

SQ digital trial

SINGAPORE Airlines has started trials on a new digital health verification process which links to an IATA platform to automatically check the authenticity of passenger COVID-19 tests.

Initially being piloted for travel from Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur, customers who take pre-flight coronavirus tests at selected clinics in each city will be given either digital or paper health certificates with a QR code.

Airport check-in staff and immigration authorities in Singapore will be able to verify that the certificates are genuine via a secure mobile app, and thus ensure that the customers meet Singapore's entry requirements.

The back-end information is being provided by IATA's Timatic registry, as part of the Association's modular Travel Pass solution which aims to allow travellers to manage their trips in line with COVID-19 testing and vaccination requirements.

Labor blasts grant scheme

THE Australian Labor Party has joined the chorus of voices concerned about the implementation of the \$128m travel agent support scheme (**TD** 01 Dec), citing "significant issues with the way the program is proposed to operate".

Just before Christmas, Shadow Minister for Tourism, Don Farrell, wrote to the outgoing Simon Birmingham and his replacement Dan Tehan (see **page three**), describing "disbelief and anger" from agents about the way the payments are calculated.

The ALP move came the day after AFTA confirmed that it had not been given the opportunity to review and comment on the detail of the support package before the implementation was announced (**TD** breaking news).

"As a result there are multiple flaws in the approach which are creating unnecessary confusion and strain at the end of an

already challenging year," said AFTA Chairman Tom Manwaring.

While appreciating and valuing the spirit of the scheme, he said "the design of the program has failed in its noble purpose," citing disparity in the support tiers (**TD** 17 Dec) and other problems around eligibility.

The issues mean many agencies who report based on TTV will receive the maximum \$100,000 grant under the program, which will in turn see the \$128 million only support 1,280 businesses.

Adding to the frustration for agents over the holiday period was a scheduled 11-day outage in the PRODA identity system used to lodge applications, which only came online again today.

An incorrect help line number listed on the required "certificate of tax information" from the Tax Office also meant it was difficult to obtain clarification of the details required for applications.

Today's issue of TD

This is the first issue of *Travel Daily* for 2021, and we want to wish all of our readers all the best for what surely must be an improvement on the last 12 months!

Today's issue has five pages of news including our popular PUZZLE page.

C&M closure

MELISSA Schembri has confirmed the shutdown of the C&M Travel Recruitment office in Sydney, after more than 20 years working in travel recruitment.

Schembri, whose commitment was highlighted last year as a key supporter of the Travel Industry Hub Survive & Revive sessions (**TD** 19 Mar), will take a break and enjoy time with her family.

She said she was grateful for her time in travel, telling **TD** "I count myself very lucky to have assisted some of the most inspiring leaders in our industry".

Travel Daily



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EK Premium Economy launch

EMIRATES has unveiled its long-anticipated Premium Economy product, which is rolling out on six new Airbus A380s, as well as some of its Boeing 777X aircraft due to join the fleet in 2023.

The first A380 with the new cabin arrived last week, with EK President Tim Clark saying “while others cut back, Emirates is working hard to restore the products and services that we’ve had to suspend or adjust due to pandemic precautions, and introduce new offerings and enhancements”.

He said the Emirates Premium Economy product had been developed in line with the carrier’s brand positioning as a “full-service airline of the highest quality,” with 56 seats in an A380 in a 2-4-2 cabin layout at the front of the main deck.

Norfolk quarantine

VISITORS to Norfolk Island from Greater Sydney, Central Coast, Illawarra, the Shoalhaven, Nepean and the Blue Mountains region are now required to quarantine for 14 days at home or in rental accommodation at their own cost.

The island’s authorities said they were responding to the Northern Beaches COVID-19 cluster, and would continue to monitor the situation with a view to hopefully removing the quarantine requirement as soon as possible.

The latest EK superjumbo also features slightly larger First class private suites, a refreshed Business class cabin and onboard lounge, and updated Economy seats with leather headrests and flexible side panels to provide optimum in-flight support.

The new EK A380 premium economy cabin can be viewed at traveldaily.com.au/videos.

Rex looks livery

REGIONAL Express has taken delivery of the first of its Boeing 737-800NG jet aircraft in full Rex livery, with the plane touching down in Sydney on Christmas Eve.

The airline’s second 737 is currently being painted in Wagga Wagga, with the remaining four jets on order undergoing scheduled checks and will arrive in the country over the next three months, according to Rex Deputy Chairman John Sharp.

“The livery of Australia’s favourite regional airline is now emblazoned on a 737, ready for take-off...it’s an historic moment.”

Rex expects to operate its first Melbourne-Sydney flight on 01 Mar, with Brisbane to be added to the carrier’s new capital city jet network after Easter.



Vale Fiona Tansley



THE Australian travel sector is mourning the death of Fiona Tansley (nee Reading) who lost her battle with cancer on 30 Dec.

Tansley (**pictured**), known to many industry friends as Fifi, worked with Qantas for more than 20 years between 1987 and 2007, and was one of the carrier’s most highly regarded sales executives before she moved to New Zealand to start a family with her husband Nick.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a celebration of her life will be held in Sydney later in 2021.

Hands On Journeys cancels AFTA/ATAS

HANDS On Journeys has confirmed its voluntary withdrawal from AFTA and ATAS, with founder Simla Sooboodoo telling *Travel Daily* she has pulled out because with health concerns and continued travel restrictions, “it wouldn’t be possible to run a Hands On Journeys kind of tour any time soon”.

The irrepressible Sooboodoo has pivoted to a floristry business called SLAK Flowers which provides opportunities for the homeless (*TD* 10 Nov), with a formal launch planned for Feb.

Southwest adds

US-BASED low cost carrier Southwest Airlines is expanding its presence in California, with planned additions including services to Santa Barbara (SBA) and Fresno (FAT) in Q2 2021.

Ponant NZ cruises

THE relentless efforts of Ponant Chair Sarina Bratton to lobby for a restart of small ship cruising in the region have proven fruitful, with the line’s *Le Laperouse* given approval to operate domestic NZ voyages from next month.

The initial voyage, a 14-night Chatham Island and Subantarctic Islands expedition, is scheduled to depart on 08 Feb, with subsequent coastal departures planned taking in Stewart Island, Doubtful Sound, Milford Sound and Dusky Sound.

Bratton said “this is an important step forward and it takes us closer to the time when borders re-open and cruising resumes in Australia”.

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia MD Joel Katz said the domestic operations planned by Ponant in NZ were an example of the carefully controlled regional approach proposed for the resumption of restricted cruise operations in the region.

He confirmed that CLIA had outlined extensive new health protocols to governments on both sides of the Tasman as part of a global response to COVID-19 by the cruise industry.

SA hotel breaches

ALMOST 100 security guards have been stood down or sacked in South Australia after breaching a variety of protocols while overseeing the state’s COVID-19 quarantine hotel program.

A list of breaches was provided by SA Police Commissioner Grant Stevens to a parliamentary committee last month, with the details released by the state opposition yesterday.

Transgressions cited included sleeping on the job, a failure to wear personal protective equipment, turning up to work intoxicated, posting videos from inside medi-hotels on social media, and impersonating a military officer to obtain parking privileges.

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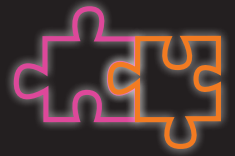
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Murray still open

MURRAY River Paddlesteamers Managing Director Rohan Burgess has blasted the Victorian COVID Hotline for allegedly misinforming Victorians that they are currently forbidden from sailing on the Murray River due to COVID.

“The river is open for business as long as people do not land on the northern side of the river,” Burgess said, while also flagging the company expects to receive an exemption to operate accommodated cruises which moor on the NSW side of the river before cruises recommence again in Feb.

Current government health advice states that a person may leave Victoria to travel along the Murray River, but only if the person does not set foot on the banks of the Murray River on the NSW side of the river.

Contiki slashes 2021

CONTIKI is currently giving guests up to 30% off 2021 trips to anywhere in the world when bookings are made by 07 Jan.

Trips costing less than \$1,500 per person under the deal include the seven-day NZ North Island Off-Grid tour which explores Rotorua, Auckland, Raglan, as well as the eight-day Croatia Island Sail Plus package, taking in cities like Dubrovnik, Hvar & Split.

The promotion is also applicable with Contiki’s no-risk \$99 deposit.

Call 1300 856 157 for further information on the promo.

MSC unveils 2022

MSC Cruises has unveiled more information about its 2022 collection, which will officially be open for sale soon.

Details include a series of seven-night cruises in the Mediterranean, special long cruises from Genoa in Italy, two-to 21-night sailings in Nth Europe & two ships in the Caribbean.

MSC also revealed that for the first time, two vessels will be based in Asia in 2022.

Tehan takes over tourism

AUSTRALIA has a new Trade and Tourism Minister following a recent cabinet reshuffle, with Dan Tehan assuming the portfolio from Simon Birmingham who had spent more than two years in the role (**TD** breaking news 18 Dec).

The Victorian-based Tehan was previously the Minister for Education for over two years and before that was Minister of Social Services for seven months.

Upon being sworn in as the new Minister in charge of Tourism, Tehan noted he would “work hard” to grow and promote Australia’s tourism sector through what continues to be a very challenging period for the industry.

“My electorate of Wannon is a popular tourist destination, so I have seen first-hand the jobs and businesses that it supports and its importance to the life of our nation and, in particular, regional communities,” he said.

“Australia is a world-leading tourist destination that offers incredible attractions, activities and services, I will be proud to represent Australian tourism to the world,” Tehan added.

Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) Chief Executive Officer Margy Osmond labelled Tehan’s appointment as a “strong choice” from the government.

“TTF has a good relationship with new Tourism Minister Tehan who will bring a strong regional

Victorian perspective and fresh set of eyes to the ongoing challenges facing the tourism sector,” she said.

Meanwhile, Australian Tourism Industry Council Executive Director Simon Westaway said Tehan’s appointment arrives at a “critical” time for the tourism sector regarding policy positions.

“Tourism is a major economic pillar, employing one in 12 Australians, but the financial and operational challenges now before us due to the impacts of COVID remain,” he said.

“Sustaining open domestic borders and the confidence that they stay open is what gets Australians truly travelling and again we call for a nationally consistent approach to virus hotspots,” Westaway added.

On exiting his position as Tourism Minister, Simon Birmingham heralded the Federal Government’s ongoing plan to support the tourism industry, including targeted assistance packages and \$231.6 million in funding for Tourism Australia to ramp up domestic marketing.



Window Seat

ANYBODY keen to travel to Donald Trump International Airport? Well your bizarre wish may soon be a reality if White House sources are any indication, with the outgoing Commander-in-chief reportedly enquiring about the idea.

The sources, who wished to remain anonymous, have suggested the likely targets for the Trumpian rebrand would either be Miami International Airport, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International or Palm Beach International.

If any renaming were to be approved, the latter suggestion of the three has been tipped as the hot favourite, with Republican Party official Christian Ziegler suggesting it would become a “South Florida gateway for the former president’s adoring fans”.

Whether or not all of the hub’s décor would need to be rebranded orange remains unknown.

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Travel & Cruise
Weekly

THE aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Each number can only be used once in each row, once in each column, and once in each of the 3x3 boxes.

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

www.sudokuoftheday.com - visit them and get a new Sudoku every day!

Where in the world?



THIS is an indoor stadium, built with a special plastic roof and walls in order to allow teams to continue to play even in inclement weather (which is the city where it is located in experiences during winter, with cold temperatures and snow). It was built in 2016 and is the

home ground of an NFL team.

The roof of the stadium was originally designed to be retractable but that was too expensive - they used plastic instead and it is the largest in North America.

Do you know where in the world this stadium is?

Pick the nation

COUNTRIES have unique geography, ethnicities and cultures which come together to often form very distinctive symbols.

Based off the four different symbols and famous faces, see if you can figure out which country they represent.

1



2



3



4



Whose mascot is this?



THIS mascot was "hatched" in 2005, designed by a school child whose entry won a competition sponsored by the sports team he represents.

"Screech" is a bald eagle, who

wears the cap and uniform of the team and, according to his nine-year-old designer, is "strong and eats almost everything."

Do you know whose mascot this is?

ANSWERS 18 DEC

Pub quiz: 1 Seattle, 2 Sweden, 3 Las Vegas, 4 Queensland, 5 Cairns Airport, 6 British Columbia and Yukon, 7 Inuit, 8 Arctic, 9 Under, Iceland's population is 364,000, 10 Denmark and Germany, 11 Goulburn (goal + burn)

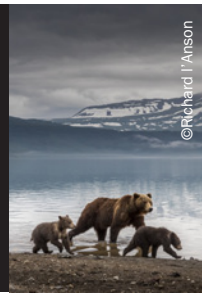
Whose flag is this: Georgia

Unscramble: afoot, fain, faint, fair, farm, faro, fiat, firm, foam, font, foot, footman, forint, form, formant, format, FORMATION, fort, frit, from, front, info, inform, infra, motif, naif, raft, rift, roof



Read about the change to Celebrity's pricing and what Aurora is doing to protect deposits in the December issue of *travelBulletin*.

travelBulletin



Globus/Cosmos deal

GLOBUS and sister brand **Cosmos** are offering a range of early booking incentives for Europe and North America itineraries departing in 2022.

The deals include 10% discounts on Globus Europe & North America trips, 5% reductions across Cosmos Europe & North America itineraries, and all 2022 product at 2021 prices when deposits are made.

Additionally, Globus is offering \$140pp savings on group bookings of 10 people or more, while \$70pp discounts are available on Cosmos 2022 tours. The promotion ends 31 Jan.

Coral plots growth

CORAL Expeditions has announced plans to expand its domestic itineraries this month and reintroduce *Coral Adventurer* to the market, revealing new sailings exploring South Australia, as well as the coral reefs and islands of WA and Queensland.

The new voyages include a 12-night cruise from Cairns to Brisbane departing 22 Jan and exploring the Great Barrier Reef and the Coral Sea, priced from \$6,990ppts for a Stateroom.

Also on offer is a 10-night Adelaide to Adelaide departing 10 Feb, and visiting Kangaroo, Hopkins & Wedge Islands.

Hopping ahead with more



TASMANIA-BASED brewery tour company, The Brew Hop, has expanded its range of tours in 2021, offering new visits to breweries, distilleries and cider mills across the state.

The company had initially only offered walking tours of Hobart's independent breweries, Shambles, T-Bone and Hobart Brewing Co, but on the back of growing market demand, this has expanded to more than 40 breweries, 30 distilleries and 10 cider-houses in Tasmania.

Stoking particular interest are breweries located in the north of the state which are typically difficult to access, with The Brew Hop offering the only drive tours of the attractions, making it easier for travellers to visit.

"There are some fantastic producers in Tasmania, and we wanted to be able to have people see them in their environment, talking about what they love," said owner Harrison Westlake.

"We're proud to offer a

personalised experience, by keeping our group numbers small, everybody gets a high level of interaction with the people at the breweries and distilleries.

"With Tasmania re-opening, we see this as a great time to start offering a service that lets people see as much as they can, with as much ease as possible," Westlake added.

Pictured: Some beer tasting in action on a Brew Hop tour.

Fraser coast cruise

TASMAN Venture has introduced a new private charter experience for the Fraser Coast, offering travellers multi-day cruises of Fraser Island and Lady Elliot Island on the Southern Great Barrier Reef.

One-, two- and three-day sailings are on offer, and includes meals, cruises of less than 12 passengers, and all activity equipment hire such as snorkelling gear and kayaks.

BROCHURES

WELCOME to Brochures of the Week, *Travel Daily's* Monday feature. If your firm is releasing a new brochure you'd like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description summarising its features and itineraries, including a PDF of the front cover, and contact details to brochures@traveldaily.com.au.



Contiki Holidays - 2021 Australia
Contiki Holidays has gone to press with its 2021 Australia brochure. Contiki's program hinges on the pillars of "living like a local", such as enjoying breakfast with koalas and sailing the Whitsundays. Trips also stay in style in funky beachfront hostels, include small groups varying from 10 to 30 travellers; and journeying with the ultimate travel guides, all of whom are Australian locals. Cultural, and wellness experiences are also highlighted.



Wendy Wu Tours - 2021-22 China
Wendy Wu Tours' new 2021-22 China brochure provides a range of tours to the country, as well as surrounding destinations such as South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Tibet. The season will see Wendy Wu host a number of tour styles, such as classic, taking travellers to the tourist hotspots; private, allowing guests their own personal guide; and go beyond, taking journeyers off the beaten path. There are also tailor-made tours available.

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