



## French winners!

**THE** winners of the first two modules in the Hauts-de-France training platform (**TD** 20 Jan) have been announced as:

Module 1 (The Essentials of Northern France) - Josephine Hanney from Goldman Travel.

Module 2 (The Sir John Monash Centre) - Donna Sheehan, Cronulla Travel.

Both have won a special de Beaurepaire Wine Prize Pack and a Sir John Monash Centre book.

Advisors who complete all eight modules also go into a draw to win the ultimate Western Front Explorer Tour courtesy of Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours.

See [northernfrancetraining.com](http://northernfrancetraining.com).

## AC carbon target

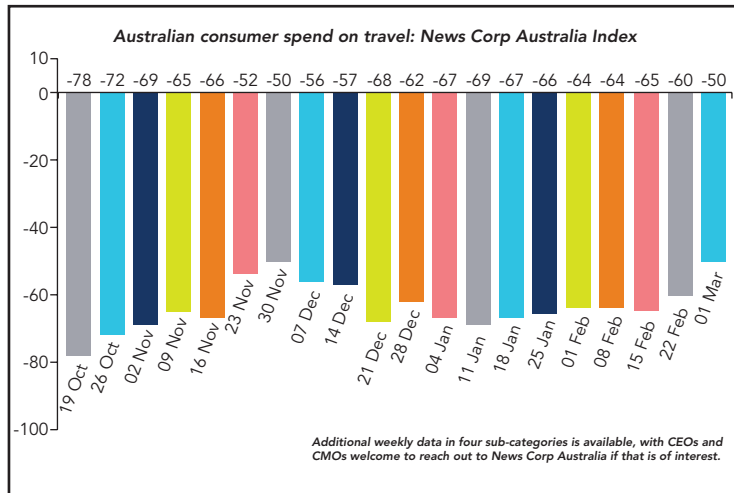
**AIR** Canada has announced its "long-term commitment to advancing climate change sustainability," with an ambitious target to realise a goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions throughout its global operations by 2050.

The carrier has also set net reduction targets by 2030 compared to a 2019 baseline, and has committed to investing CAD\$50m in sustainable aviation fuel and carbon reductions and removals from its business.

## Today's issue of TD

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

## A cracking week for spend



### EXCLUSIVE

**THE** latest exclusive News Corp Australia consumer travel spending figures showed a jump in consumer confidence, with the overall figures in the "best shape since the pandemic began," according to News Corp Head of Travel Dwayne Birtles.

While there is still a way to go, the positive outcome showed week-on-week growth across all travel categories, while the combined figures (pictured) are now 50% of what they were 12 months ago.

Birtles said the two showstopper categories this week were Cruise and Airline Spend Under \$350, which both posted the best week seen during the entire pandemic.

The air category is sitting at just 15% below its level a year ago, a strong 17-point week-on-week

jump, while cruise spending leapt 11 percentage points to be now down 62% on pre-pandemic levels - the first time it has been in the "60s" in over a year.

"With a boost in cruise sales being reported by the industry, it's a welcome nod that the love of cruise still sits firmly in Australian hearts," Birtles said, while the strong spike in airline sales was likely a reflection of customers booking Easter holidays as well as an uplift in interstate corporate travel.

Accommodation also did well, but the figures are skewed by monthly timeshare payments.

The next reported week will reflect the most recent period of COVID cases spiking in Qld and NSW, but with all domestic borders still open the industry can hope for another week of recovery, Birtles concluded.

## EK/TP codeshare

**EMIRATES** has expanded its codeshare partnership with TAP Air Portugal, with the deal including support for TP as it "investigates flying to Dubai".

The new agreement kicks off from 01 May, and will see expanded cooperation on frequent flyer programs as well as the TP code being placed on EK flights to Barcelona, Delhi, Male, Jakarta, Manila, Mexico City, Mumbai, Osaka, Taipei, Tokyo Narita, Hanoi and Bali.

In return EK customers will have access to additional domestic destinations in Portugal as well as TP ports in the USA, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Senegal, Gambia, Morocco, Tunisia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Conakry and Cape Verde.

## We are Bjorn to fly

**THREE** former Norwegian Air Shuttle and OSM Aviation executives - all named Bjorn! - have announced the formation of Norse Atlantic Airways, a low-cost long-haul carrier to debut in Dec.

Bjorn Tore Larsen, Bjorn Kljos and Bjorn Kise are in talks to lease 12 Boeing 787 aircraft which were previously operated by the now defunct Norwegian Air Shuttle long-haul operation.

Destinations flagged include New York, Los Angeles, Miami, London, Paris and Oslo.

Larsen said the post-pandemic world provides an "historic opportunity to build a new airline from the start".



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## Intrepid goes upmarket

**INTREPID** Travel this morning launched a new Intrepid Premium range of tours, targeting “discerning travellers” with hand-picked accommodation, private transport, train journeys and signature experiences.

The program features more than 70 new trips with scheduled departures from Jan 2022 spanning over 40 countries.

“With our aim to become a world leader in sustainable, experience-rich travel, we identified that many of our customers were seeking a higher-end product with purpose,” said Intrepid CEO James Thornton.

“As we continue to prepare for a gradual and sustainable recovery, we saw Premium as an opportunity to build a new style of tour that ensures local communities truly benefit from high-value tourism...we wanted to show that a premium product can also deliver on a premium

purpose,” he added.

The new range of premium adventures include accommodation at a special cave hotel in Cappadocia in Turkey, stays at an eco-lodge in Uganda’s Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, as well as signature experiences such as a sand dune dinner under the stars in Pushkar in India.

Another option on offer is a special community stay in Peru that features meet and greets with the Ese Eja people, an indigenous community considered to be the stewards of the Peruvian rainforest.

Highlight packages include a 13-day Premium Vietnam and Cambodia tour priced from \$4,595 per person, as well as a nine-day Premium Peru adventure leading in at \$4,395 per person.

All tours will be led by handpicked Intrepid expert guides - for more info, [CLICK HERE](#).

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and it’s all included.



MTA Advisor Julie Evans

Let’s chat - 1300 682 000 | [mtatravel.com.au/joinus](http://mtatravel.com.au/joinus)



## Qatar smells sweet

**QATAR** Airways has launched a worldwide exclusive partnership with perfume house Diptyque, which will see the airline introduce complimentary Diptyque luxurious toiletries for First and Business class passengers to use on flights and premium airport lounges.

The luxury range includes velvet hand lotion, infused facial water, shower gels, shampoo, conditioner and body lotion.

## Viking names its Feb winners

**VIKING** has named Bicton Travel’s Phil Smethurst as the Feb winner of its latest agent incentive, taking home \$5,000 worth of Viking points.

Angas Travel’s Kate Collins took out second prize, which was \$2,500 worth of points, while Helloworld Saints Road’s Drew Currell claimed third prize, winning \$1,000 of points value.

## Window Seat

**FORMER INXS** rocker Andrew Farriss (pictured) is set to put the rural Queensland town of Gympie on the international stage with the release of the music video for his new song, “Run Baby Run”.

Ahead of the debut of his self-titled solo album this Fri, the video sees Farriss rocking aboard the Mary Valley Rattler heritage railway line.

We hope the rock musician’s endorsement of rural Queensland will have travellers singing the region’s praises.




COVID-19 AIRLINE RATING SKYTRAX

COVID-19 AIRPORT RATING SKYTRAX

## Enhancing safety with ‘Zero-Touch’ technology

As we continually enhance our safety measures, we are pleased to be the first global airline to offer 100 percent Zero-Touch technology for our award-winning Oryx One in-flight entertainment system. This innovation, offered across our A350 fleet, will limit on-board surface contact, providing greater peace of mind for our passengers.

Click [here](#) to learn more.



**QATAR** AIRWAYS القطرية

GOING PLACES TOGETHER



## SIA feels the pinch

**DEMAND** for international passenger air travel on board Singapore Airlines continued to be “severely dampened”, the carrier has reported, with its year-on-year capacity contracting by 75.6% for Feb 2021.

Overall passenger carriage, measured in revenue passenger-kilometres, was lower by 96.6%, resulting in a Group passenger load factor of 9.7% - a decline of 59.4% year-on-year.

Passengers carried for Feb 2021 was 67,700, a close to 97% drop on the Feb 2020 period.

## Crowne seamless meetings launch

**IHG** Hotels & Resorts has launched Crowne Plaza Connections, enabling access to seamless hybrid meetings across 12 properties in Australia.

The connectivity enables live-streaming through Microsoft Teams, Webex, Zoom and more.

## Teaming up to buy

**BLACKSTONE** Real Estate Partners and Starwood Capital Group have formed a 50/50 joint venture in order to acquire Extended Stay America (ESA).

The apartment hotel chain yesterday signed a definitive agreement which will see the joint venture pay US\$19.50 per paired share in an all-cash transaction valued at approximately US\$6 billion.

Extended Stay is positioned as a mid-class hotel brand that focuses on lodging for guests interested staying for weeks and not days, typically offering guests kitchen facilities and more space than a standard hotel room.

The company was also helped along by a demand for essential workers staying at its hotels during 2020, achieving a 74% occupancy rate last year.

Completion of the transaction is expected to occur in the second quarter of 2021 and is contingent upon closing conditions.

## No more lounging around

**VIRGIN** Australia has now completed the reopening of all its domestic lounges, with Canberra the final location to formally relaunch to the public today.

The seven lounges are now open for business in line with a rising demand for interstate travel in Australia following increased confidence on the back of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

Each of the lounges have been given a fresh makeover in preparation for the airline reaching pre-COVID capacity by Jul, with the Canberra location now featuring a new menu for customers including a selection of sandwiches, salads, wraps and healthy snacks which are prepared on site.

“As travel demand continues to strengthen, and state borders remain open, we’re excited to offer a fantastic network of domestic lounges for our frequent flyers to access at major

airports around Australia,” the carrier said in a statement today.

“Guests of our Canberra lounge will be able to enjoy our new menu which is gradually rolling-out across the network.

“Virgin Australia is committed to offering its frequent flyers lounges and looks forward to welcoming guests as they return to leisure and corporate travel.”

The latest opening in Canberra follows the recent unveiling of Virgin’s “lounge of the future” concept at Adelaide Airport late last month (**TD** 24 Feb).

**MEANWHILE** Virgin Australia is reportedly in “advanced discussions” to lease eight additional Boeing 737s to help boost its local capacity in anticipation of a rapid recovery.

If successful, the deal would see the carrier keep pace with rival Qantas which will lease 14 Embraer E190s from Alliance Airlines from Jun (**TD** 04 Feb).

## EMAIL MARKETING MANAGER (1 YEAR CONTRACT)



We’re looking for an accomplished Email Marketing Manager to join our dynamic team.

The ideal candidate will have a minimum of seven years’ experience in a marketing role with at least four years’ in email marketing, and demonstrated success in creating and delivering high-impact, unique marketing campaigns that drive engagement and convert bookings.

Responsible for owning the creation and execution of effective email marketing strategies, this role will also drive lead generation and past passenger marketing.

We are looking for:

- Hands-on experience working with complex EDM platforms and HTML
- Excellent copywriting skills and ability to produce well-crafted and engaging content
- Experience in interpreting and using effective customer segmentation
- An understanding of the metrics that drive our business objectives
- A creative yet strategic thinker able to successfully influence our customer and generate results

Viking is the world’s leading river and small-ship cruise operator. This is an opportunity to join a recognised industry leader and be part of a fun and friendly team. With eight new ships set to launch over the next two years, now is the perfect time to become a Viking!

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**Apply via LinkedIn or  
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your resume to  
jobsau@vikingcruises.com**

**Applications close  
28 March 2021**

## It's a runaway Judy!



**ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K)** recently bid farewell to Private Travel Manager Judy Harris (pictured), who has retired after 25 years with the company.

"It is impossible to overstate the contribution Judy has had at A&K in her 25-year tenure," Abercrombie & Kent posted on its LinkedIn account.

"Judy has been a mentor, an inspiration, not to mention the



immeasurable impact of her travel expertise on the many guests she has helped embark on incredible adventures."

Melbourne-based Harris lists her personal travel philosophy as being "the best travel is travel shared with others - no matter your age, budget or destination."

Her career travel highlights included journeying to the centre of the earth riding in a cage in a Reykjavik volcano in Iceland and taking a trip aboard the Royal Scotsman luxury train.

## LATAM dips a third

**LATAM Airlines'** operational capacity projections for Mar 2021 will reach just 35% of the same month in 2019.

The airline plans to operate 675 daily domestic and international flights for this month, after Feb traffic was 27.3% in relation to the same period in 2019, with the COVID impacted 2020 Mar period excluded for comparison in order to provide a more accurate rebound picture.

Colombian operations are leading the resurgence, which measured 58% of operations compared to Mar 2019.

## AFTA UPDATE

from the Australian Federation of Travel Agents

**IN LAUNCHING** the Morrison-McCormack Government's \$1.2 billion support package last Thu, the Government committed to the extension of the \$128 million Consumer Travel Support

Program for three months beyond 13 Mar plus an additional \$130 million for round two of the program.

Government has also continued to evolve its SME Recovery Loan Scheme and "will work with lenders to ensure that eligible firms will have access to finance to maintain and grow their businesses when JobKeeper ends". This will see Government guarantee 80% of the loan amount with lenders allowed to offer a repayment holiday of up to 24 months - <https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus/sme-recovery-loan-scheme>.

Securing initial support for our members and our sector and securing ongoing support has and will continue to be a priority for the AFTA Board and team.

It's time-consuming and involves considerable to-ing and fro-ing. It can be and has been frustrating. But it's the process that we must go through.

Our Board, which reflects the diversity of our membership base, is in there day in, day out alongside the AFTA team



afta

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF TRAVEL AGENTS

championing the needs of all AFTA members.

Let's remember what we have achieved. We managed to secure an initial \$128m for our sector. We have now managed to secure an

additional \$130 million.

We have added our voice to the wider calls for other additional measures to be introduced, expanded and extended.

We have done this by working together within the AFTA community, and across the tourism sector with other bodies including CATO and CLIA, and then more widely to make sure that our needs are understood, along with the results of failing to support us.

We continue to work hard to make sure the political intent and support is optimally translated at an implementation level.

This week we begin a series of meetings with Austrade on the equalisation of round one of the COVID-19 Consumer Support Travel Grant scheme and on the refinement of the approach for round two.

Remember, this is new ground for Government and Government agencies too. As we keep saying, there are a lot of moving parts to get right. AFTA is in there, working hard and we will continue to do so.

## Ansett schools VA

**ANSETT** Aviation Training has expanded its business relationship with Virgin Australia, with the co-branding of a second Brisbane Training Centre.

The relationship will also see Ansett assume maintenance of Virgin's Boeing 737 simulators, to be located at Brisbane Airport.

Ansett Chief Executive Officer David Garside said the centre will build on Ansett's commitment to providing safe and reliable training equipment.

He added the centre will offer Virgin Australia everything from flight simulators to cabin and aircrew training facilities.

## KAYAK hotel launch

**ONLINE** travel agency KAYAK has opened its first hotel in Miami, KAYAK Miami Beach.

Launching in partnership with Life House, the hotel will integrate with KAYAK's Trips feature so travellers can connect their inbox, receive real-time alerts, and easily organise their travel itineraries.

KAYAK Miami Beach will feature amenities such as Apple TVs, contactless check-in, and Marshall speakers in every room.

The hotel will also serve as a "behind-the-scenes design lab" for KAYAK to build and refine its accommodation technology.

## Unscramble

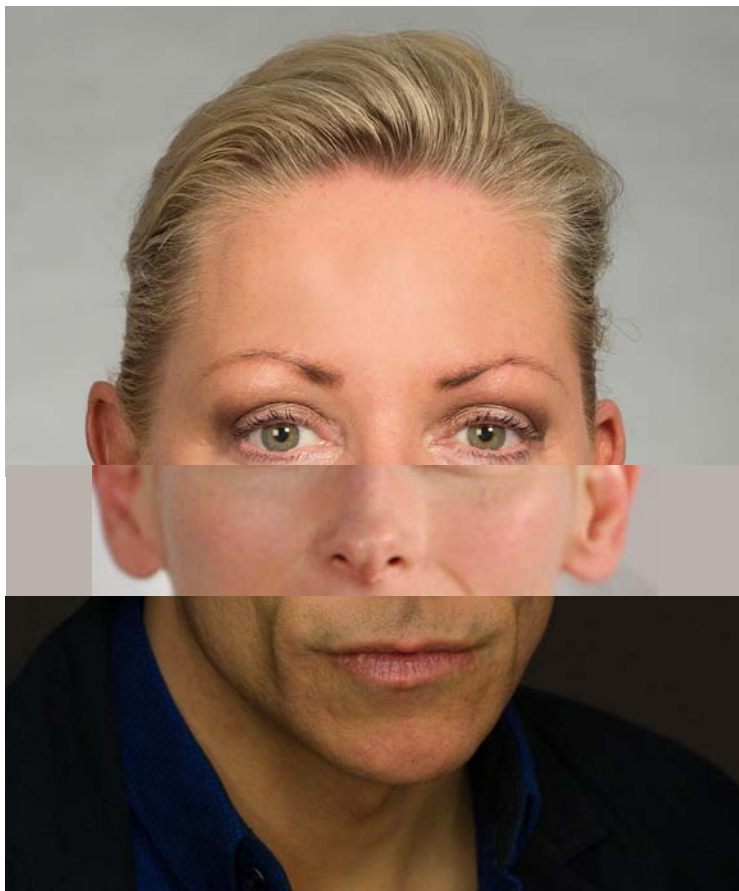
**HOW** many words can you make out of these nine letters? Every word needs to include the centre letter, have four letters or more and not be a proper noun or a plural. You can only use each letter once.

A	T	D
V	I	A
T	C	E

Good – 15 words  
 Very good – 23 words  
 Excellent – 30 words

NOTE: We've used Chambers Dictionary to decide what words are acceptable.

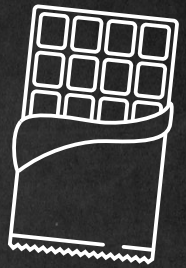
## Famous faces



**THERE** are three different faces that make up this picture. They are a mixture of famous celebrities and travel names. Can you figure out who the

eyes, nose and mouth in this picture belong to? And don't worry if you can't guess them all, two out of three ain't bad!

## Get your chocolate fix



**THIS** tasty twist on your traditional hot chocolate comes from Travelmarvel who have created a special Insider Experience for guests to enjoy when visiting Bridestowe Lavender Estate in Tasmania.

online or in person if you're visiting.

Make sure to send your recipes to [chocolate@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:chocolate@traveldaily.com.au).

It's a quick and easy way to get your chocolate fix.

The recipe uses culinary-grade lavender which can be purchased from the estate

xx Jenny

Jenny Piper  
 Owner,  
 Business  
 Publishing  
 Group



### Lavender Hot Chocolate

SERVES 2-3

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1L of milk
- 120g good quality dark chocolate
- 1 tbsp of Bridestowe Culinary Lavender
- 2 tbsp caster sugar

#### METHOD

##### HOT CHOCOLATE

Break chocolate into small pieces. Put the milk and the chocolate in a saucepan. Place over a low heat, stirring occasionally until the chocolate melts and the milk is steaming. Do not allow the milk to boil. Add the lavender sugar (see recipe below) and whisk until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture is foamy. Serve in your favourite mugs!

##### LAVENDER SUGAR

Crush the Culinary Lavender with a pestle and mortar or grind with 1 tablespoon of the sugar in a spice or coffee grinder. Mix thoroughly with the remaining sugar. Store in an airtight container.

### ANSWERS 15 MAR

Where in the world: Gellert Baths, Budapest, Hungary

Pick the nation: France

Whose mascot is this: Wenlock and Mandeville - London Olympics 2012

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



## Rocky delays season

**ROCKY** Mountaineer will delay the start of its Canadian travel season this year until 01 Jun, while the inaugural season of its new Rockies to the Red Rocks route in the USA is being extended by four weeks.

The preview season for the US route between Moab, Utah and Denver, Colorado starts on 15 Aug, and will now run through until 19 Nov with additional rail cars and 16 new departure dates added in response to demand.

The company has also confirmed the departure of CEO Steve Sammut, while founder Peter Armstrong has stepped back into the role of interim CEO.

Rocky Mountaineer is currently recruiting for a replacement.

## VA slots another goal



**VIRGIN** Australia continues its run of recent announcements by revealing it will continue to be the official airline partner of the AFL and AFLW until 2025.

The new five-year extension agreement will see the carrier fly all 32 teams around the country, including players and coaching staff, adding approximately 16,000 seats booked by the clubs each season.

"The AFL and Virgin Australia have both had a challenging 12 months, but we've come out the other side, stronger, fitter, better, re-energised and ready for the season ahead," said VA CEO and Managing Director Jayne Hrdlicka.

"We're proud to be continuing our partnership until 2025, helping Australians all over the country connect with their love of this great game," she added.

The new agreement will also see Virgin Australia continue to develop its Footy Families grassroots engagement platform, with both partners to collaborate on marketing efforts such as ad campaigns on-ground activations.

**Pictured:** Hrdlicka flanked by Izzy Huntington (Bulldogs), Sam Docherty (Carlton), Trent Cotchin (Richmond) and Kaitlyn Ashmore (North Melbourne).

## Airline COVID move

**NAURU** Airlines has signed a contract with airport technology provider Ink Aviation to use its Health APIS tool in a bid to restart international operations to destinations such as Australia.

The carrier said Health APIS will help coordinate COVID testing and lab integrity checks for its customers which will run through key government, airport and airline filters to eliminate fraud.

Nauru Airlines added the tool would be particularly helpful when travelling to Australia which has "strict" health protocols.

## MONEY

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

**AU\$1 = US\$0.774**

**AIRLINES** helped to lead the Dow Jones higher as investors become more optimistic about the potential for international travel starting again soon.

However, the Australian dollar remained largely steady this week in anticipation of what the Reserve Bank of Australia says today in relation to calming local bond yields.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.774
UK	£0.557
NZ	\$1.075
Euro	€0.649
Japan	¥84.58
Thailand	฿23.82
China	¥5.037
South Africa	11.521
Canada	\$0.966
Crude oil	US\$69.22



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