

Intrepid RAP report

INTREPID Travel has released its one-year Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) progress report, saying it “transparently outlines the areas where they have made good progress, as well as where they’ve fallen short”.

In 2020/21, 853 customers experienced a First Nations tourism experience on Intrepid trips in Australia, but challenges include an ongoing tour guide shortage - to view [CLICK HERE](#).

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CVFR wins new Thai GSA

EXCLUSIVE

THAI Lion Air has appointed Airline Rep Services, the GSA division of CVFR Travel Group, as its new General Sales Agent (GSA) for Australia and New Zealand.

The Bangkok-based low-cost carrier is an associate company of Indonesia’s Lion Air Group, and operates from Don Mueang International Airport.

The carrier also plans to serve domestic and international destinations from other cities in Thailand, with the company’s Chairman, Captain Darsito

Canada reopening

THE Canadian Government has announced “adjusted border measures” following high rates of vaccination and declining COVID-19 cases, meaning that from 07 Sep it intends to allow unrestricted entry to arrivals who have been fully vaccinated at least 14 days prior to departure.

As a first step, on 09 Aug, Canada plans to begin allowing entry to US citizens and permanent residents who have been fully vaccinated.

Travellers will still require a negative pre-entry COVID-19 test result, but new arrangements will only necessitate post-arrival tests for vaccinated travellers who are randomly selected, under a risk-based approach.

Hotel quarantine will be eliminated for travellers arriving by air, and international flights carrying passengers will be able to land at Halifax, Quebec City, Ottawa, Winnipeg and Edmonton in addition to Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver.

Hendroseputro, saying “hopefully our market expansion can escalate new customers inbound and outbound from/to Thailand and Australia & New Zealand”.

Airline Rep Services has established a call centre specially for the carrier’s customers and the travel trade, with GDS bookings available under Thai Lion Air’s SL code and tickets able to be issued via BSP.

CVFR Travel Group MD Ram Chhabra said he was thrilled at the GSA deal, particularly in the current environment.

“This appointment is truly a proud one for the company... Thailand has always been a preferred tourism destination for Australians and I am sure post-COVID this will continue to be the case,” he said.

Swiss train training

SWITZERLAND Tourism is today showcasing its recently launched travel agent training program which covers not just trains, but the entire Swiss Travel System.

Participation in the program is free - more details on [page six](#).

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news plus a full page from **Switzerland Tourism**.

Maldives Evil rep

VISIT Maldives has announced the appointment of Evil Twin PR as its new representative for Australia.

Evil Twin takes over the account from Anne Wild & Associates, which had represented Visit Maldives locally for the last two years (*TD* 28 Jun 2019).

Visit Maldives MD Thoyyib Mohamed said Evil Twin PR’s “impressive travel and tourism experience will be a great asset in helping us increase the number of Australian travellers to the beautifully scattered islands of the Maldives, one of the safest destinations in the world”.

MEANWHILE visitors to the Maldives will face a new per passenger departure tax from 01 Jan 2022, with the Government imposing a tiered levy of US\$60 for foreigners in Economy and Business class, US\$90 in First class and US\$120 for private jets.

Maldivians in Economy class will pay US\$12 for departures.

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Source: nib Travel Brands Survey, May 2021, N=1044, Australian respondents - comfort levels around travel once vaccinated.

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DISCOVER THAILAND

Agent wins NCAT appeal

WENDY Kiss, a Helloworld Travel agency owner from the NSW Central Coast, has been successful in challenging a decision by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) which had previously ordered her to refund a client who had booked a trip to Canada.

The initial ruling in late Mar this year related to a booking made in Aug 2019 including non-refundable Air Canada airfares and hotel reservations made via wholesaler Momento Travel.

The Tribunal had judged that based on the *Frustrated Contracts Act* and the Government's COVID-19 travel bans, the agent was liable to pay the refund even though the suppliers in question

had not repaid the bookings.

Kiss complied with the order and paid more than \$9,000 back to the customers, but also appealed the decision in Apr.

In last Fri's ruling, the Appeals Panel confirmed that contrary to the earlier ruling, "in making the arrangements for travel for the respondents, the appellant [Kiss] was acting only as agent (on behalf of Air Canada and Momento Travel) and is therefore not personally liable to reimburse the respondents".

The panel cited the agent's booking terms and conditions which made it clear that she was to provide booking and advisory services only to allow the clients to acquire travel products from third party providers, and noted clear communication that airfares and accom were non-refundable.

The previous ruling was set aside, with AFTA, which had supported the appeal, hailing Kiss' "resilience, persistence and tenacity" (see **page four**).

EU scraps Amadeus and Sabre probe

THE European Commission has suspended a two-year plus investigation into Amadeus and Sabre, which were targeted in late 2018 over claims that agreements between the GDS firms and their airline and travel agent clients may breach European antitrust regulations (**TD** 28 Nov 2018).

The EU competition regulator said "the evidence collected is not sufficiently conclusive to justify pursuing the investigation further," but said it would keep an eye on the sector as part of a review of rules governing relationships between airlines, travel agents & booking systems.

AA suspends Oz

AMERICAN Airlines has suspended its flights to Australia, with the move believed to be related to the recent halving of inbound travel caps under the Government's four-stage plan to resume to normality (**TD** 05 Jul).

GDS screens confirm the cessation of AA flights between Los Angeles and Sydney from the end of next month.

nib insurance snacks

NIB Travel Insurance has launched a new weekly online series aiming to equip travel consultants with greater knowledge to help them better support their clients.

The Insurance Information Series covers topics such as cruising, skiing, medical and emergency assistance plus COVID-19-related information.

It kicks off today, with participation free by registering at nibtravelinsurance.com.au.

NZ adds UV clean

THE New Zealand Aviation Security Service (AvSec) has deployed 18 Smiths Detection Ultraviolet light tray disinfection systems to help enhance public health and safety at airports across the country.

The UV disinfection kits are "proven by independent laboratory tests to eliminate up to 99.99% of microorganisms - including coronaviruses" according to the manufacturer.

Six of the systems have been installed at the Auckland and Christchurch Airports, plus four in Wellington and two in Dunedin.

Smiths Detection MD Australia and NZ, Jordan Thrupp, said the UV technology helped provide a high level of reassurance to passengers and airport staff.

"I hope we can take our experience to other airports in the region which are going through similar challenges and restore confidence in travelling."



Window Seat

HERE'S an unlikely thought experiment for you, imagine you are camping on a holiday and you had to choose a female celebrity to light the campfire, who would you recruit?

According to a new survey by Hipcamp, the answer is not Kylie Minogue (**pictured**), who was recently ranked by Aussies as having the least successful chance of starting a campfire.

Miss Minogue polled slightly worse than Pauline Hanson (24.3%), Rebel Wilson (15.2%), Olivia Newton-John (12.3%) and Margot Robbie (12.2%).

So who were the male camping duds you ask?

Polling suggests Clive Palmer would do the worst Bear Grylls impression, grabbing a third of the vote, followed by Prime Minister Scott Morrison (18.1%), Ian Thorpe (17.7%), Russell Coight (13.7%) and Chris Hemsworth (10.1%).

Unsurprisingly, Kylie Minogue ranked much better on the question of who would you like to wake up next to in a tent, topping the list with over 25%.



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Dreamworld cuts another thrill ride

DREAMWORLD will retire another attraction from its original "Big Nine" collection of thrill rides, revealing the BuzzSaw will close down from 31 Aug.

In its day the ride was a major drawcard for the theme park, billed as the tallest inversion ride in the Southern Hemisphere.

The BuzzSaw will now make way for the new Steel Taipan attraction, which will whip guests through a rock tunnel at speeds of up to 105 km an hour.

Steel Taipan is on track to open in time for Christmas, pending State Government approvals.

JAL faces the facts

JAPAN Airlines will begin rolling out new facial recognition tech for passengers boarding international flights from Narita and Haneda airports, following a successful trial in Apr.

FCTG Choice disappointment

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group says an attack on the company overnight by consumer group CHOICE is disappointing, given that "key elements of a comprehensive response relating to specific claims were ignored".

The consumer watchdog issued a follow-up to its recent report on the travel sector, which called for a range of reforms including standardising terms and conditions, clear refund policies and a Government-funded industry ombudsman (**TD** 08 Jul).

Last night's update noted that in Choice's travel cancellation survey of 4,443 Australians earlier this year "more than a few would-be travellers praised the efforts of travel agents in trying to resolve their issues".

However the consumer group called out Flight Centre as an exception because it was the subject of a high number of consumer complaints in the

survey, "though some customers did report positive experiences".

A Flight Centre spokesperson provided **TD** with the company's detailed response to Choice's queries, noting that some areas were "misunderstood or misrepresented" by the consumer group, in particular "an agent's ability to charge fees for the time they incur in securing refunds".

The company noted that claims travel vouchers are likely to expire before they can be redeemed were "unlikely to be the case," with Flight Centre credits currently valid until 31 Dec 2022 and that date set to be possibly extended in line with restrictions.

Flight Centre's initial \$300 cancellation fee refund policy was updated on 24 Apr 2020, just five weeks after Australia's borders closed, while the company also noted the hard work its staff had done to secure refunds from recalcitrant suppliers.

Qld rides the wave

THE Australian Surf Life Saving Championships has been secured for Queensland through a new decade-long deal.

Queensland Tourism Minister Stirling Hinchliffe said the events would inject \$100 million into the state's visitor economy over the course of the next 10 years.

Outrigger Thai buy

OUTRIGGER Hotels & Resorts has increased its presence in Thailand with new acquisitions.

The trio of beach resorts in Koh Samui, Phuket and Khao Lak will reopen under the Outrigger brand and management by the end of the year.

The three southern Thailand beach resorts consist of 372 keys in some of the most sought-after beach locations in Asia.

The investments are aligned with Outrigger's broader strategic regional expansion plan in the Asian region.

Did you know?

Travel & Cruise Weekly's fortnightly consumer magazine called **Keep Dreaming** is specially designed for agents to send their clients - giving you a reason to reach out to your database.

Keep Dreaming is full of destination articles, cruise stories and more to inspire.

Click here to view **Keep Dreaming** magazine

Click here for a toolkit to help you share it with clients



Travel & Cruise
Weekly

Bunnik unveils southern gem



BUNNIK Tours has added another domestic tour to its expanding local range, this time an 11-day exploration of Canberra and the Sapphire Coast.

Starting in the nation's capital, travellers will enjoy a behind-the-scenes look at Parliament House including a meal prepared by the building's chefs, as well as the chance to pay tribute to fallen soldiers at the Australian War Memorial, finishing with a Last Post Ceremony in the Commemorative Courtyard.

The next stop heads farther south to the NSW Eurobodalla region, famous for its ice cream,

milkshakes and wine culture.

After snacking on some of the cheese at Tilba Valley Winery & Ale House, guests then head to NSW's famous Sapphire Coast, visiting the towns of Merimbula, Eden and Pambula.

Highlights of this region include visits to picturesque ocean lookouts, world-renowned oyster farms and rugged goldfields.

The size of the tours are capped at 20 travellers and the price includes all sightseeing, accommodation and most meals.

Rates for the adventure lead in from \$4,495 per person.

Pictured: Merimbula boardwalk.

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Travel & Cruise
Weekly

AFTA UPDATE

from the Australian Federation of Travel Agents

IN THE midst of all the madness, it feels even more important than ever to celebrate the wins.

The very welcome decision last Fri from the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal Appeals in *Kiss v Parsons* is very much the

result of resilience, persistence and tenacity of travel agent Wendy Kiss.

She decided to appeal an initial decision of the Civil and Administrative Tribunal that she refund a client following cancellation of air travel by Air Canada and related holiday bookings with Momento Travel as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.

The decision highlights two key legal areas that have dominated the cancellation and refund space during COVID-19: agency and frustration.

The travel agency's Terms and Conditions made it very clear that it acts as an agent for the Third Party Travel Provider and that the Third Party Travel Provider is liable to the client for the Travel Product.

AFTA happily supported the initial appeal against the NCAT decision that the contract was frustrated and



that it was Wendy's responsibility to refund the client. Providing support in this way is always a decision that the Board takes very seriously.

Our focus in doing so was to reinforce the reality of the

role of the travel agent in the travel payment ecosystem and to make sure that travel agents are not unfairly and inequitably burdened.

It's definitely worth reading the full decision <https://www.caselaw.nsw.gov.au/decision/17a36235b7d6540ea850089>.

We also pay tribute to Wendy for her commitment to seeing this through to a second Appeal and achieving this result.

We are proud to have been a part of shaping the outcome.

As announced post AFTA's AGM last week, high on the priority list will be a review of both AFTA's Constitution and the ATAS Charter to make sure we are where we need to be.

We will continue to keep members updated.

These are just some of the priorities which new AFTA CEO Dean Long and the Board have on our list.

Agency test model

HAYS Travel, the UK's largest independent travel agency, has started offering COVID-19 testing kits that its clients can take with them on holidays to provide them more peace of mind on trips.

Teaming up with approved supplier Collinson Group to provide the government-approved tests, the agency has already seen a big uptake as Britons prepare for overseas summer holidays in destinations like Greece and Spain.

The agency is bundling the kits for the cheaper price of £33.60.

Sea-Blazer VIPs

VIRGIN Voyages has unveiled details of a new VIP program for passengers who manage to set sail with the line in 2021, offering prizes and perks in exchange for feedback on their first voyages.

The cruise line labels the group of cruise customers "Sea-Blazers", offering them an extra US\$125 when they purchase a pre-paid bar tab, US\$300 off their next sailing in 2022, as well as a yet-to-be-revealed limited exclusive welcome gift.

Further information on the new VIP offer is available [HERE](#).

Cruising Europe is one of the best ways to discover the continent - read more in the July issue of *travelBulletin*.

travelBulletin

CLICK to read

©Celebrity Cruises

Silversea overland

SILVERSEA Cruises has launched its World Cruise 2024 along with new overland journeys, including in Australia.

Cruisers will experience Uluru by flying from Darwin to spend a night in Australia's heartland.

Guests will also be welcomed to country and then have a native bush dinner under the stars at the Field of Lights.

Silversea said interest in the global cruise had so far witnessed "unprecedented demand".

Call 1300 306 872 for details.

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.733

THE Australian Dollar found itself struggling against most of the major currencies overnight as worries about the growing impact of the Delta variant of COVID-19 caused global sharemarkets to weaken.

A sharp increase in cases across Asia, along with a rise in developed economies like the US and UK, has seen markets worry the recent economic recovery will be threatened.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.733
UK	£0.536
NZ	\$1.058
Euro	€0.622
Japan	¥80.37
Thailand	฿24.11
China	¥4.763
South Africa	10.96
Canada	\$0.94
Crude oil	US\$73.59

Come and live like Kingsford



FOLLOWING a three-year, multi-million-dollar redevelopment by owners Stefan and Leanne Ahrens, the updated 16-suite Kingsford The Barossa has reopened to the public.

Catering to a maximum of 32 guests, the private retreat located near the Barossa Valley now features a Kegel Bahn bowling alley, the Peppertree Pool & Bar, and a cellar room with a long wine-tasting table.

Also new is the Orleana Restaurant and Lodge Bar serving a range of tasty dishes inspired by local Barossa ingredients and matched to the local wines.

The owners believe the property will appeal to both local and interstate visitors for a variety of reasons, from leisure travellers wanting something a little bit more luxurious, to special events



like weddings and functions.

"You come to Kingsford to share all of the Barossa experiences in one place, where you have privacy and exclusivity whilst savouring the best collections of food and wine we can offer," owner Stefan Ahrens said.

Commenting on the reopening, South Australian Tourism Commission Chief Executive Rodney Harrex said the property represented another great addition to the state's thriving accommodation sector.

"The opening of Kingsford The Barossa is superbly timed to leverage this opportunity - at a time when South Australia is punching above its weight and accommodation in our regions is so highly sought after," he said.

Pictured: The facade of the new Kingsford, and **inset left** is the bowling alley/bar area and **inset above** is the cellar room.

Get Local Oct shift

THE upcoming Get Local business events domestic showcase is now scheduled for 18-19 Oct, after the current NSW and Vic lockdowns put a spanner in previous plans for late Aug.

Co-owners Donna Kessler and Gary Bender said by Oct current restrictions and rules on group gatherings should have lifted - getlocalexpo.com.au.

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