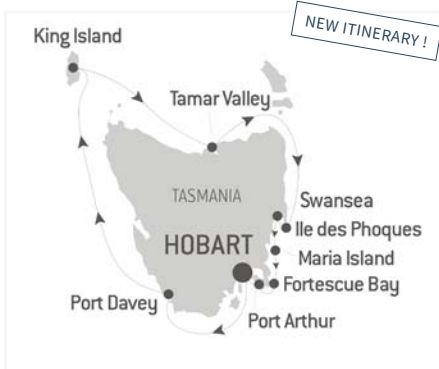


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\*Advertised price is based on the Ponant Bonus Fare, is per person, in Australian Dollars, based on a double occupancy in a Deluxe Stateroom, including port taxes, yield managed, correct at time of writing - 04/02/2020. Price is subject to availability and can change at any time. 1) Price based on 30 October 2021 departure. \*\*Surcharge may apply. ^30% discount is based on the Ponant Bonus offer. Ponant Bonus is yield managed and may change at any time without notice. #Welcome Offer: AUD\$800 discount is per stateroom based on double occupancy and only valid for guests travelling on their first PONANT cruise. This offer is based on availability, cannot be combined with other special offers unless specified and may be withdrawn at any time, without prior notice. Terms and Conditions apply, refer to au.ponant.com for more information Photographs © PONANT Nick Rains, Phillip Plisson / Adobe Stock. ABN: 35 166 676 517



### Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today has six pages of news including our PUZZLE page plus a front full page from Ponant.

### CX cuts flights

A NEW mandate by authorities in Hong Kong requiring 14 days of hotel quarantine for all pilots and cabin crew when they return to the city has seen Cathay Pacific suspend flights to a range of global destinations.

At this stage details are only available for the period 20-28 Feb, during which services to all ports in Australia except Sydney will cease to operate.

CX will continue to operate to Amsterdam, Los Angeles, New York and Toronto, as well as one way from Hong Kong to London, while LHR-HKG is suspended.

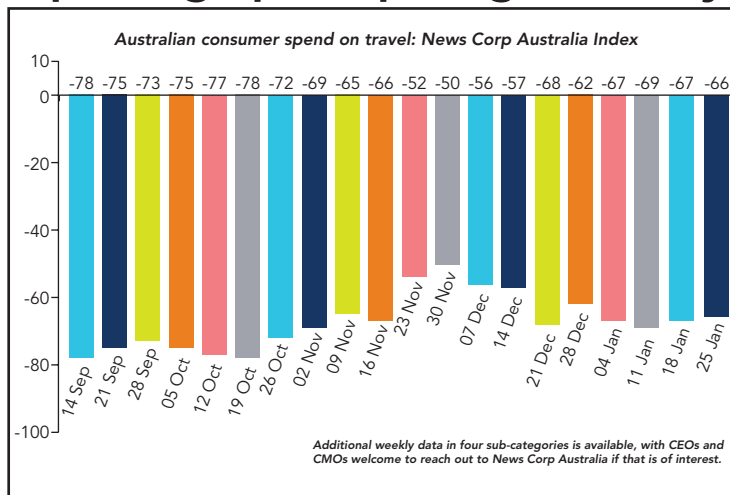
In Asia, Cathay Pacific is continuing to fly to Jakarta, Surabaya, Osaka, Tokyo, Manila, Singapore and Bangkok.

### WWT world sale

WENDY Wu Tours (WWT) is offering savings of up to \$2,000 per couple on tours to Japan, China, Southeast Asia, Latin America, Central Asia and the Middle East.

Specials are on offer for more than 80 late 2021 and 2022 tours, with places able to be secured on most trips with a \$99 deposit and no more to pay until 75 days before departure - 1300 727 998.

## Openings prompt flight frenzy



### EXCLUSIVE

THE reopening of Queensland and South Australia to residents of Greater Sydney two weeks ago created a spike in consumer travel spending, with the immediate reaction being to book flights.

The "flights under \$350" segment of News Corp Australia's consumer travel spending index (pictured) jumped a healthy 15% for the week of 25 Jan, and is now sitting at 40% lower than the same week 12 months ago.

The second biggest mover was a 5% week-on-week improvement in spending on cruise - a jump not seen since Jun last year.

"Something drove cruisers to drop some cash," said News Corp Head of Travel, Dwayne Birtles, saying a potential driver may have been the news of Royal Caribbean and Dream Cruises' successful COVID-safe operations in

Singapore, prompting oceangoers to believe that there may be a light at the end of the tunnel.

The Travel Agent and Tour Operator category is sitting at -74% year-on-year, up three points, but the week also saw a hefty 13% decline in the usually reliable accommodation category.

Birtles said that may have been due to the year-on-year change in the timing of Australia Day, with less people able to take advantage of a four day weekend in 2021 compared to last year.

### Triple QF points

QANTAS Business Rewards members are being offered triple Qantas points for any bookings of eligible domestic flights.

Companies must register and book between 09 and 15 Feb, for travel through to 31 Dec - more at [qantasagencyconnect.com](http://qantasagencyconnect.com).

### Ponant adds eight

PONANT has announced eight new Australian coastal itineraries, which will see two of the line's vessels deployed in local waters.

*Le Laperouse* and *Le Soleal* will operate from a range of homeports with departures ex Broome, Fremantle, Hobart and Cairns, with the season scheduled to commence from 22 Sep 2021.

Sales are now open, with interested clients urged to contact their travel agents as soon as possible to secure space, with pre-registrations for "at home" voyages very strong.

For more info see the front page as well as today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

### New English rules

INTERNATIONAL passengers arriving in England from next Mon will be required to have three self-funded COVID-19 tests, as well as undergo a mandatory 14-day quarantine period.

Arrivals from 33 "red list" countries such as Argentina, Brazil, South Africa and the UAE must complete the quarantine at an assigned hotel at their own expense, with an initial 4,600 rooms in 16 hotels contracted by the government.

Quarantine packages must be booked and paid for online prior to departure for the UK, and are priced at £1,750 for an individual travelling alone.

All outbound UK leisure travel is also currently banned.

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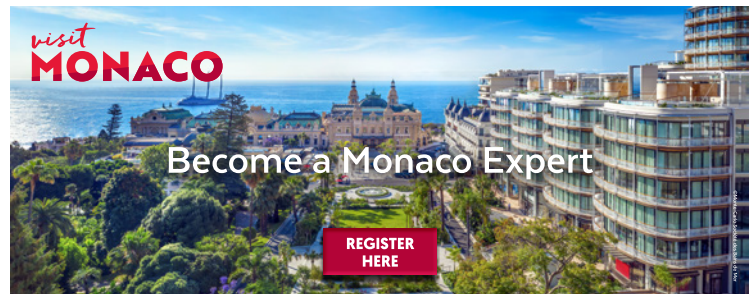
## Tasmania

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## ACCC ticks QF, MU pact

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has granted full approval for an Extended Joint Coordination Agreement between Qantas and China Eastern Airlines allowing them to coordinate operations through until 31 Mar 2023.

The carriers had previously cooperated under a 2015 approval which was set to expire last Oct, with an initial request which would allow the pact to continue until Mar next year.

The ACCC said that in times of more normal demand for services between Sydney and Shanghai, the lessening of competition would result in a "significant public detriment," but due to the COVID-19 pandemic there remains uncertainty about the extent and timing of a recovery.

The Commission said it considers that allowing the pact will assist both airlines to reinstate services as demand

picks up, and as it currently appears it will take longer than anticipated for travel between Australia and China to return to its pre-pandemic state the agreement has been authorised for two more years.

Key benefits include the extensive networks operated by both carriers in their respective countries, which are more easily accessed by passengers under the agreement.

The replacement of interline connection options with codeshares also helps reduce the risk of forfeiting non-refundable fares if the first sector in a journey is delayed, the ACCC said.

Reciprocal loyalty programs, the stimulation of tourism, simplified baggage processing and "faster and more sustainable reinstatement and potential growth in capacity between Australia and China" is likely, with the authorisation effective 20 Feb.

## All hands on Topdeck

FLIGHT Centre-owned youth operator Topdeck has hit back at media reports suggesting the company had been arbitrarily booking customers on trips without their consent.

Speaking with *Travel Daily* yesterday, the company's General Manager Global Sales David Gendle said that while clients were informed they had been "tentatively" booked on new departures to avoid price increases, nobody had been forced to accept travel bookings that didn't suit them.

"Obviously, the new tour dates would not suit all customers, so they were also provided with the following advice in writing: *This date doesn't suit you? Or want to talk options with me? Reply to this email with your questions, jump on our Topdeck website chat or pick up the phone and give me a call.*

"Most customers have either elected to keep the new trip booking or to leave the funds in credit, a minority asked for refunds - which they were entitled to - after receiving the communications and if the new dates didn't suit them or if they simply no longer wanted to travel," he said.

Gendle apologised for any confusion caused to travellers' future holiday plans, but insisted the approach had so far "generally been well received" by customers, given that many are looking forward to travelling when it is safe to do so.



A POPULAR theme park in Utah is struggling to shake, shake, shake off a bad Google search engine ranking, claiming pop superstar Taylor Swift's latest album has badly damaged its online presence.

Evermore Park is a fantasy amusement park populated by various knights and witches, but the only witch in its sights is Swift and her new album *Evermore*, which has kicked the park well down the Google search engine results list.

The park is also seeking more than US\$2 million in damages for alleged infringements of merchandise, which it claims is tantamount to counterfeiting.

Swift is yet to publicly acknowledge the suit, however music pundits are tipping that whatever she says, Kanye West is likely to interrupt.

## Melbourne Skal

SKAL International Melbourne will offer an opportunity to hear from City of Melbourne Director Tourism & Events, Louise Scott and her colleague Lucia Perera about recovery strategies for the city at an event next Thu 18 Feb.

To take place at Charcoal Lane in Fitzroy, tickets are available now including a two course meal and two hour beverage package.

Book at [melbourne.skal.org.au](http://melbourne.skal.org.au).

## NT Product Showcase 2021

Learn what's on offer in the NT



Meet NT tourism operators and win great prizes!

Starts 16 February, spaces are limited!

Register now at [tourismnt.com.au/trade/showcase](http://tourismnt.com.au/trade/showcase)



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## CORPORATE UPDATE

# Business spend plummets

**EXPENSE** management platform Coupa has released its latest quarterly report, finding a 96% year-on-year decline in business spending on air travel.

The study analysed billions of dollars in global spending by corporations using Coupa's system, with the update confirming a small uptick in business spend sentiment.

Travel and hospitality spend is down 86%, while the report also found a strong trend towards last-minute bookings, with the "days-in-advance purchase average" dropping by 38%.

Coupa Chief Economist Jeff Collins said while sentiment showed a modest improvement,

"a return to trend is unlikely until the number of new COVID cases reported daily has been significantly reduced.

"Although government action to combat the economic consequences of the pandemic has likely mitigated the depth of the downturn, we do not expect the US economy to return to 'normal' levels of output or employment in the next three to six months," he said.

Breaking down business confidence by sector, there was improvement in financial services and technology, while sentiment in health and life sciences, retail and manufacturing businesses remains stubbornly low.

For a more detailed breakdown see [www.spendindex.com](http://www.spendindex.com).

## NSW restrictions eased by Singapore

**TRAVELLERS** to Singapore from NSW will no longer be required to undergo a week-long quarantine, with new procedures effective from today seeing these passengers instead required to take a PCR test on arrival.

Short-term visitors to Singapore from NSW will also be able to access Singapore's Air Travel Pass program from 16 Feb - see [safetravel.ica.gov.sg](http://safetravel.ica.gov.sg).

**MEANWHILE** the proposed "Connect@Singapore" travel bubble for travellers with high economic value (*TD* 18 Dec 2020) has been stalled, apparently due to delays in finalising a suitable operator for the special quarantine facility.

The bubble plan allowed visitors to enter Singapore without quarantine to undertake business meetings in a dedicated location where they would be accommodated and undergo regular coronavirus testing.

It's still expected the facility could open sometime this quarter, with one proposed location at Singapore Expo to have 670 guest rooms and 170 meeting rooms.

## QF NDC on track

**AFTER** a brief hiatus at the start of the pandemic, the Qantas NDC technology team resumed its ongoing work on enhancing the Qantas Distribution Platform, with regular release cycles of new features every six weeks.

QF Head of Distribution, Nadine Dawood-Morgan told the *CAPA Live* conference this week that the roadmap was focused on modernising the flight shopping experience, with recent upgrades including the ability to access fares based on Qantas frequent flyer information (*TD* 03 Feb).

Dawood-Morgan said a key part of the strategy was to improve the ability to manage bookings, which had been particularly highlighted through the huge number of involuntary changes forced by rapid border changes during the pandemic.

"It's crucial for adoption of the QDP that the servicing is really solid and better than what we have today...we talk a lot about content with NDC and how exciting it is, but we know that without the servicing capability being amazing we won't get the volumes there for the content."



Travel Daily

### What time of year has the best weather in Thailand?

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

## 1000MTG get together



**IT HAS** definitely been a long time between drinks, so a get together for the 1000 Mile Travel Group (1000MTG) at Brisbane's Eagle Farm Racecourse this week was very welcome.

CEO Ben Ross hosted the group's Queensland team and their partners for lunch and a few winners, with the event undertaken with the much appreciated support of Qantas.

Ross said he looked forward to connecting more of the team across the country over the next couple of months.

## CT expansion

**MELBOURNE-BASED** conference and incentive specialist Tribe Travel is the latest addition to the CT Partners consortium, expanding the group to a total of 21 members.

Tribe is the second new CT Partners member for 2021, with In Travel Group, owned and managed by Dwayne Good, also joining CT last month.

Good is also in a joint venture with Helloworld via Inspire Travel Management (*TD* 31 Jan 2018).



Travel Daily

## NEWS ON THE FLY

# NEW EPISODE AVAILABLE!

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## Taking pride in our work



**VIRGIN** Australia will operate a special 'Pride Flight' from Brisbane to Sydney on Fri 05 Mar ahead of the annual Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

The flight will offer 200 seats and be hosted by Sydney drag queen royalty and Virgin Australia cabin crew member Penny Tration (pictured centre), with rates for Economy one-way flights priced from \$150, while Business class tickets will cost \$350.

Providing extra excitement mid-flight will be drag performances, bottomless beverages, DJ entertainment, in addition to a whole lot of glitter and rainbows.

"I'm incredibly proud of what Virgin Australia stands for in the community and our inaugural Pride Flight is going to be a unique celebration not to be missed," said Virgin Australia Group Chief People Officer Lisa Burquest.

## Sydney hotels flat

**OCCUPANCY** at Sydney hotels in Jan was at its lowest point since May 2020, according to the latest figures from STR.

Compared with Jan 2020, the month fell by 64.7% to 26.6%, with the Average Daily Rate also declining by 7.3% to \$191.20.

STR noted that confidence had been damaged significantly by ongoing snap border restrictions.

"A number of our team members identify as LGBTQ+ and we embrace the challenge to not only create an inclusive organisation where everyone can be their true self at work, every day, but an organisation that is representative of the communities in which we live, work and fly - the Pride Flight is a testament to that," she added.

Tickets for the COVID-safe flight went on sale last night and cancellation fees will be waived.

## Crown denies report

**THE** fallout following a recommendation to refuse Crown Resorts its gambling licence at Barangaroo continues, with the company forced to deny media reports today that its CEO Ken Barton plans to step down within days, according to the ABC.

In response, Crown Resorts said Barton had definitely not resigned & was currently "considering his position" in light of the findings by NSW's Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority.

**MEANWHILE** the personnel changes on the board continue after two directors stepped down yesterday, with Andrew Demetriou tendering his resignation overnight.

He has also stepped down from his role as Chairman of Crown Melbourne Limited.

# TTIH North Sydney closure

**THE** continued uncertainty around COVID-19 has seen The Travel Industry Hub (TTIH) founders Richard Taylor and Luke Crawford make the tough decision to close the North Sydney premises which have provided such a lifeline to the industry through the pandemic.

Taylor will now focus on continuing to grow the online community being built at The Travel Community Hub.

"It's evident from the reaction of visitors to TTIH that a dedicated work, meeting and event space for the industry is a fantastically positive thing, and so closure of the physical space is a temporary setback for a project that has great opportunity when the time is right," he said.

Over the last 12 months TTIH hosted more than 150 online and in-person events reaching thousands of people across the industry, with The Travel Community Hub to continue connecting the sector online - see [thetravelcommunityhub.com](http://thetravelcommunityhub.com).

Webinars to support the

## Meet MSC's Rob



**MSC** Cruises has announced the debut of the new MSC Starship Club which will be available on board the line's new flagship *MSC Virtuosa* when she enters service on 16 Apr this year.

The club is an "integrated bar and entertainment experience" featuring Rob (pictured), claimed to be the first ever humanoid robotic bartender at sea.

Guests will use "vertical digital cockpits" to place drink orders with Rob, who can speak eight languages and has an LED face to convey his robotic emotions.

Cosmic cocktails are served in souvenir glasses, and the venue features immersive digital art, 3D holograms and a "digital interactive table" allowing guests to explore space on their own personal galactic tour.

industry will continue, with "accidental lobbyists" Jo Francis and Christine Ross-Davies appearing this afternoon at 5pm (AEDT) in an unmissable session to discuss their tireless efforts on everyone's behalf.

The webinars are accessible to The Travel Community Hub members, with a free two-week trial membership now available by **CLICKING HERE**.

**MEANWHILE** next week a special session will feature CATO Chairman Dennis Bunnik from Bunnik Tours, who will be speaking with *Travel Daily* publisher Bruce Piper the day after Bunnik meets with Tourism Minister Dan Tehan in Canberra.

The CATO/*Travel Daily* webinar, titled "On Your Marks, False Starts" takes place live online at 9.30am (AEDT) next Wed 17 Feb - to register **CLICK HERE**.

[Register for FREE](#)

## New online maps

**GREAT** Britain's official mapping agency Ordnance Survey (OS) has launched its popular walking and cycling app, OS Maps, in Australia.

Australia is the first country outside the UK to have access to the platform, which Ordnance Survey says features accurate mapping and routes to help people "explore more and create their own adventures on and off the beaten track".

The app is free, with an optional premium subscription service providing unlimited access to more detailed mapping, routes and features.

OS Maps will also roll out in NZ, Canada and the USA during 2021 - see [osmaps.com](http://osmaps.com).

## TG to slash fleet

**THAI** Airways has been granted a final one-month extension of the deadline to submit its formal rehabilitation plan, with Thailand's Central Bankruptcy Court approving a request allowing the lodgement by 03 Mar.

The carrier has confirmed widespread job losses as part of the survival plan, with hundreds of pilots to be laid off and the expected permanent retirement of all of its Boeing 747s, Airbus A380s and Airbus A330s.



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Travel Daily

## Icon under a microscope



**THIS** landmark is iconic and easily recognisable when you see the whole picture, but can you identify it from this small portion of the image?

This window, and two others just like it, is one of the most

famous features of this cathedral, which is one of the most widely recognised symbols of the city it is in.

The building is also one of the first to use rib vault and flying buttresses in its construction.

## Test your knowledge

**FOR** travel, flying is a key part of our industry, and it's also full of symbols and acronyms.

Agents have to know airport codes, airline codes, airline liveries and more.

How well do you know the aviation industry? Do you know what airports these codes stand for, and what plane liveries are pictured?

### AIRPORT CODES

1. RGN
2. CAI
3. BHQ
4. KEF

2



### AIRLINE LIVERIES

1



3

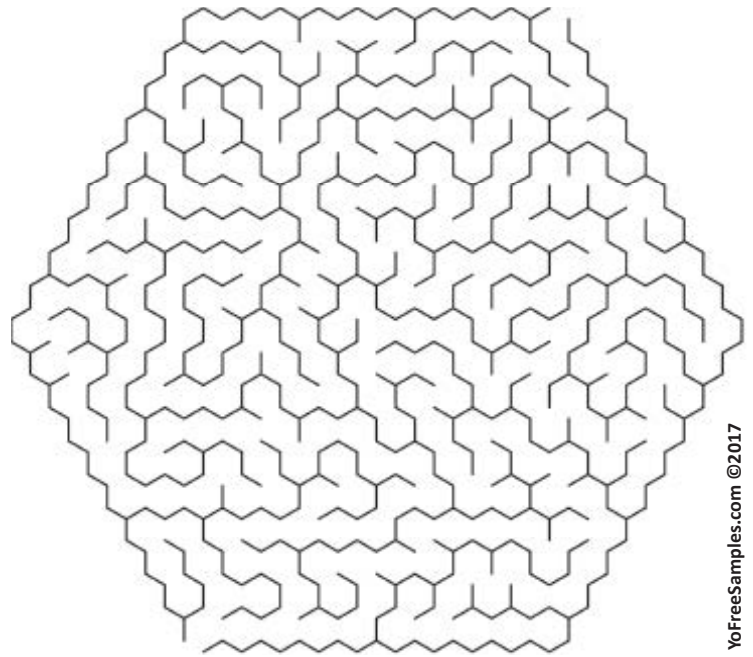


## Pub quiz

1. Kovalam Beach is found in which country?
2. Milan is the capital of which Italian region?
3. Thimphu is the capital of which country?
4. The Bowery is a neighbourhood in which city?
5. Nobby's Head is a headland welcoming ships into which Australian city?
6. Which American state's citizens are referred to as "Cornhuskers"?
  - a) Idaho
  - b) Nebraska
  - c) Ohio
7. The Airbus A380 was first delivered to which airline in October 2007?
8. In which city can you visit Prek Toal bird sanctuary?
9. Southeast Asia's Golden Triangle is the area where the borders of which three countries meet?
10. What theme park is located within Penny's Bay?

## A-maze-ing

**CAN** you find your way through this maze? Start at the top right corner and finish in the bottom left.



YoFreeSamples.com ©2017

### ANSWERS 11 FEB

Where in the world: Mulu Pinnacle, Sarawak, Malaysia

Know your brands: 1 Crystal Cruises, 2 Australian Super, 3 Hermes, 4 Ferrari

Whose animal is this: Turquoise-browed motmot - El Salvador



## SeaDream local VP

SEADREAM Yacht Club has appointed Rune Grenager to be its new Vice President Sales for Europe and Australia.

The Oslo-based Grenager is known to be a big supporter of working with the travel trade and had previously held the role of Account Director with the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group.

"His great standing in the travel agent community and his extensive experience in the travel industry will be a great asset to our SeaDream family," said Executive VP Andreas Brynstad.

Before the pandemic struck and the line was forced to cancel cruises, the Australian market accounted for roughly 10% of SeaDream's global sales.

## New lookout at Wineglass Bay

THE visitor experience at Tasmania's iconic Wineglass Bay has been improved with the opening of a new lookout area.

The aim of the new \$700k viewing platform, which was jointly funded by the National Tourism Icons Package and the Tasmanian Government, is to reduce congestion at peak times and provide travellers to the area with multiple viewing angles.

"Wineglass Bay is one of Tasmania's premier tourist attractions, and it's important the facilities match the expectations of visitors," said Tasmania's Assistant Minister for Forestry, Fisheries and Industry Development Jonno Duniam.

## TRAVEL SPECIALS

WELCOME to Travel Specials, *Travel Daily's* Friday feature. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of, send the details to [specials@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:specials@traveldaily.com.au)

**Intrepid Travel** is offering 10% off all of its Tasmania trips for bookings made until 15 Mar. Highlights include the six-day Trek the Cradle Mountain Overland Track trip, which was priced at \$2,125 per person for a multishare room, now only \$1,913 per person. Call 1300 458 437 for info.

Guests can book with **MSC Cruises** and save 50% on the price of a second person as part of its new Valentine's Day promo. The offer kicks off today on select sailings in the Mediterranean from 26 Mar 2022 to 20 Nov 2022 on most cabins. Deal ends 12 Mar. Call 1300 028 502 for info.

A further 5% off **Insight Vacations'** journeys is on offer for Club Bon Voyage members, a deal that can be used in addition to the brand's global 20% Take Off sale. The offer is valid from now through to 28 Feb, with final payments able to be made until 30 Mar. [CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

Savings of up to 40% on cruises are available when customers book a sailing via **Cunard's** special Valentine's Day sale. Guests can choose from a selection of two-, three- and five-night sailings between Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide during the months of Dec 21 and Jan and Feb 22. The deal is valid until 17 Feb. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.



## SIA all clear for take off



**SIA** Group carriers Singapore Airlines, SilkAir and Scoot have commenced operating services with a fully vaccinated crew of pilots and cabin staff.

The first service with a full set of vaccinated crew was flight SQ956, which departed Singapore for Jakarta on 11 Feb, closely followed by Scoot's TR606 which departed for Bangkok.

The aviation industry has been a top vaccination priority for the Singapore Govt which had previously noted the importance of rebooting travel as soon as possible, with SIA staff quick to sign up for their job in order to

get in the air sooner.

"We are very encouraged by the strong take-up rate for the vaccine from our colleagues," CEO Choon Phong said.

"Vaccinations will be key to the reopening of borders and to enhancing travel confidence, in tandem with robust testing regimes and the wide-ranging safe management measures that are in place on the ground and in the air," he added.

**Pictured:** Crew from the first batch of fully vaccinated flights.

## Govt backs Air NZ

THE NZ Government has confirmed its intentions to participate in an equity raising for Air NZ set to take place 30 Jun.

The govt said the airline's ongoing commitment to green initiatives was one of the reasons.

## Paris terminal binned

THE French Government has decided to abandon its plan to build a new fourth terminal at the Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris.

The decision was made in light of the pandemic's adverse effect on air traffic, as well as climate change considerations, with the French transport authorities labelling the project "obsolete".

Got a confidential tip? Contact *Travel Daily* via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or [click HERE](#)