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CVFR seals H9 deal

CVFR Travel Group continues to buck the current downbeat industry trend, this week announcing the appointment of its Airline Rep Services division as Australia and NZ GSA for Himalaya Airlines (H9).

The carrier, a joint venture between Nepal and China, has a fleet of A320/A319 aircraft growing its footprint in the Middle East and South Asia.

Himalaya Airlines is also strongly focused on building its sales in the Oceania region, having recently joined BSP Australia.

VP Vijay Shrestha said he looked forward to the new partnership with Airline Rep Services helping establish brand visibility and connectivity via H9's non-stop services between Kuala Lumpur and Kathmandu.

A call centre has been established for the travel trade and H9 customers on +61 2 8249 2517 or email himalaya-airlines@airlinerepservices.com.au.

CVFR CEO Ram Chhabra told *Travel Daily* he was thrilled at the appointment, with Airline Rep Services having strong relationships with consolidators, retail chains and large independent agents allowing it to effectively and efficiently distribute airline products.

He said he was also proud that, unlike some competitors, the group's call centres had stayed open to take calls and emails from agents and clients non-stop throughout the pandemic.

Push for industry reform

THE organisers of a Facebook group urging change to the way the travel industry operates have lodged the next phase of their proposals for legislative reform.

The "Travel Industry Issues - The Need for Change for Australians" group was set up by Adam Glezer (*TD* 30 Nov 2020), and has been supporting consumers in their push for refunds and redress in the face of COVID-19 disruptions.

Glezer acknowledged many agents are doing the right thing and going through an extremely difficult time, but said the proposals aimed to lift transparency & ethical behaviour.

Changes suggested include a mandatory code of conduct, better protection of consumer funds, and the removal of financial incentives for agents.

The group is also pushing for all terms and conditions to be provided to customers at point of purchase, along with an itemised fee schedule and customer documentation to include details of wholesalers and any third parties involved in a booking.

Learn more French!

THE opportunity to learn more about the rich history on offer for travellers in Northern France can be accessed via Hauts de France.

The region is home to battlefields of World War I, medieval villages, beautiful bays and cathedrals.

See **page seven** to learn more about this amazing destination.

Tehan's high hopes

TOURISM Minister Dan Tehan has confirmed the Government is expecting international tourism to resume within 12 months.

Speaking on morning TV yesterday, Tehan said while the option of travel bubbles with places like NZ, Japan and Singapore was being kept open, "I think everyone's forecast is that everything going well, we would hope to be welcoming international tourists back this time next year".

He also urged consumers to be confident about booking cruises, assuring the public that "the cruise industry has done a lot of work to make sure that cruising is now COVID-safe" - more in today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

Virgin to match QF

VIRGIN Australia is expected to shortly announce that it will match the new flexible booking policy announced by Qantas (*TD* yesterday), with change and cancellation fees waived for all travel through until 31 Jan 2022, for bookings made by 30 Apr.

The carrier has also extended its Let The Good Times Fly sale until midnight AEDT on 15 Feb, with Economy one-way fares from \$75 including baggage, seat selection and Velocity points.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news including our **PUZZLE page** plus a front full page from **Tourism New Zealand** and a product profile from **Northern France Training**.

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NZ coach holidays

GRAND Pacific Tours (GPT) has released a new 84-page New Zealand Coach Holidays e-brochure to the market for the 2021/22 season.

The range of all-inclusive holidays includes three ways to travel, four styles of touring, 30 itineraries and more than 250 separate departures.

Grand Pacific Tours is also waiving any required deposits until Australia's border with New Zealand opens for two-way travel.

"Our team has been working hard to develop an enhanced range of itineraries utilising full size coaches with capacities of 20, 32 and 48 seats. Our position as the market leader for New Zealand coach touring has never been clearer," said Managing Director Peter Harding.



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Vox Group seeks local partners

A NEW walking tour platform released by Vox Group looks set for rapid expansion, with 25 cities around the globe to be on board by Apr and the organisation "particularly looking for partners in Australia and New Zealand".

Vox Tours Australasia MD Peter Smith told *Travel Daily* the group is seeing some light at the end of the tunnel in many markets, particularly since the rollout of vaccination schemes overseas.

"As a company that is a B2B supplier to travel businesses, we have noticed a definite global shift in attitude in the last three weeks or so, with partners moving much more aggressively to ramp up their product lines for recovery," he said.

The new Vox City Walks

program "ticks all the right boxes to meet the changed aspirations of travellers," with Gray Line City Sightseeing New York the most recent franchise partner to sign on for the system.

The "hop-on, hop-off" walking tour concept allows guests to enjoy live commentary from a local guide along with pre-recorded audio in multiple languages via the Vox City app.

A free webinar tomorrow will showcase the franchise offering which Smith said provided "easy takings" for the right partners - to register **CLICK HERE**.

NZ culture on show

TOURISM New Zealand is titillating the travel tastebuds of the industry, encouraging travel advisors to give their clients the cultural experience of a lifetime - see the **front page** for more.

APT Euro 2022 deals

APT has marked the launch of its Europe 2022 season with a range of special earlybird deals.

Offers include Business class flights from \$2,995 per person when bookings are made by 31 May for select itineraries that include a 14-night river cruise.

Other promotions include Fly to Europe packages from \$995, earlybird savings of up to \$2,000 per couple, and no solo supplements on select options.

For more details **CLICK HERE**.

ToursByLocals eyes Aussie agents

CANADA-BASED ToursByLocals is ramping up its trade and consumer focus in Australia by appointing a dedicated PR agency for the first time in Gate 7.

The company is calling on travel agents to improve their clients' travel experiences by booking commissionable expert-led tours that are tailored as an add-on to existing trips.

ToursByLocals also offers a **Find Your Cruise** portal designed to assist travellers in selecting shore excursions that match upcoming cruises, linking with brands such as Princess, Celebrity, Norwegian and P&O Cruise Lines.

"By registering with ToursByLocals, travel agents can use a dedicated agent portal to gain access to a large network of private guides in Australia, a minimum of 5% commission, and 24 hour customer support, making it extremely appealing," the company's Chief Executive Officer Paul Melhus said, claiming to have 500 Australian travel agents already signed up.

Register to join **HERE**.

Window Seat



SYDNEY Lodges has teamed up with The Wonderland Bar to offer special themed hotel rooms making guests feel like Alice peering through the looking glass.

Sydney Lodges GM Marousa Polias was on board immediately when approached by The Wonderland Bar with the partnership proposal, aimed at showcasing Bayswater Sydney's rooms as themed escapes.

Themed rooms currently on offer are the whimsical Mad Hatter room (**pictured**) and the Magical Wizard's Dorm - **CLICK HERE** to book today.



Bestjet meeting

PILOT Partners, the administrators of the collapsed Bestjet Travel Pty Ltd (**TD** 19 Dec 2018) have convened a meeting of the company's Committee of Inspection tomorrow.

A progress report will be presented, with the meeting to also discuss the administrator's future remuneration.

Picture yourself here...

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We will rebook this year

NEW research commissioned by IHG Hotels & Resorts has found that more than half of Australians have either rebooked or are planning to rebook their holidays in 2021 after being forced to cancel trips.

The study of 6,000 people conducted by OnePoll last month, including 2,000 Aussies, showed that 42% of people were forced to cancel between one and two trips in 2020, while 13% were frustratingly made to postpone between three and four holidays, with many noting the disappointment had taken a toll on overall mood and wellbeing.

Safety still ranks as a high concern for Aussie travellers, with 40% of adults stating they would wait until a vaccine is “easily and widely available” before travelling, higher than the US travellers (31%) but lower than prospective holidaymakers in the

United Kingdom (43%).

Overall, 27% of travellers indicated that a clean and safe surrounding on holidays impact their mood and wellbeing.

Positive psychological sentiment from taking a holiday is also on the rise for Australians in particular, with 22% noting they need a four- to six-week holiday a year in order to feel “refreshed”, with 57% also stating they feel better mentally and physically after taking a holiday.

Two in five respondents admitted the past year was the longest they had gone without taking a leisure trip, while 55% confessed to wanting to take a trip in order to escape from home and daily life.

Of the trips cancelled, seeing family and friends was the number one purpose for rebooking travel, followed closely by reclaiming a family holiday.

Outrigger Promise

OUTRIGGER Hotels & Resorts has launched The Outrigger Promise, vowing guests who don't love their Hawaii holiday accommodation will receive another stay for free.

Stays must be booked directly at Outrigger.com before 01 May for stays within the period of 01 Mar through 21 Dec.

Guests can also be reassured through Outrigger's cancellation policy, with fees waived within 24 hours prior to arrival.

Oceania hot cakes

OCEANIA Cruises has revealed its 2023 Around the World in 180 Days voyage has sold out within one day of opening for sale to the public on 27 Jan.

The global cruise also saw more than one-third of its bookings arrive from new-to-brand guests, a trend Oceania has noted across its entire suite of itineraries over the last 12 months.

QF eyes Sth Africa

QANTAS Airways is reportedly keen on restarting direct Perth-Johannesburg flights seven years after its codeshare from PER with South African Airways fell apart in 2014 (**TD** 24 Feb 2014).

The flights would be in addition to Qantas' established Sydney-Johannesburg route, but would also force the airline to navigate through its dispute with Perth Airport regarding its desire to run international operations through Terminals 3 and 4 as opposed to Terminal 1.

Recovery in 2023

EMIRATES President Tim Clark has forecast the aviation industry to return to its “former glory” by 2023, provided coronavirus is dealt with “meaningfully”.

Clark said he hoped Emirates would return to 2019 demand by 2023 and stated airlines would be able to recover without a major change to business models.



Silver Muse arriving in Sydney Harbour.

EXPLORE IN LUXURY, CLOSE TO HOME

In the summer of 2021/2022, we are excited to bring not one, but two of our luxury ships to New Zealand and Australian waters for the first time. The beautiful Silversea flagship, *Silver Muse* will arrive in Australian waters in December, with the award winning *Silver Shadow* arriving for her first complete season in our region in January 2022.

To celebrate the arrival of these two stunning ships and their all-inclusive itineraries, bookings made before **28 February** save 10% and select sailings can enjoy INCLUDED BUSINESS CLASS FLIGHTS*

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*T&Cs apply, visit silversea.com/terms-and-conditions.htm



Head to the *Travel Daily Training Academy* to find the answer and learn more about this and other destinations.

New PNG departures



ARCADIA Expeditions has introduced a new 16-day journey to Papua New Guinea, called *Voices on the Wind: 60,000 Years of Culture & Trade*.

The expedition explores the culture of Papua New Guinea in depth, venturing off the beaten track to three of the country's most fascinating regions – the Sepik (**pictured**), the New Guinea Highlands and the Coral Sea.

Led by renowned archaeologist Ben Shaw, the journey follows age-old trading routes, and features immersive experiences with colourful tribal groups.

With a very low amount of reported coronavirus cases, Arcadia is banking on Papua New Guinea opening up to Australia soon as part of a Pacific travel bubble, setting two departure dates in Nov 2021 and Nov 2022.

Voices on the Wind is also available for private departures, with a flexible range of dates in 2021 and 2022.

Find out more about the new PNG adventure **HERE**.

Growing the vines

AUSTRALIAN cycling tour operator Tour de Vines has notched up two consecutive record months of bookings as Aussies continue to show more interest for cycle trips during the COVID period.

"All our tours are available to sell by agents with industry level commission rates and we are starting to see some of the fruits of that effort," said founder Damian Cerini.

The company has recently introduced new cycling tours in Tasmania, NSW and Victoria, another factor Cerini believes has led to the recent sales spike.

"Many of our guests returning to travel with us again as int'l travel is off the radar has resulted in...a sustained surge in bookings," he added.

AFTA UPDATE

from the Australian Federation of Travel Agents

THIS week, AFTA CEO Darren Rudd is in Adelaide to meet with South Australian Premier Stephen Marshall on a number of occasions, and to connect with multiple AFTA members

as part of our community-based engagement program.

The purpose of the agent meetings is to hear first-hand the needs, challenges, aspirations and most importantly understand what additional support members need from AFTA.

It is also to enable members to ask any questions of the organisation.

AFTA would like to thank the following AFTA/ATAS members who are participating in the meetings this week: Angas Travel; Thor Travel; South America Tours SA; Holidays of Australia and Bunnik Tours; Travel Extra; italktravel & cruise Glynde; Phil Hoffmann Travel; John Abbott Travel; Axis Travel Centre; Island Travel; Oliver Travel; King William Travel; Peregrine Travel Centre; Adelaide Travel & Travelaffare.

We would also like to thank the following Helloworld Travel agencies Blackwood, Brighton,



afta

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF TRAVEL AGENTS

Elizabeth and Marion.

For this trip, we have chosen these members based on their proximity to Adelaide and will return to the state at a later date to connect with members in regional South

Australia.

Additionally, you may be aware that AFTA Chair, Tom Manwaring joined Darren at Parliament House last week for meetings with the Hon Dan Tehan MP, Minister for Trade, Tourism & Investment, Shadow Minister Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), Convention Bureaux and Kate Carnell Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (ASBFEO).

Both Tom and Darren are working through the actions resulting from these meetings and are preparing detailed responses to both the Minister and his support agencies.

Both Dan Tehan and Don Farrell are travelling this week during parliamentary recess to meet with agents in North Queensland to understand firsthand how agents are coping.

Longer quarantine?

AN EXTENSION of hotel quarantine has been floated by New South Wales Member for Keira Ryan Park after a traveller tested positive for coronavirus two days after leaving lockdown.

However the ACT Minister for Health Rachel Stephen-Smith has played down the idea, stating it would be an unlikely eventuality as testing happens prior to returning travellers board flights, effectively creating a test regime of longer than 14 days.

Pick your perk deal

WINDSTAR Cruises has launched its Pick Your Perk promotion, allowing travellers to either choose up to US\$1,000 of onboard spending money, one free hotel night on a European voyage, the Captain's exclusive beverage package, or unlimited wi-fi access, with the deal on offer for the rest of the month.

Deposits have also been reduced from 15% to just 5% of the cruise fare for all 2021 voyages - call 1300 749 875.

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.

R	O	B
D	M	D
E	B	A

Good – 16 words
 Very good – 24 words
 Excellent – 32 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 08 FEB

Where in the world: Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, Alberta, Canada

Pick the nation: Russia

Whose mascot is this: Youppi - Montreal Canadiens (hockey)

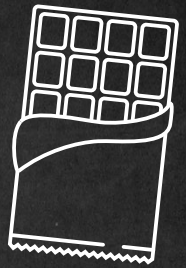
9	3	7	1	2	5	4	8	6
6	2	1	9	8	4	3	5	7
8	5	4	3	6	7	2	1	9
2	1	8	7	5	9	6	4	3
4	7	5	2	3	6	8	9	1
3	6	9	8	4	1	7	2	5
5	9	6	4	7	8	1	3	2
1	4	3	6	9	2	5	7	8
7	8	2	5	1	3	9	6	4

Get your chocolate fix

BELGIUM'S chocolate heritage dates back hundreds of years. Belgium is particularly known for the praline: chocolates with all sorts of wonderful fresh fillings.

This is VisitFlanders own chocolate mousse recipe, of course the secret is in using Belgian chocolate. Enjoy! Make sure to send your

recipes to
 chocolate@
 traveldaily.
 com.au.



xx Jenny

Jenny Piper
 Owner,
 Business
 Publishing
 Group



Belgian Chocolate Mousse

INGREDIENTS

- 170g bittersweet or semisweet Belgian chocolate, chopped
- 170g unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- 160ml dark-brewed coffee
- 4 large eggs, separated
- ⅓ cup, plus 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 tbsp dark rum
- 1 tbsp water
- Pinch of salt
- ½ tsp vanilla extract

METHOD

Fill a saucepan one-third full with hot water and heat it, and in a bowl set on top, melt together the chocolate, butter and coffee, stirring over the barely simmering water, until smooth. Remove from heat.

Fill a large bowl with ice water and set aside.

In a bowl large enough to nest securely on the saucepan of simmering water, whisk the yolks of the eggs with the 2/3 cup of sugar, rum, and water for about 3 minutes until the mixture is thick, like runny mayonnaise. (You can also use a handheld electric mixer.)

Remove from heat and place the bowl of whipped egg yolks within the bowl of ice water and beat until cool and thick. Then fold the chocolate mixture into the egg yolks.

In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites with the salt until frothy. Continue to beat until they start to hold their shape. Whip in the tablespoon of sugar and continue to beat until thick and shiny, but not completely stiff, then add the vanilla.

Fold one-third of the beaten egg whites into the chocolate mixture, then fold in the remainder of the whites just until incorporated. Don't overdo it or the mousse will lose volume. Transfer the mousse to a serving bowl or divide into serving dishes, and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, until firm.



Catch up on the February issue of *travelBulletin*, with stories on the vaccine debate, government grants and more.

CLICK to read

travelBulletin

Accor turns the key

ACCOR has commenced rolling out its new digital key solution internationally in an effort to bolster the company's strategy of making a guest's stay as contactless as possible.

Following successful pilot programs in North America, Europe and Asia, the digital key will be implemented in all new Accor hotels opening in 2021 and to at least 50% of its existing portfolio of properties over the next five years.

The new high-tech solution will see guests receive their room key virtually on arrival by using the Accor application, where customers can then access rooms, meeting spaces, lifts and select hotel amenities.

Qld tourism strategy

TOURISM and Events Queensland has released a new strategy document outlining how the state plans to restore its struggling tourism economy.

The commercial priorities for Qld will be to become the dominant Aussie voice in New Zealand, develop a rapid market reopening model and grow its market share of interstate travel.

Marketing campaigns will be primarily run across TV, radio, social, digital and out of home media, while tactical planning will focus on converting holiday interest, through either agent or direct channels, into bookings.

Most efforts will focus on NSW and Victoria, with an ad burst planned before and after Easter.

Rex at the ready



AS REGIONAL Express' (Rex) east coast launch approaches, the carrier's ground team at Sydney Airport gathered recently to mark the countdown to takeoff.

The team posed in front of one of the Boeing 737 aircraft that will service the company's routes between the major cities of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, joining the competitive domestic market occupied by Qantas and Virgin Australia.

Rex's Sydney Ramp Manager Ashley Vella paid homage to the knowledge and experience of the new ground team that will help propel the airline through its latest chapter of growth.

"With more than 100 years of airport experience between the 737 group (**pictured**), I have no doubt the operation and transition into the domestic market is going to be a smooth and successful one," Vella said.

"As we move closer to 01 Mar... we've been working hard behind the scenes to ensure everyone is ready to go," he added.

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.770

THE AUD/USD gained 0.3% as it returned to near three-year high levels, with the Australian dollar also higher again more broadly as global shares extended the large bounce seen at the end of last week.

The greenback gains were also influenced by the US market struggling in recent weeks after a period of speculative trading. *Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.770
UK	£0.560
NZ	\$1.07
Euro	€0.639
Japan	¥81.05
Thailand	฿23.10
China	¥4.97
South Africa	11.451
Canada	\$0.981
Crude oil	US\$59.34

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A guide to Northern France

The First World War left Northern France steeped in Australian history and remembrance.

The Australian Remembrance Trail along the Western Front links significant battlefields, cemeteries, memorials and museums all sharing their own experiences of the First World War.

Offering an introduction to the Australian Remembrance Trail, the Sir John Monash Centre uses state-of-the-art technology, to tell the stories of those who served here in their own words. Each visitor is invited to download the SJMC app, available for

free, which works as a virtual tour guide, allowing visitors to experience the site at their own pace and providing a seamless and deeply personal experience for visitors as they journey through the Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery, the Australian National Memorial and the Centre itself.

The charming region of Northern France is also filled with historical treasures and cultural delights. Discover a region with a beautiful mosaic of museums, medieval villages, royal chateaux and cathedrals. Aside from its stunning architectural heritage, the region of Northern France is an offering of picturesque villages and untouched nature reserves such as the Somme Bay, one of the most beautiful bays in the world and noted for its

ornithological richness.

From the Flemish elegance of the capital Lille, to the floating gardens of Amiens, or the chateaux of Chantilly and Pierrefonds as well as the stunning oak and beech trees in the Forrest of Compiègne, a visit to Northern France will be one rich in history, culture and nature.

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