

## AFTA empty roles

**THE** Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) has confirmed its Board will discuss what is happening with the now two vacant Director roles at its next meeting in Feb.

The normally 12-strong Board has been depleted by the resignation of former Magellan Travel Group MD Andrew Macfarlane who retired in Dec (**TD** 25 Nov), as well as the untimely death of CT Partners GM Ian Edwards (**TD** yesterday).

Under the AFTA Constitution, the Board “may, but is not obliged to” appoint new Directors to fill the casual vacancies.

## P&O suspends NZ

**P&O** Cruises Australia is planning to commence a 150-day New Zealand season in Jul, following an extension of its pause in operations in the country to 25 Apr.

*Pacific Explorer’s* operations were previously paused to 04 Mar, and have now been extended again, having initially been scheduled to sail from Auckland on 06 Feb.

President Sture Myrmell said the new year brought renewed optimism, and that P&O Australia was continuing to work with governments and public health authorities, predicting “much better days lie ahead”.

More of the latest cruise industry news available in today’s issue of *Cruise Weekly*.



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## Grant BAS changes blocked

**EXCLUSIVE**

**TRAVEL** agents are no longer able to amend their Business Activity Statements (BAS) to reflect TTV rather than business income in order to access higher tiers of support through the Government’s COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support Program, in the latest twist in the rollout of the controversial \$128m scheme (**TD** breaking news).

An update to the program’s eligibility guidelines which became effective last Mon 04 Jan now stipulates that the Australian Tax Office certificate supplied to establish the level of support for each business will reflect the “G1” sales figures for 2019 which had previously been reported effective from 14 Dec, the date the grant program launched.

There has been huge confusion over the program and how support levels are based on this G1 BAS figure, with wide disparities in how agents report their financials and AFTA describing the program as having “multiple flaws”.

It’s understood that the G1 figure is used by the Government as a way of tracking the performance of the economy, and so the inconsistencies in reporting have not impacted tax payable by individual travel agencies and have thus not been particularly relevant until now.

However with the grants program using this inconsistent figure as the basis for payments,

the issue means that identical sized businesses receive wildly varying levels of support.

It’s believed the 04 Jan amendment to the program was rapidly introduced as officials realised that many agents who were restating their G1 figure to reflect TTV would receive significantly higher payments than expected - meaning the \$128 million funding pool was likely to be quickly exhausted.

The change is not retrospective, meaning those who were quick enough to amend figures and lodge prior to last Mon will receive higher levels of support - which could be up to \$100,000 or as much as five times what they were expected to get under the program’s initial design.

A FAQ document added to the grants website provides an option for agents who still hope to amend their G1 figure by calling Services Australia on 1800 560 774, with enquiries to be referred to Austrade for consideration.

Details of the updated guidelines can be accessed at [austrade.gov.au](http://austrade.gov.au).

## Today’s issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today has five pages of news including our PUZZLE page.

## Quarantine-free travel for NZ to BNE

**AIR** New Zealand will fly to BNE quarantine-free from tomorrow after brokering a deal with Australian authorities.

Pax are required to complete the Australia Travel Declaration form stating they have been in NZ for the preceding 14 days.

NZ147 will depart Auckland at 7.40am Auckland time and arrive in Brisbane at 8.25am.

## Govt rebukes QF

**FOLLOWING** Qantas’ decision to start selling int’l tickets from Jul (**TD** yesterday), Deputy PM Michael McCormack has reiterated that the government will officially make those calls, not private enterprises.

“Borders will be opened when international arrivals do not pose a risk to Australians...decisions about when int’l travel resumes will be made by the Aust Govt”.

# Catch up on the news of the week



Travel Daily

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Skroo Turner on Flight Centre, the pandemic and what the future holds for the business and industry - read it all in our exclusive interview in the December issue of *travelBulletin*.

travelBulletin



## Qantas, JAL plot alliance

**QANTAS** and Japan Airlines have lodged an application for a Joint Business Agreement which will see them coordinate activities to rebuild flight operations "between and within Australia/New Zealand and Japan".

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is currently seeking feedback on the proposal, which the carriers say is "critical to sustainably restoring air links" between the countries.

Combined, they say they will be able to offer increased frequencies and improved connectivity over a more diverse number of city pairs, which will drive consumer confidence and rebuild the "crippled tourism industries and state and regional economies" across the region.

Qantas is currently not operating any flights to Japan, while JAL has maintained thrice weekly Tokyo-Sydney flights.

The proposed pact would expand the existing QF-JL codeshare relationship to add 29 new ports, including expanded

cooperation on the Tasman.

If approved, the plan would also have a "broader restorative effect by helping to support the reinstatement of capacity across other parts of Qantas' international network" the submission claims.

Qantas and JAL are seeking urgent interim authorisation of the deal, while the ACCC has invited submissions by 29 Jan.

## Fed Govt must take control of borders

**ADELAIDE** Airport Managing Director Mark Young is calling on the Federal Government to take formal control of the country's internal border decisions to "ensure a unified and consistent approach to border control and health protocols".

In a submission to a Senate inquiry investigating the future of Australia's aviation sector following the pandemic, Young mounted the case for border powers to be transferred from state and territory governments to the Federal Government in cases of national emergency.

"By having the Commonwealth take control of national borders through regulation and override state legislation by proclamation in an emergency, these emergency measures would be in the best interests of the national economy and the aviation and tourism sectors," he argued.

Young has also asked for government to provide grants for capital works or rebates required to offset any extra costs needing to be passed on to travellers during the downturn.

## Emirates eyes Israel

**EMIRATES** is planning Dubai-Tel Aviv flights from next month, having applied to Israel Airports Authority for landing and takeoff slots from 15 Feb.

The airline has recently enjoyed a codesharing arrangement with flydubai to Tel Aviv, and has been establishing a relationship with its Middle-Eastern neighbour since the Israel-United Arab Emirates normalisation agreement in Sep.

Late last year, Emirates set up K kosher Flight Catering (EKFC) to provide pure food to airlines through a dedicated production facility in the United Arab Emirates.

Emirates K kosher Flight Catering will also set up a chain of kosher restaurants.

Competitor Etihad Airways is planning to begin its own Dubai-Tel Aviv flights on 28 Mar (**TD** 17 Nov).

## Octantis on track

**VIKING** has marked the float-out of its first expedition ship, *Viking Octantis* (**TD** 27 Nov), set to debut in Jan 2022.

The 378-guest vessel will spend her maiden season sailing voyages to Antarctica and the Great Lakes.

A second identical expedition ship, *Viking Polaris* (**TD** 05 Jun), is set to debut in the southern summer of 2022, sailing journeys to Antarctica and the Arctic.

Viking has also developed a series of short videos about the new expedition voyages, ship design, and Viking's scientific partnerships, which can be found on its website **HERE**.

*Octantis* has been constructed by Italian shipbuilders Fincantieri.



## Window Seat

**THE** ultimate proof that Kiwis are utterly obsessed with *The Lord of the Rings* (LOTR) franchise may have just been uncovered this week, amid news that a group of the films' fans in New Zealand want to turn a commercial jet bearing the LOTR livery into a hotel.

The original Air New Zealand 747 aircraft (**pictured**), currently parked in Spain and bound for the scrapyard shortly, may soon be rescued and returned to NZ if a bid to purchase it for between one and two million Aussie dollars is successful.

Heading up the unusual bid is Radio New Zealand National announcer Paul Brennan, who said that although the ultimate goal was to relocate the plane to Wanaka on New Zealand's South Island to act as a boutique hotel for travellers visiting the ski town, the main objective was to preserve the aircraft for the sake of history.

"The main thing is recovering it, and if we can just get it back, even if it's parked up for a while, it's not going to go under the arm of a digger, which is what they use to rip these things to pieces - we don't want that to happen," Brennan said.

All we can really say about the plan is, oh my precious!



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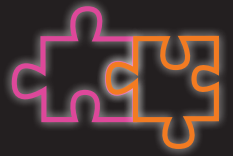
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Travel Daily

## I'm a celebrity, get me to Asia



**CELEBRITY** Cruises has announced more than 30 sailings aboard *Celebrity Infinity* and *Celebrity Solstice* as part of its new 2022-23 Asia and South America itineraries.

More sailings to Japan (**pictured**) is a highlight of its latest Asia itineraries, which also includes all-new 12-night itineraries featuring overnights in Bangkok, Kyoto or Kobo; and visits to a new port, Subic Bay.

*Celebrity Solstice* will also visit China, Hong Kong, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam from Sep to Apr.

Meanwhile, South America itineraries will see overnight stays in Buenos Aires, a 14-night Antarctica cruise, & visits to over 20 destinations in six countries.

From Dec to Apr, *Celebrity Infinity* will explore Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, with wi-fi, drinks and service charges now always included (**TD** 11 Nov).

## SA voucher crash

**THE** South Australian Tourism Commission's computer systems have crashed - once again (**TD** 09 Nov) - as the second round of the state's discount tourism vouchers went online (**TD** yesterday).

The stampede for the second round of the vouchers saw the allocation exhausted within only 40 minutes, after debuting online at 11am yesterday.

The second round of Great State tourism discount vouchers offered a larger range of accom providers and more time to travel, and includes \$100 for a downtown Adelaide hotel.

## Borders bust bookings

**NEW** research commissioned by the Australian Airport Association (AAA) shows the local appetite for domestic air travel has been dented by ongoing concerns over border closures.

Overall, the research showed more than eight in 10 (86%) people would be willing to travel interstate, but more than half of those said they were "discouraged" from booking airfares due to the risk of sudden border closures (52%), while 45% of respondents said they were concerned by potential health risks and outbreaks.

Other barriers to flying that were listed include cost (43%), fear of cancellations and/or loss of money (42%), as well as reduced income (17%).

More than 8 in 10 people (83%) said they would wear a face mask if they were travelling domestically by air, while 71% of people said they would be more

confident flying domestically if face masks were mandatory.

The results come as Qantas Airways, Virgin Australia and Jetstar all recently announced the mandating of masks on all New South Wales flights.

Three in four listed their own car as the mode of transport in which they are most confident for travel within Australia, while only half of Aussies listing air services as their preferred mode of travel.

The study also found that those aged under 50 were significantly more likely to be willing to travel interstate (91%), dropping to 82% for those aged 65 and over.

Willingness to travel interstate was found to be lowest among those living in WA, the state which has boasted the toughest border policies, while Victoria had the biggest domestic appetite, the state forced to implement the toughest lockdowns.

## NSW the big losers

**AUSTRALIAN** tourism has absorbed a \$3 billion hit across the Christmas season, according to new analysis by business management consultant Stafford Strategy, commissioned by the Tourism & Transport Forum.

The report estimates that while Australians usually spend \$5.5 billion on travel, accommodation and tourist activities between Christmas Eve and 11 Jan, this year the spend will be \$2.9 billion less than that, with many unwilling or unable to travel because of a virus outbreak on Sydney's Northern Beaches.

Businesses in New South Wales alone are collectively losing \$125 million a day, as most of the country currently remains closed to the state.

Stafford's estimates also suggest other states, including Victoria, are losing out on \$172 million a day which New South Wales visitors would normally be spending on their own holidays.

## QF claims safest airline award

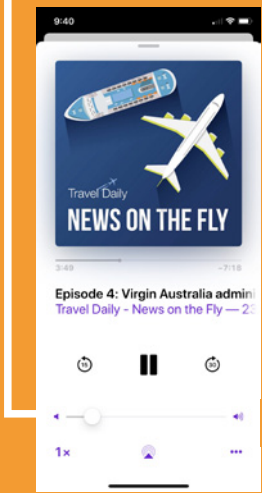
**QANTAS** Airways has been named the safest airline this year by AirlineRatings.com.

The review website monitors almost 400 airlines, and in selecting QF as its safest airline for 2021, noted the Australian flag-carrier as the industry's most experienced airline.

"The Australian airline has been a clear leader in the development of the Future Air Navigation System; real-time monitoring of its engines across its fleet, the flight data recorder to monitor plane and later crew performance; automatic landings using Global Navigation Satellite System, as well as precision approaches around mountains in the cloud using RNP," AirlineRatings.com said."

Unfortunately, Qantas was not listed as one of AirlineRatings.com's 20 most COVID-19-compliant airlines.

**CLICK HERE** for the full list.



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Travel Daily

## Pub quiz

1. What is the name of Tokyo's popular upscale shopping area, also considered to be one of the most expensive streets in the world?
2. Which country uses the kina as its currency?
3. Kings Park is located in which Australian city?
4. Which Australian town is traditionally known as Rubibi?
5. Which Western Australian town is known for hosting joint operations with the United States?
6. Which town can be seen on the horizon from the lookout at Mirima National Park?
7. True or false: Walt Disney witnessed none of his company's theme parks built to completion?
8. What was the first Canadian city to host the Winter Olympic Games, doing so in 1988?
9. The Fijian Government owns 62% of Fiji Airways, but what other carrier owns 46%?
  - a) Air New Zealand
  - b) American Airlines
  - c) Etihad Airways
  - d) Qantas
10. What is the largest city on the South Island of New Zealand?

## 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.

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

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

## Seen it at the movies



**MONUMENT** Valley in the US state of Utah is an iconic film location.

Located in the Native American Navajo nation's land, the area is recognisable for its cluster of huge sandstone buttes, with the largest reaching over 300m above the valley floor.

The area has been featured in a large number of movies,

particularly westerns, and film critic Keith Phipps said "its five square miles have defined what decades of moviegoers think of when they imagine the American West."

It's not just westerns that it has featured in however, with the location in over 50 movies.

Can you name at least three of them?

## Funnies Flashback



WE'VE trawled through the TD Window Seat archives to give you a blast from the past. Here's some gems from 09 May 2014:

**LOT** Polish Airlines is rightly proud of its fleet of Boeing 787 Dreamliners, which has grown to six aircraft following the delivery of its latest plane.

The carrier conducted an internet contest to determine the plane's name, with thousands of entries received and the winner getting the opportunity to become the aircraft's "parent-godfather".

"The choice was difficult," said LOT spokesperson Barbara Pijanowska-Kuras, adding: "we wanted the name to arouse positive emotions, to be nice, short easy to read and pronounce for foreigners, creative intriguing and somewhat surprising".

The outcome is certainly intriguing and surprising, with the plane to henceforth officially be known as "Frank".

### ANSWERS 05 JAN

Celebrity faces: Eyes - Reese Witherspoon, Nose - Hugh Jackman, Mouth - Skroo Turner

Pub quiz: 1 Southampton, 2 White Star Line, 3 a) Finance, 4 Caicos Islands, 5 Perth, 6 Port Hedland, 7 Australia, 8 Tasmania and Western Australia, 9 Kingscote, 10 Sydney

Unscramble: ached, adduce, bade, baud, beached, bead, beaded, behead, cede, ceded, cubed, cued, dace, daub, daubed, dead, debauch, DEBAUCHED, decade, deduce, deed, deuce, dude, educe, educed, head, headed, heed, hued



## Heli Bike takes off

**GCH** Aviation division, Coastwide Helicopters, has launched a new heli biking experience on the west coast of New Zealand's South Island.

After purchasing a set of helicopter bike racks from Canada, the company can offer travellers a chopper ride from Greymouth with their bikes to the 56.2km Paparoa track, cutting out the 15km mountain climb needed to reach the starting point.

For more details, [CLICK HERE](#).

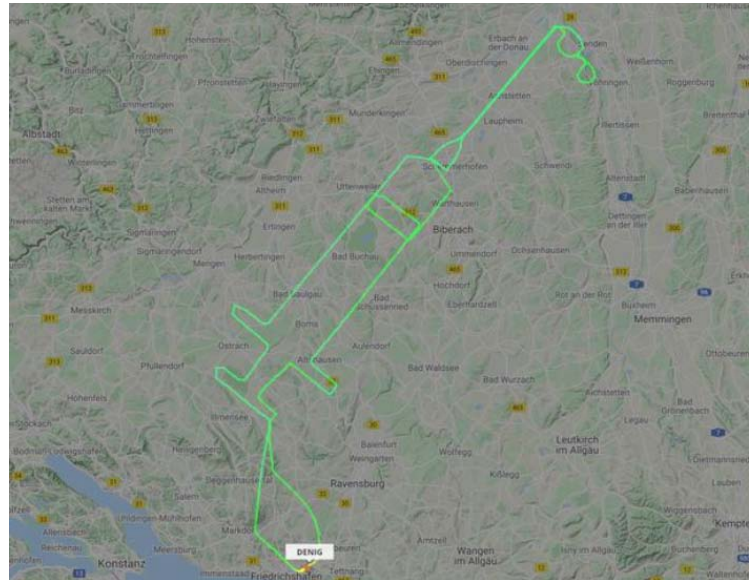
## Diamond for Venus

**VIKING** Cruises has revealed that British broadcaster Anne Diamond will be the godmother for the line's upcoming 930-passenger ship, *Viking Venus*.

Diamond has enjoyed a distinguished career as a journalist in the UK, a career spanning more than 40 years and covering key events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Scheduled to debut this year, *Venus* will sail routes in Northern Europe in her maiden season.

## Pilot takes cheeky jab



**LEAVE** it to those cheeky and creative pilots to get to the pointy end of the message in style.

German airman Samy Kramer recently marked the rollout of the mass COVID-19 vaccination in Europe by flying his plane more than 200km around his homeland to create the GPS image of a syringe (**pictured**).

The lofty effort was not simply to celebrate what should be the end of a disastrous health chapter, but to also serve as a sharp message to the growing anti-vaccination movement which threatens to derail global efforts to eradicate the disease.

"There are still relatively many people opposing the vaccination and my action may be a reminder for them to think about the topic, to get things moving", Kramer told local media.

The industrious pilot added that the manner in which he was raising awareness was also in support of the travel sector, which has been slammed more than any other industry throughout the health crisis.

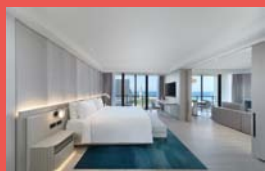
"Perhaps it was also a bit of a sign of joy, because the aviation industry has been hit pretty hard by the pandemic," Kramer said.

## 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](mailto:accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au).



**Sofitel Sydney Darling Harbour** has enhanced its wellness experiences this month by creating a range of new beverages in partnership with The Healthy Chef founder Teresa Cutter (**pictured**). The new menu items include a new Up + Go coffee shake with banana, protein, oat milk and dates, as well as the Everyday Greens option, serving up a combo of green grapes, lime, coconut water and ginger.



**JW Marriott Gold Coast Resort & Spa** has officially opened to the public, marking the debut of Marriott International's JW Marriott brand in the Pacific region. The luxury property features the Misono restaurant, inspired by Tokyo's Harajuku laneways, as well as a sophisticated day bar called Chapter & Verse and a saltwater lagoon and a freshwater pool.



**EDITION Hotels** has announced the scheduled opening of its first Italian property, **The Rome EDITION**, which will boast 95 guest rooms, a rooftop terrace, high-tech gym and two treatment rooms. The hotel will open around Sep, and will be located only a few steps from Via Veneto and Bernini's Tritone Fountain in Piazza Barberini. Further amenities of the property will include a rooftop swimming pool, indoor and outdoor event spaces, as well as a signature restaurant with outdoor dining spaces.

## Vietravel cleared for takeoff

**NEW** Vietnamese carrier Vietravel Airlines has been authorised to commence operations, initially servicing routes between Hue & the cities of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

**MEANWHILE** Vietnam's Health Ministry has confirmed it will suspend inbound flights from countries known to have any cases of any new COVID-19 variants, with Britain and South Africa singled out initially.

"The risk for the disease to penetrate and spread in Vietnam is very high, especially from people entering from infected countries," the department said.

## Pandaw goes larger

**SMALL** river ship operator Pandaw has unveiled new spacious suite sizes on board select vessels, doubling the space of its regular suites.

The new offering is available to book on the line's larger P Class ships which service popular Asian destinations such as Vietnam, Cambodia and Burma.

In addition to increased space, the new Pandaw Suite collection also offers guests a private balcony, a complimentary bottle of sparkling wine, personal butler service and an in-suite espresso machine, with the first sailings departing from Aug.