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## PARTNERS • FIRST REWARDS

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\*Offer correct as at 5 January 2021 and subject to change or withdrawal. Offer ends 31 March 2021 unless extended. For full terms and conditions click here. <sup>^</sup>Conditions apply. To join Partners First Rewards agents must have an individual Norwegian Central log in. Click here to sign up to Norwegian Central.

## Cover-More app

**TRAVEL** insurance provider Cover-More has revealed it will introduce a new app (**TD** 15 Oct 2020) designed to help travellers in an overseas emergency from the next quarter of this year.

CEO Cara Morton said the app would include a 24/7 emergency assistance button that travellers can access when they need assistance, as well alert users about any potential health risks in the destination they are visiting.

"We want to give the traveller more information, so they make better decisions," Morton said.

The news follows Cover-More's launch of new insurance products to the market, including COVID-19 cover (**TD** 16 Dec 2020).

## VA opens lounges

**VIRGIN** Australia has announced the reopening of its lounges at the Perth and Gold Coast airports, citing a growing demand for domestic travel from its frequent flyers to both destinations as the reason.

Demand for services in Perth is especially encouraging in light of Western Australia's tight border restrictions in place.

The openings follow the reactivating of VA's lounges in Sydney and Melbourne in Dec, with Adelaide and Canberra lounges both flagged to open back up again "soon".

Due to COVID, its lounges are not currently offering shower facilities or valet services.

## C&K administrators quit

**THE** UK-based Duff & Phelps administrators of the collapsed Cox & Kings businesses (**TD** 23 Oct 2019) have resigned, after the company's major creditor declined to fund investigations into the company's failure.

A court order issued just before Christmas confirmed approval for the Administration process of Prometheon Enterprise Limited to end, with the company to be liquidated by Re10 Restructuring.

A final Progress Report from Duff & Phelps notes they had initially sought to achieve a better result for creditors, but this can no longer be achieved "due to the lack of funding".

The report notes the UK entity had listed investments in other group businesses valued at £158 million, with the assets including Prometheon Australia, the parent of Cox & Kings Australia, as well as Tempo Holidays.

However correspondence from the directors of the Australian business has "remained unanswered" and Duff & Phelps said they had not been able to locate sufficient financial information to be able to value Prometheon's stake.

The company's secured creditor, India's Yes Bank, has not approved remuneration for the Administrators and a £54,000 invoice remained unpaid.

Peter Kerkar, who was a Director of Prometheon as well as the

company's Australian entities, is facing charges in India where the Government's Enforcement Directorate this week alleged that Yes Bank founder Rana Kapoor, also under indictment, instructed officials not to recover massive loans to Cox & Kings.

The agency's formal complaint against Kerkar also alleges that C&K's three top customers - AK Travel, Holiday Break Travel and Worldwide Travels, operated from the office of another company owned by Kerkar himself.

The Directorate claims Kerkar and C&K CFO Anil Khandelwal "indulged in circular trading by purchasing air tickets from other group companies of Cox & Kings and selling it to another group company, Ezeego One Travels and Tours Limited, to inflate the books of accounts".

## Accom paying bills

**THE** accommodation sector is faring well in comparison to other industry verticals when it comes to businesses paying their bills on time, according to new figures from ratings agency CreditWatch.

Payment times within the accommodation industry were down by 8% in Dec, and more than 41% over the entire 2020.

"This may seem surprising given lockdowns, but this result was supported by consumers buying locally and coming out in force to travel within Australia after the post lockdown restrictions in the middle of the year," said a spokesperson for CreditWatch.

However, the reporting agency also issued a cautionary note regarding the findings, suggesting the sector's performance may be affected by the COVID outbreaks that occurred in Dec.

## Today's issue of TD

**Travel Daily** today has five pages of news including our PUZZLE page plus a **Norwegian Cruise Line** cover page.

## Norwegian rewards

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line has this week formally launched its new Norwegian Partners First Rewards program (**TD** 07 Dec).

Agents are being asked to register to participate in the scheme, making them eligible to earn points on NCL bookings and given access to monthly incentives as well as an annual awards event.

More details on the **front page** as well as on **page 3** of **TD** today.

## Scenic recruits global cruise chief

**SCENIC** Group has appointed Benny Weidacher to be its new Vice President of Global Cruise Operations, where he will take charge of all major aspects of Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours and Emerald Cruises brands, as well as help promote *Scenic Eclipse*.

Reporting to Scenic Group's COO Rob Voss, Switzerland-based Weidacher will be tasked with enhancing the company's cruise product and experiences by elevating Scenic's "guest-centric" approach to travel.

"Benny's proven ability to develop unique and memorable experiences will bring even greater opportunities for us to check off the bucket lists of our guests," Voss said.

Weidacher was most recently VP Ship Operations Marine and Hotel for Spain's currently defunct Pullmantur Cruise Lines.

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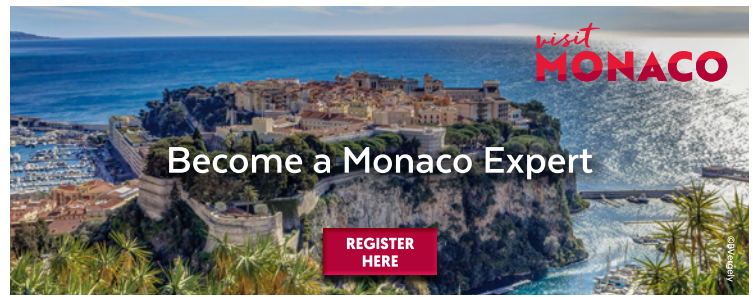
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**Domain name for sale**

[HolidayLocally.com](http://HolidayLocally.com)

For more information and inquiries email: [ahw24643@gmail.com](mailto:ahw24643@gmail.com)



## TTIH launches community

EXCLUSIVE

THE Travel Industry Hub (TTIH) has today announced a range of new membership options, including a secure online community offering annual access to the popular TTIH ongoing series of webinars and workshops.

The \$49 introductory yearly subscription also gives a range of other benefits including discounted access to the TTIH Sydney hub, exclusive supplier offers, an industry event calendar and online discussion, help & advice from other members.

There's also a Supplier membership option, allowing posting of branded messaging which TTIH co-founder Richard Taylor noted was a "highly cost effective way of reaching people in 2021 who are engaged with the industry".

Since the onset of the pandemic last Mar, TTIH has hosted more than 150 free webinars and

other events which have been attended online by thousands in the industry.

"We realised that the one thing missing was interaction between industry peers," Taylor told **TD**.

"Attending a webinar can be great, but everyone immediately leaves without an opportunity to network and chat. Industry discussion seems to currently happen across endless Facebook groups that lack privacy and don't offer the opportunity for deeper connections and richer conversations," he added.

New Premium Economy, Business Class and First Class pricing options for access to the TTIH premises in North Sydney have also gone live, with plans ranging from casual hot desks through to meeting rooms, private offices, event space and virtual office/mailing addresses.

The membership sign-up page is live at [thetravelindustryhub.com](http://thetravelindustryhub.com).

## Rex refund pledge

REGIONAL Express (Rex) has reinforced its commitment to delivering full refunds to passengers whose travel plans become affected by COVID, with the airline's GM of Network Strategy Warrick Lodge assuring travellers this would be done "without exception".

"Rex will be offering a full refund of tickets for passengers who are directly affected by current and future COVID-related border closures or travelling restrictions...this even applies to promotional 'use-it-or-lose-it' tickets," he confirmed.

Lodge added the airline has a strong track record regarding refunds, stating last year it sent out eight monthly reminders to travel agents to seek refunds from Rex, as it was not able to refund tickets directly to those who booked through an agent.

A new QF waiver policy around border closures (**TD** yesterday) explicitly excludes any refunds.



## Window Seat

AS THE United Kingdom continues to battle against a mutant strain of COVID-19, a furore has kicked off over a humble bike ride from the PM.

Boris Johnson has found himself the subject of public criticism for cycling 11km from his Downing Street home, reportedly in breach of lockdown rules which stipulate that no person should leave travel beyond their local area.

"It is okay to go for a long walk or a cycle ride or to exercise, but try to stay local," UK's Health Secretary Matt Hancock said in defence of the British leader.



# Travel Daily

## Cocktail compendium

Find your new favourite drink today!





## NCL Partners First

### EXCLUSIVE

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line (NCL) has shed more light on its new Partners First Program (**TD** 07 Dec 2020), encouraging those who remain committed to selling its product to sign up.

Designed to recompense advisors for booking with Norwegian, Director of Sales Aus/NZ Damian Borg said NCL wanted to connect and reconnect with those who remain in the industry after a large period of churn.

"The biggest challenge we have right now is we don't know who's opened, who's closed, who's on reduced hours, who's out there, we don't know who we're talking to anymore," Borg said.

"By registering, they become eligible to earn points on bookings they make and be rewarded for those points they log into the system," he added.

Borg said the new Partners First Program was also designed to "simplify and standardise" the way Norwegian recognises its top partners.

"We put some work into formalising a more structured program to make it easier for our consultants to engage with us," he said.

"The one big difference with this program when compared to other incentives we've put in place is we're asking agents to register for the awards program themselves."

NCL will also host an annual awards event each year to acknowledge its top advisors, highlighting each state's highest-volume sellers, top-selling consultants, highest growth and best marketing supporters.

## Leaders condemn states

A NUMBER of prominent travel leaders have voiced concerns about Australian states implementing their own set of interstate travel protocols, arguing it only takes the country further away from a nationally consistent approach to borders.

The collective anxiety follows the Victorian Government's move this week to implement a traffic light system for its residents (**TD** 10 Jan), providing a colour-coded framework for interstate travel.

The major issue with states and territories going their own way, Tourism & Transport Forum CEO Margy Osmond argues, is that travel confidence is less likely to be restored under a piecemeal approach rather than a unified national policy.

"While a range of states, including Tasmania and now Victoria, have put unique travel systems in place, in reality a national framework is what is desperately needed to reboot domestic travel confidence across the country," Osmond told **TD**.

"Likewise, major tourism, aviation and accommodation companies operating across state borders would benefit more from a range of smart solutions based on a simple and consistent national approach, rather than eight new sets of rules across each Australian jurisdiction."

This is an objection shared by Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) MD Brett Jardine, who said the jostling between the states over border policy was costing the travel sector valuable recovery time.

"Whilst Australian states continue to struggle with an

appropriate national approach, a re-start date for outbound and inbound travel is likely to be pushed further down the road, which will continue to have a devastating impact on jobs and mental health right across our industry," he said.

"CATO Members remain extremely frustrated at the disjointed state-by-state approach to dealing with COVID," Jardine added.

Meanwhile, Australian Tourism Industry Council chief Simon Westaway echoed the call for a national approach above any "hotpotch" state schemes, also criticising the way in which the Victorian Govt went about developing and implementing its traffic light system.

"Victoria's tourism industry, nor any other, appeared to have been consulted around this state's new border permit arrangements," Westaway said.

"The approach will only stifle Victoria's visitor economy in seeking to recover as it goes to the heart of challenging the intention to safely or seamlessly travel and we believe will be counter-productive," he added.

## Disneyland rides vax

**DISNEYLAND** Park is set to become a coronavirus vaccination site as California lags behind the job rate of its fellow states.

It is one of several similar vaccination sites opening up in the state, including Sacramento's Cal Expo, LA's Dodger Stadium and San Diego's Petco Park.

Disneyland has been closed since mid-Mar (**TD** 13 Mar 2020).

## Excite \$200k in Expedia refunds

THE KPMG Administrators of Excite Holidays, which ceased trading 12 months ago (**TD** 09 Jan 2020), are in the process of finalising refunds from Expedia under a separate agreement facilitated by Cherrybrook Travel's Liz Ellis (**TD** 27 Nov).

Ellis, who put her hand up to join the Committee of Inspection at the Excite Holidays creditors meeting (**TD** 18 Feb), has worked tirelessly to highlight the complexities of the travel payment process.

The special Expedia refunds for some Excite bookings total almost \$200,000, with Ellis telling **TD** "when I look at the amount of money this task has seen refunded, I feel some comfort that some people will get refunds, or travel agents that have had to refund clients without funds, will get something back".

Any bookings claimed which were not able to be recovered have automatically been added to the unsecured creditors claim for each agent owed money.

## CX vax solution

**CATHAY** Pacific Cargo has today announced the launch of Ultra Track, a "next generation track-and-trace system" specifically for the transshipment of COVID-19 vaccines across the globe.

The new platform monitors shipments for vital information including temperature and GPS location, with the CX Cargo Terminal in Hong Kong also expanded to offer more temperature controlled capacity to handle over seven million doses of vaccine per day.

## Keep your clients engaged and planning their next trip with *keep dreaming...*

A weekly e-magazine with destination features, puzzles and more, to inspire your clients' next escape.



## Pub quiz

1. Ho Chi Minh City was formerly known by what name?
2. Hispaniola is shared between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, but which country takes up more of the island?
3. The Grasberg mine is the world's largest gold mine, and is also the world's second-largest quarry of what other substance?
4. China Airlines is headquartered in what city?
5. What is the world's most populous island?
  - a) Cuba
  - b) Australia
  - c) Madagascar
  - d) Java
6. In August 1883, what natural disaster was reportedly heard as far away as Perth?
7. What highway ends in Port Augusta, South Australia?
8. Darwin is said to have been almost entirely rebuilt how many times, and for what reasons?
9. Which country's national day is often considered the oldest in terms of occasion of celebration?
10. Is Merimbula closer to Sydney or Melbourne?

## 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.

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

## Seen it at the movies



**SYDNEY** has been the setting for plenty of major Hollywood blockbusters over the years, particularly in the late 90s and early naughties when the Aussie dollar made it economically viable for the Americans to shoot major film projects on the other side of the planet.

One of these blockbusters spawned two more sequels and starred a 'speedy' action megastar whose character was the 'seemingly' nerdy computer programmer Thomas Anderson.

If you answer correctly, you might be 'the one'. Can you name the movie?

## Funnies Flashback



**WE'VE** trawled through the **TD** Window Seat archives to give you a blast from the past. Here's some gems from 17 Jun 2014:

**THERE** appears to be a common theme in the tag-lines of at least some Asian low-cost carriers.

AirAsia has marked its rapid growth across the ASEAN region with its low fares meaning that "Now Everyone Can Fly".

Cebu Pacific has taken on the same thought but tweaked it for its Filipino heritage by saying it was "the first to offer low fares to every Juan".

The idea recurs right across the Cebu Pacific collateral, with the airline saying its low fares make it the reason "Why every Juan flies" - while other promotions include "great value hotel bookings for every Juan" and claims that it's the "Juan for Fun" for backpacking fliers.

A promotion on the carrier's website gives travellers "Juan more chance" to save, while single sectors are (naturally) called "Juan way flights".

### ANSWERS 12 JAN

Celebrity faces: Eyes - PINK, Nose - Andrew Burnes, Mouth - Keith Urban

Pub quiz: 1 Thailand, 2 Ho Chi Minh City, 3 Dominican Republic and Haiti, 4 Indonesia, 5 Ecuador 6 b) 60 metres, 7 Adelaide, 8 Los Angeles, 9 Darling Harbour, 10 Murray River

Unscramble: cell, cello, cere, cert, clot, coerce, cole, collect, colt, core, cote, creel, creole, croc, elect, elector, electro, erect, lector, recce, RECOLLECT, recto, tercel, torc



## Doubling Danang

**INTERCONTINENTAL** Hotels Group (IHG) has signed a management agreement to open a second Crowne Plaza hotel in the rapidly expanding Vietnamese city of Danang.

Scheduled to open its doors in 2023, the 300-room Crowne Plaza Danang Waterfront will boast 38 storeys and feature large meeting and events spaces, a rooftop infinity pool, three restaurants and a fitness centre, and will be located 5km from the airport.

## Heritage learnings

**HERITAGE** Line is inviting agents to learn more about its Ha Long Bay & Lan Ha Bay cruises in Vietnam, as well as the company's newest luxury vessel set to launch in early 2022, *Heritage Line Anouvong*, which will sail the Mekong River in Laos.

The 30-minute online Zoom session will be held today at 1pm (AEDT), with time allocated for a Q&A session.

For further information and to register, **CLICK HERE**.

## WTA makes its debut



**A NEW** Europe-based sales and marketing group called The Worldwide Travel Alliance (WTA) has been formed, targeting new business opportunities with travel entities around the world.

WTA was founded by six leading sales and marketing experts based in France, Germany, Russia, Thailand and the United Kingdom, with a view to preparing sales channels for travel brands around the world to restore business confidence following the COVID-19 pandemic.

WTA's main targets are hotels & resorts (individual or group bookings), national & regional tourism boards, DMCs, theme parks, tour operators, cruise lines, medical tourism outlets and travel associations.

"After the travel industry trauma of 2020, all travel brands are

setting new priorities and targets - many are effectively starting over in 2021," said one of the group's founders Andrea Hogg.

"This is where WTA can step in and quickly help them create business from important source markets," she added.

Between them, the WTA founding directors have intensive in-market expertise in business-to-business sales, road shows, virtual and physical events and media relations, for more information - see [worldwidetravelalliance.com](http://worldwidetravelalliance.com).

**Pictured** clockwise, the WTA founders are ADS Consulting's Anabela Dos Santos, ScottAsia's Ken Scott, Wendum Travel Services's Andrea Hogg, Eastern Favourites' May Kamya, Travel Media's Elena Vetrova, and ScottAsia's Anchalee Sriwongsa.

## 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).



Marriott International's **The St. Regis Cairo** has opened its doors to the public, boasting what the property describes as "the epitome of modern Egyptian glamour". The 39-storey hotel will feature 286 rooms, as well as amenities like an upmarket poolside restaurant and bar called Sirocco, a 1,000m<sup>2</sup> wellness spa, and a dramatic ballroom venue with state-of-the-art technology installed, geared towards hosting major business events and wedding receptions.



Atelier Ace has announced plans to open the **Ace Hotel Brooklyn** in New York later this year, a 287-room hotel that aims to be "open, spacious and welcoming for guests", with large lobby and walkthrough spaces. Each of the hotel's guest rooms come with

floor-to-ceiling windows, many with views of the city and the iconic Statue of Liberty.



**The W Nashville** is anticipated to open to the public in May 2021, boasting 346 rooms, 60 suites, including two Extreme Wow Suites. The property will be equipped with a large pool deck complete with luxury cabanas, as well as a fitness centre, meeting and events spaces, and modern live entertainment spaces. The property is also pet-friendly and will offer guests two on-site restaurants to dine in. For music-lovers, the hotel is also located in the famous neighbourhood called The Gulch, featuring many live music venues.