful that countries will develop safe-travel zones but need to be realistic considering operational limitations and the uncertainty around frameworks that support the sensible opening and closing of borders," said VA spokesperson Kris Taute.

Tucan Travel ceases trading

EXCLUSIVE

LONG-TIME adventure travel specialist Tucan Travel has been placed into voluntary administration, with the company's businesses in Australia and the UK having "ceased to trade with immediate effect".

The closure marks the end of an era, with Tucan Travel having been founded as one of the first South American specialist operators more than 33 years ago in 1987 by Aussie couple Pip and Liliana Tyler, and since expanding to a portfolio of more than 400 group tours across the globe.

A statement issued on behalf of Tucan Travel's staff noted the severe impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the travel sector.

"During this challenging time tour operators like Tucan Travel have faithfully tried to support people and balance their needs," including making difficult decisions to keep the company alive and making many staff layoffs, which has now extended to all employees.

In Mar 2020 Tucan Travel took the decision to suspend tour operations, with the company noting that "there has been no satisfactory solution for tour operators to be able to address the number of clients wishing to receive immediate full refunds".

"The reason for this is that tour operators effectively coordinate airlines, hotels and local services such as guides, permits and

transportation for groups of clients.

"Tour operators are required to pay in advance to secure these services on behalf of their clients; many of these service contracts are non-refundable or non-transferrable.

"In addition many of the smaller overseas hotels and service providers that specialist tour operators support are in an even worse situation, they simply do not have the resources to repay what is owed to tour operators until they are able to reopen their business and earn money again."

The company said no-one could have predicted that in Jan 2021, most countries in the world would be in further tough lockdowns with many people losing their lives and loved ones.

"There is unlikely to be any normal international leisure travel until 2022 and so with a heavy heart, the decision was taken in the best interests of everyone concerned to place the company into administration."

Andrew Barnden of Rodgers Reidy in Sydney has been named as Administrator of the Australian business (ABN 77 085 587 659).

Tucan Travel was a member of AFTA and CATO, and continues to be listed on the websites of both organisations as well as being ATAS accredited.

Any customers who have paid via credit card are being told to seek a chargeback.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news including our PUZZLE page plus a front full page from **Celebrity Cruises** and full pages from:

- Visit Monaco
- SUKI

EMERALD WATERWAYS

2022 European River Cruising

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Warriors of Wisdom

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Discovery Cruise Sale – Q1 2021 Campaign

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Scenic Outback out

SCENIC has today released its 2021 35th Anniversary Outback Collection, including a new range of land journeys to give clients a “true sense of the outback”.

Highlights include the 16-day Oceans to Outback trip including Kangaroo Island, the Great Ocean Road and Broken Hill; the 14-day Outback Queensland Adventure; and a 14-day Central Australia and the Ghan journey.

Scenic noted high demand for the itineraries, with earlybird offers for some trips selling out.

More at scenic.com.au.

Wendy adds more

WENDY Wu Tours has expanded its current free single supplement offer, adding new tours including itineraries in South America, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The solo deal has also been extended until 28 Feb, offering savings of up to \$3,990 - more info at wendywutours.com.au.

Special QFF fares via QDP

QANTAS has confirmed an enhancement to its NDC-based Qantas Distribution Platform (QDP), which now has the capability of distributing special price offers for Qantas Frequent Flyer (QFF) members when they book via the indirect channel.

The update means that travel agents are now being encouraged to enter their customers' QFF numbers when shopping for flights to ensure they can access any special offers that might be available.

“Special price offers for Qantas Frequent Flyer members will be made available from time to time on selected flights and travel dates from Feb,” the carrier said.

All travel agents who are participating in the Qantas Channel and making bookings using QDP content can access the special price offers.

The capability expansion follows the world-first launch of carbon

offset functionality through the QDP late last year for Australian-based travel agents (**TD** 08 Dec).

The controversial Qantas Channel initiative “is designed to more closely align the functionality of indirect agent channels with qantas.com,” the carrier said.

Marriott chief focuses on health

MARRIOTT International has announced that its CEO Arne Sorenson will “step back from full time oversight of the company for several months” after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

62-year-old Sorenson will remain as CEO and on the Marriott Board, with Stephanie Linnartz to oversee the company's International division while Tony Capuano will be in charge of Marriott's US and Canada operations.



Window Seat

KARSTEN Horne from Reho Travel has a well-deserved reputation as one of the Australian travel industry's biggest innovators - and his latest suggestion is no exception.

Noting a scientific report in the *Nature* journal about engineers at MIT who have used nanotechnology to create spinach which can send emails (see nature.com), Horne posted on LinkedIn last night that “this is massive progress”.

“During tonight's dinner I urged my salad to email my local MP to mount a ‘spinach inquisition’ as to why the travel industry is not getting the support it requires,” Horne said.

In the same vein, today's issue of **TD** is brought to you by tomato, cucumber and broccoli.

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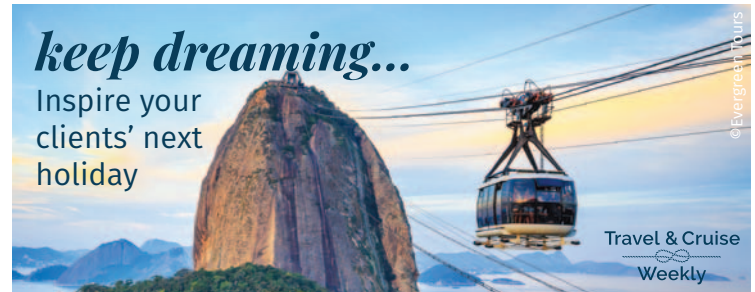
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Ponant NZ season is off

LAST ditch attempts to allow Ponant's sold-out New Zealand domestic cruise season to operate have failed, with the NZ Govt intractable when it comes to granting visas to 61 of the crew.

"Ponant regretfully advises that our small expedition ship *Le Laperouse* has been forced to cancel her season of seven fully booked expedition voyages in NZ for New Zealanders," according to a statement issued by the line.

"Following a detailed application submitted in Oct, including the numbers and nationality makeup of the crew to arrive on the ship, the Ministry of Health issued an approval in mid-Dec.

"The approval's conditions were to operate with a limit of 100 guests, within NZ waters for Kiwis only," the company said.

"*Le Laperouse* and her full complement of 90 crew were mobilised under strict COVID isolation and multiple testing

protocols and sailed from her anchorage off Jakarta on 10 Jan for New Zealand...health officials were scheduled to test all crew upon arrival on 30 Jan."

After travelling over 3,600 nautical miles, the company was advised on 27 Jan that visa applications for the hotel department officers and crew were "not considered critical for the ship's entry to New Zealand".

The ship was instructed by Immigration NZ to turn around and go elsewhere, with officers and company management facing arrest if *Le Laperouse* entered the NZ Exclusive Economic Zone.

As well as devastating to Ponant, the cancellation of the season will cause \$6m in direct economic loss to NZ suppliers.

"We hope there is a quick review of the processes for expedition ships to operate in NZ and that the 2021-22 season can be saved," Ponant said.

Virgin Hotels bullish

VIRGIN Hotels has confirmed it is on track to open three new US properties this year, with CEO Raul Leal saying "we are very optimistic about the return of travel despite the tremendous difficulties posed by COVID-19".

The expansion includes the massive Virgin Hotels Las Vegas, with more than 1,500 rooms and suites and a 60,000ft² casino, followed by the 230-room Virgin Hotels New Orleans and then the high-rise Virgin Hotels New York City with 463 rooms on the corner of Broadway & 30th.

Los Angeles arrests

SIX people have been taken into custody in the hills above Los Angeles after using large tarps to alter the famous Hollywood sign to make it read "HOLLYBOOB".

Officers said no permanent damage was done, with the offenders claiming to be trying to raise awareness of breast cancer.

Aiden Darling Hbr

LUXURY boutique hotel Aiden Darling Harbour will debut in Australia mid this year, featuring 88 rooms across eight storeys.

Amenities will include a lobby cafe-bar area, 24-hour reception, digital keys, and free wi-fi, and will be located close by to the ICC.

Island Escape(s) NZ for Australia instead

NEW Zealand-based Island Escape Cruises has announced it will be running voyages in Australia for the first time this year, revealing the details of a 10-night Cairns to Brisbane (or vv) sailing via the Great Barrier Reef.

Prices for the cruise lead in at \$9,855pp, with two departures on offer, 21 Aug and 11 Sep.

The company pivoted to Aussie sailings in light of complications around its New Zealand itineraries, see more details in **Cruise Weekly** tomorrow.

For info on sailings, **CLICK HERE**.

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Calls for support

THE ongoing plight of travel agents is still being championed by a selection of politicians in Canberra, with two MPs putting the case forward for a JobKeeper extension in Parliament yesterday.

Pat Conaghan from the northern NSW electorate of Cowper said after being contacted by “numerous travel agents” in his area about anomalies in the original \$128 million support package, a new targeted program needed to be assembled for an additional 12 months to “ensure their viability”.

Fiona Phillips, representing the seat of Gilmore in NSW, also reiterated the need for more govt support, labelling the first package a “failed delivery” and stating that several agents in her electorate didn’t even qualify.

“While the money should have helped to cover the hundreds of hours they have spent, unpaid, helping their clients since this all began, they will get nothing.”

G, what small tours

TRENDS for longer travel and “workcations” have led to G Adventures introducing a range of Mini Adventures.

The program of 36 add-on trips in 28 cities and 19 countries around the world will give travellers an extra two-to-six days, priced from \$179pp.

The Mini Adventures can be booked as extensions to existing tours, or standalone holidays.

CLICK HERE for more details.

Kiribati new strategy

TOURISM is being made a priority by the Kiribati Govt, with Tourism Minister Tekeewa Tarati stating the ministry was working toward a new 20-Year Vision.

The focus will be on creating niche products, selecting some islands in the Gilbert and Phoenix island chain for high-end development, and the cultivation of Tabuaeran (Fanning Island) as a world-class surfing destination.



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Travel Daily

Diving into Fijian tourism



VOLIVOLI Beach Resort has helped Fiji’s next generation of divers qualify for their open water diver course.

Along with the support of Ra Divers Fiji and Settlement Services International, the three organisations sponsored eight boys aged between 12 and 19 to

complete the course.

This project will help to unlock an ocean of opportunities for the boys to become tourism leaders of the future within their communities.

Pictured: The successful group of divers prepare for the ramp up of Fiji’s tourism sector.

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Pub quiz

1. In what country can you find the Yamuna River?
2. Order these three cities from closest to farthest away from Darwin: Adelaide, Brisbane or Perth.
3. The Industrial Revolution is considered to have begun in what country?
4. To the nearest 10 million, roughly how many people are there in the Middle East?
 - a) 370 million
 - b) 480 million
 - c) 530 million
 - d) 570 million
5. Donnybrook, Western Australia, is known as the state's hub for what fruit?
6. The 1930 FIFA World Cup, the first-ever tournament, was hosted and won by what country?
7. What is the only international destination listed by Jetstar as a "focus city"?
8. The Sinai Peninsula is part of what country?
9. Jordan is located on the bank of what river?
10. Name any of the seven cities that most prominently lay claim to the title "the Paris of the North"?

Seen it at the movies



THE beautiful Tweed Heads near the border of NSW and Queensland was the real-life setting for the fictional movie town of Porpoise Spit, the focal point for a famous Aussie favourite starring Toni Collette. Although parts of this movie were shot elsewhere, such as

Moreton Island for an infamous wedding scene, as well as parts of Sydney, most of the project was shot in Tweed Heads and has since become one of the most successful Aussie films of the last 30 years. Can you name this classic local comedy released in 1994?

Sudoku

EASY

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.

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

Funnies Flashback



WE'VE trawled through the **TD** Window Seat archives to give you a blast from the past. Here's some gems from 18 Jun 2014:

RESIDENTS of the Queensland town of Maryborough woke up with a hangover & little to show for it recently after falling short in its attempt to reclaim the (appropriately titled) Guinness World Record for the most people on a pub crawl at once.

Official numbers were well short of the record number required, with less than half of the estimated 4,000 attendees actually handing in their "Pub Fest Passport" to mark their participation in the attempt.

Maryborough invited everyone able to get to the town to take part as it tried to beat the 4,800 record set by the US city of Philadelphia early last month.

The Pennsylvania city itself took the record from Kansas City, with Maryborough having held the record since 2005.

ANSWERS 02 FEB

Celebrity faces: Eyes - Liam Hemsworth, Nose - Margot Robbie, Mouth - Michelle Black, Viking Cruises

Unscramble: cere, circle, cleric, clone, coerce, coil, coin, coir, cole, colic, cone, conic, core, corn, cornice, creel, crenel, creole, crone, encircle, encore, icon, licence, nice, nicer, niece, oleic, once, recce, recombine, recoil, RECONCILE, relic, rice

Skyrail reduces hrs

THE Skyrail Rainforest Cableway in Cairns has made the tough decision to scale down its hours of operation amid a major downturn in customers.

The once-thriving cable car attraction will now operate only on the weekends for at least the next couple of months, as the drought in international arrivals applies pressure to its profits.

Cairns has been hit particularly hard by the travel shutdown, with Skyrail's announcement following Indigenous attraction Tjapukai's decision to close its doors after more than 30 years of operation last month due to the lack of international arrivals (**TD** 08 Jan).

Status quo support

NEW research conducted by Redbridge Group has found that more than 90% of Australians want returning travellers to the country to continue being housed in hotel quarantine on arrival.

The study, supplied exclusively to News Corp, noted that support for the tough isolation measures are currently highest among older Australians, with 92% of over 50s supporting quarantine, while 86% of 18-29 year-olds want to see hotel quarantine continue in its current form.

On the question of a tracking device alternative, 49.6% were receptive to the idea while 39.3% were opposed and 11% unsure.



ETIHAD Airways were able to enjoy all of the action of a Melbourne City soccer match with agents at AAMI Park in Melbourne on Sat night.

Although the home team went down to a red hot Perth Glory side 3-1, it didn't stop the airline's representatives from showing a

group of travel agents some well-deserved love on the night.

Ethad recently confirmed its commitment to the Australian market by continuing to operate repatriation flights leaving the United Kingdom to Australia, despite ongoing border blocks on in-bound travel to mitigate the spread of new strains of COVID.

Pictured: Travel advisors gather to meet with key Etihad executives on a fun night of wine and soccer.

ACCOMMODATION

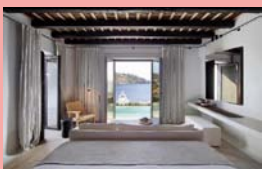
WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



The Radisson Collection has debuted in China, with the company introducing its premium lifestyle concept to the city of Shanghai. The **Radisson Collection Hotel, Xing Guo Shanghai** features a large expanse of manicured gardens, historical villas, and 1930s Art Deco architecture, as well as 185 rooms across 16 storeys. Further amenities include a fitness centre and restaurants.



The **Crowne Plaza Hawkesbury Valley** has recently undergone a multi-million dollar transformation that has refreshed all of its rooms to incorporate greater light and more modern interiors. The rooms are now also more open plan in design and boast eco efficient LED lighting and softer colours.



The **Kalesma** hotel in the Greek tourist hot spot of Mykonos will soon open its doors to the public for the first time in Apr, featuring 25 suites and two villas overlooking Ornos Bay. The luxury accommodation will also boast a restaurant facing the daily sunset, yacht charter opportunities and a dedicated concierge service.

Thredbo green tick

THREDBO has been awarded Gold EarthCheck Certification, an accreditation that endorses the resort's efforts to meet key sustainability criteria across emissions, energy, waste, land use and conservation - the first nod of its kind to be awarded to an Australian-based ski resort.

Qatar smells sweet

HAMAD International Airport's shopping emporium, Qatar Duty Free, has partnered with French luxury fashion house Dior to create a new exclusive fragrance.

The name of the new luxury scent is Tobacolor, and will see passengers flying with Qatar Airways receive personalised invites to visit the Dior boutique, with the carrier's Premium class passengers encouraged to collect a discovery size bottle of Tobacolor when travelling through Hamad International.

US cruises mask up

THE US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has mandated that face masks be worn on all cruise ships and terminals throughout the country.

The new regulations came into effect yesterday, and is part of a wider set of COVID rules for travellers using American transport, with masks also compulsory for travellers on all buses, trains and airports.

"Given how interconnected most transportation systems are across our nation...when infected persons travel on public conveyances without wearing a mask and with others who are not wearing masks, the risk of interstate and int'l transmission can grow quickly," said CDC Director Rochelle Walensky.



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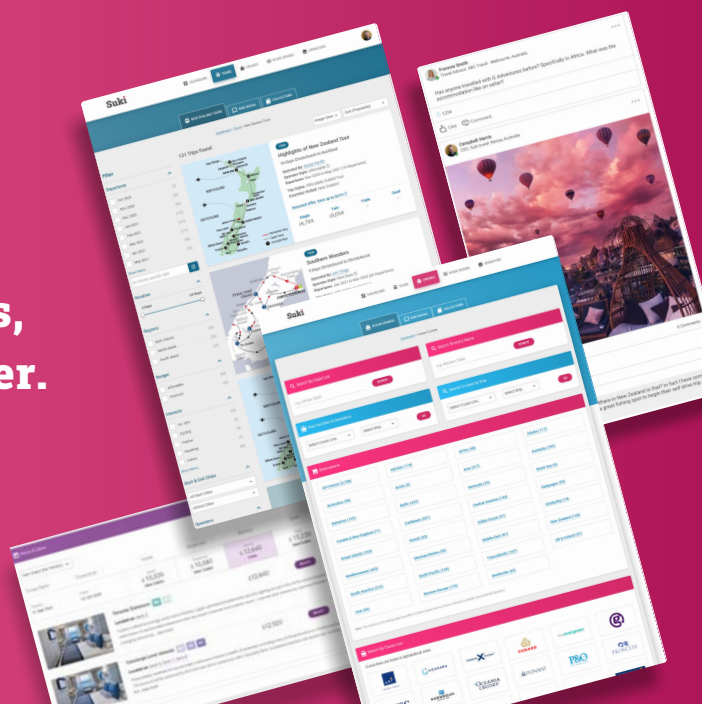
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As an industry we need to ensure that we hold onto our best advisors. Agency owners need to

look at ways to improve efficiencies and maximise sales within their current business structure while considering how that will look in the future.

Those advisors still dedicated to the travel industry and wanting to move ahead with their careers need to embrace all technologies that help them to be better at what they do.

“No advisor can be an expert in everything, but blending your experience with technology can save you hundreds of hours, leaving you more time to get those complex bookings across the line.”

Suki Social...what's that all about?

In designing Suki we wanted to bring the global travel advisor community closer, so if you're on any other social platform, you'll feel

right at home on Suki.Social – a place where advisors and operators can share knowledge and help each other out.

That's the overriding ethos we had when designing Suki – what can we create that benefits advisors, agency owners and Operators too? We hope we got it right because we have lots of ideas to push Suki even further if we get the support from the industry. Only time will tell.

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