

Qld maps rebound

THE Qld Government has created a special taskforce of senior business leaders to help chart the rebound of its battered \$25.5 billion tourism sector.

The expert committee will be chaired by Intrepid and North Qld Airports Non-Executive Director Liz Savage, who will be joined by former Tourism Australia CEO Andrew McEvoy and Tourism and Events Qld Chair Brett Godfrey.

Together the panel will canvass how to rebuild airline capacity, create new projects to spur visitation, differentiate the destination against domestic competitors, and attract more marquee events to the state.

"We are seeing that COVID has changed the way people travel and how they spend their time away...this is the opportunity to make sure Queensland's offerings match what potential visitors will be seeking," Savage said.

New Gong for Oz

NH HOTEL Group has announced its debut in the Australian market, revealing plans to open the 240-room NH Hotel Wollongong in Q3 2023.

To be located on Burelli Street, the property will feature a restaurant and bar with all-day dining, conference and event facilities and a modern gym.

The hotel aims to bring an "easy-going, urban and fresh" service to the market, with the brand already operating locations in Europe, Africa & Latin America.

The luck of the airlines

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents has pledged to fight for better outcomes for its members, with yesterday's shock announcement of the so-called "QantasKeeper" payments to aviation workers (**TD** breaking news) set to be a hot topic in meetings in Canberra today.

QF staff unable to work due to the closure of international borders will receive \$500 a week in support under last week's \$1.2 billion aviation and tourism package, until the expected late Oct dropping of restrictions.

An update to AFTA members this morning from CEO Darren Rudd said the organisation was continuing to "squeeze out as much support as quickly as possible to keep you and your business and our sector alive."

"If aviation workers deserve 'direct support payments', given we work in the same sector and have been even harder hit than the airlines, then so do we," Rudd wrote, with the move announced to QF staff prompting white-hot outrage across the travel sector.

"You, our members, just like aviation workers, need and deserve proportionate, timely, scaleable and targeted assistance too...we have been arguing this for some time," the AFTA CEO

added, reiterating AFTA's "acute awareness" of the looming 31 Mar end of JobKeeper.

AFTA is also continuing to work through the design and delivery mechanism of the second round of the COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support Package, with the additional \$130 million described as a "significant win".

Interestingly, the update also hinted at a less-than-united front with other industry organisations.

"In representing the needs of our membership base, AFTA has a very specific agenda... where appropriate we combine our activities with other representative bodies from CATO and CLIA through to TTF.

"But there are also times when an all-in approach would be counterproductive," AFTA wrote.

MEANWHILE PM Scott Morrison is now rapidly back-peddalling over the direct booking aspects of the airline support deal - see **p three**.

Considering options

THE Travel Community Hub will host one of its highly popular webinars next Fri, with CATO Board Member, Aaron Zoanetti from Pointon Partners Lawyers and Shaun Matthews of Cor Cordis discussing the legal options for travel businesses.

With so many questions swirling about industry survival and shutdown, this is a must attend free session - register now **HERE**.

March on Canberra?

THE outpouring of anger over JobKeeper's extension for aviation workers (**TD** breaking news) has prompted a proposal for a travel industry "March on Parliament".

Michael West from Goldman Travel is urging the industry to convene next Wed 24 Mar, using online hashtags #TravelKeeper and #TravelOnParliament to rally everyone to the cause - info via travelonparliament@gmail.com.

Today's issue of TD

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



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Tasmanian agent grants

THE Tasmanian Government has announced \$1 million in funding to support the state's beleaguered travel agent community, as well as money for tourism operators and a target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2025.

Premier Peter Gutwein unveiled the moves earlier this week in a "State of the State" address, confirming money under the programs would begin to flow from early next month.

With the local tourism sector having been the "hardest hit by travel bans and restrictions," he said \$8 million will be provided in innovation and development grants to "continue to enhance Tasmania's world-class experience reputation".

"Additionally, we will also provide \$4 million in direct financial support to tourism and hospitality businesses identified as critical to regional visitor attraction that remain in acute financial stress as a result of the restrictions on travel due to the COVID-19 response," he said.

"There is no doubt travel agents, which have been hard

hit through COVID-19, will be instrumental in helping to drive demand, and we will also provide \$1 million in grant funds to support Tasmanian travel agents, with a program to be rolled out through Business Tasmania from 04 Apr," Gutwein promised.

Some of the funding for tourism and travel will come from \$5 million which remains unspent from a travel voucher scheme rolled out last year.

Tourism Tasmania will also invest \$3.5 million in the state's most aggressive winter marketing campaign ever, courtesy of Austrade's Recovery for Regional Tourism initiative.

"Complementing the Australian Government's \$1.2 billion tourism recovery package announced last week, delivering discounted flights into regional areas, we anticipate Tasmania to be red hot this winter," the Premier said.

Gutwein said making Tasmania a carbon neutral destination would also tap into a massive opportunity, with "more travellers than ever proactively selecting climate positive destinations".

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TA app agreement

TOURISM Australia has signed a deal with the CamperMate app which has seen more than 200 signature road trip and campervan experiences across multiple categories added.

The partnership was formed as part of the Holiday Here This Year campaign and will aim to inspire more domestic travel bookings, as well as purchase pre-trip and in-trip holiday experiences.

WA changes chief

THE Western Australian Government has a new Tourism Minister, with David Templeman assuming the portfolio today from Paul Papalia, who had been in the role since 2017.

The tourism brief was changed as part of a wider Cabinet reshuffle actioned by Premier Mark McGowan after his landslide election win last week.

Templeman was most recently the Minister for Local Government, Heritage, and Culture and the Arts, and before that held portfolios across climate change, child protection, volunteering and seniors.



Window Seat

DISNEYLAND California is finally set to reopen on 30 Apr after an extended coronavirus shutdown - but prospective attendees are being warned about screaming on rides, no matter how thrilling they are.

Other parks in the state are also set to return to operation next month, under guidelines which initially restrict visitation to locals only, and groups to a maximum of 10 from no more than three households.

There's likely to be much less crowding, with initial capacity limited to 15% of normal levels - and there will be initiatives in place to limit the COVID-19 impact of roller coaster yells.

The California Attractions and Parks Association, which represents theme parks across the state, has prepared a "responsible reopening plan" which also mandates use of face coverings to "mitigate the effects of shouting".



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Travel Daily

Agents set to fill the gap

TRAVEL agents will play an “instrumental” role in the resurgence of the travel sector towards a post-pandemic world,” G Adventures Chief Executive Officer Bruce Poon Tip believes. Speaking from Canada during an online briefing today, Poon Tip said agents had always been at the coalface of global crises throughout history and the COVID pandemic would be no different.

“After there is any major disruption in travel, whether that’s SARS, tsunamis or 9/11, the travel agent always rides it back a hero and this has never been more the case than now,” he said.

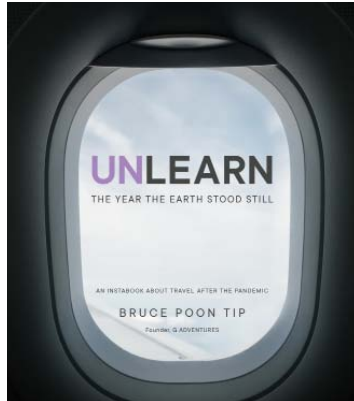
“Even now, the way travel agents are communicating with their customers to keep them abreast of what’s happening about things like vaccines, getting people to be ready to travel again and creating those conversations to get people to feel safe again, that is really how the travel agent becomes instrumental in the relaunch,” Poon Tip added.

When asked about the plight of travel agents in Australia and NZ and the likelihood of the sector emerging from the crisis much smaller than when the pandemic began, the G Adventures chief said it could represent a number of potential advantages.

“I just see opportunity and upside, there’s going to be the same amount of travellers but less sellers of travel, that is going to be a huge opportunity for the industry,” Poon Tip said.

“Not necessarily for me as I will have less points-of-sale, I have to be concerned about that but for you as an agent...there will be a great opportunity for the travel industry when there are less agents and the same amount of product & customers,” he added.

Poon Tip also believes the trade is playing a vital role right now during the travel shutdown in terms of nurturing relationships with travellers and priming them for future trips.



“The most important thing we can do is educate customers as to how to travel differently on the other side and the travel agent plays the biggest part,” he said.

“You can also create a conversation with your customers that transcends travel, right now you can’t sell them anything outside of domestic but you can create dialogues...keep them up-to-date with what’s happening, instead of reading headline news, read a scientific report and disseminate that information to your customers in terms of the rebound...be that source of information and provide light and comfort to get people to want to travel again.”

Poon Tip added that global surveys conducted by G Adventures also showed the crisis had served to spike demand for international travel, with 59% of respondents suggesting they wanted to head overseas more than they did before the pandemic, however 77% indicated they were yet to book their next overseas holiday, with 69% stating border closures to be the primary reason for not making that booking right now.

MEANWHILE Poon Tip’s free online book *Unlearn: The Year the Earth Stood Still* is available for download, with a vision of what tourism may look like on the other side of the pandemic.

Written while in isolation back in Apr 2020, the book (pictured) is available at unlearn.travel.

FCTG’s message of hope

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group has marked tomorrow’s one-year anniversary of Australia’s closure of int’l borders by taking a full page advertisement in *The Australian* (pictured).

The open letter from founder Graham Turner reflects on the challenges all Australians have faced over the last 12 months and thanks customers and Flight Centre staff, past and present.

“Overnight our business went from making travel dreams come true, to orchestrating rescue missions...I am proud to say that our expert team of travel agents have brought home over 20,000 Australians that were stuck overseas since the pandemic started, and we have refunded \$1.3 billion (and counting!) in refunds to Flight Centre clients for cancelled holidays,” he said.

Skroo notes a strong upwards trend for interstate



domestic travel, as well as encouraging signs for the return of international flights amid potential Singapore and New Zealand travel bubbles, with NZ to possibly be announced on Mon.

The full letter can be viewed by [CLICKING HERE](#).

Industry epiphany for ScoMo, Tehan

PRIME Minister Scott Morrison and Tourism Minister Dan Tehan have suddenly appeared to see the light, with the PM yesterday telling Parliament that “one of the key things we’ve been working on with the tourism and travel sector is to ensure that the discounted flights that have been made available in the new travel package will be combined with other product packages, packaged up together, and distributed and sold through the travel agent network”.

That’s somewhat different to the rhetoric used during the announcement of the \$1.2 billion package, when consumers were told to go directly to airlines to book the Govt-backed fares.

Tehan also backed the new messaging, saying “we want to make sure that we’re providing the support that travel agents need in this country...we want to make sure that we can carry as many travel agents through this pandemic as we possibly can.”

“One of the key designs of our discounted flights is that we want to encourage Australians to book them through their travel agents...I say to all Australians: do your patriotic duty and get out there and book your discounted flights through your travel agent”.

Royal tripled for 22

ROYAL Caribbean International (RCI) will sail three ships in local waters in 2022/23, including two Quantum class vessels.

Ovation of the Seas and *Radiance of the Seas* will sail from Sydney, while *Ovation’s* sister ship *Quantum of the Seas* will sail from the new Brisbane International Cruise Terminal, offering more South Pacific sailings across the school holidays than ever before.

Bookings for the season, which sails from Oct 2022, will open on Thu, with the three ships to offer 66 two-to-19-night cruises to ports throughout Australia, as well as Fiji, New Caledonia, New Zealand and Vanuatu.

The season also features more two- or three-night weekend samplers than previously.

For further information, call 1800 754 500.

Edwards to Explore

FORMER NRMA Tourism and Leisure Holdings sales chief Michael Edwards has been appointed the MD of adventure tourism specialist Explore.

London-based Edwards, whose career has also included senior roles in Europe with Intrepid and G Adventures, will report to Joe Ponte, now CEO of Explore’s parent firm Hotelplan UK.

CORPORATE UPDATE

FCM integrates 4D Consulting

FOLLOWING the completion of the merger of Flight Centre Travel Group's (FCTG) meetings & events brand events into FCM Meetings & Events (**TD** 07 Oct 2020), FCTG has also revealed 4D Consulting will integrate with FCM Australia.

The move will see the entity operate as FCM Consulting, creating another specialist division within FCM Australia.

The transition of the two brands will boost the businesses' client servicing capabilities, and opens the door to customers looking for new opportunities to create efficiencies and drive value on their travel spend.

It also presents new avenues for customers keen to drive engagement and connect with their employees or other stakeholders through innovative meeting and event solutions.

FCM Australia General Manager Melissa Elf welcomed the expansion, and said the new operational structure was a logical and exciting step forward for the travel group.

"It makes sense to have both these specialist services within the FCM brand, with many of our clients also having sizeable

meetings and events programs that run alongside their travel programs," said Elf.

"Additionally, large market clients will often look to a consultant when they need in-depth or complex work carried out by a team that is structured for and highly experienced in travel program deep diving.

"From a customer's perspective, they can expect a smoother and more cohesive approach to holistic travel program management because of improved accessibility and integrated systems between our business divisions.

Elf added the change will provide added flexibility for clients to tap into the expertise of these areas to harness further program efficiencies.

The most recent merger follows FCM's announcement of an end-to-end rebrand (**TD** 10 Mar).

Travelport's first Qantas NDC trips

IT'S now more than 18 months since the global travel agency community was forced to join the Qantas Channel, and Travelport is now finally celebrating its very first NDC booking with the carrier.

The first QF NDC tickets to be issued via Travelport's Smartpoint desktop were booked by "early adopters" ATPI and Maxim's Travel, with the first passenger on an NDC booking flying from Sydney to Melbourne yesterday.

From next month the platform will roll out to other Travelport connected agents, offering key servicing functions including refunds, automated exchangers and schedule changes.

QF Executive Manager Global Sales & Distribution, Igor Kwiatkowski, said "despite the significant impact of COVID on airlines globally, Qantas remains committed to progressing our NDC program with our key partners like Travelport".

GBTA backs vax

MEMBERS of the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) have overwhelmingly backed vaccination passports as a means of enabling employees to safely resume business travel.

The outcome of the organisation's 17th COVID-19 poll found two thirds of members and stakeholders believe implementing Digital Health Verification to open travel and reduce the need for mandatory quarantine is a good policy.

Those who were against the idea were mostly opposed on the basis of privacy concerns.

The poll also found rising optimism among the industry as vaccines roll out.



One Rudd worth a thousand words



LAST week 1000 Mile Travel Group welcomed AFTA CEO Darren Rudd for a one-on-one catch up to discuss the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the corporate travel sector.

1000 MTG MD Ben Ross and co-founder Nicola Veltman (pictured with Darren Rudd) were able to relate how their business had pivoted over the last 12 months, and what they believe is needed moving forward for the industry, the company and home-based travel agents.

"Whilst it is challenging times, it is very reassuring to know Darren is hitting the pavement drumming up support to keep as many agents and agencies in business as he can," Ross said.

"The strong united message which Darren is across is domestic borders need to stay open, grants distributed quickly and fairly without so much red tape, lobbying the government into 2021/22 to understand the plight of the travel agent, lessons learnt from COVID-19 in the last 12 months and what we need to do moving forward," he added.

"We live in a new world of travel where travel companies and travel experts are needed more than ever...we will keep fighting and we will survive."

In an AFTA member update this morning (see **page one**) Rudd noted the importance of the Federation's Meet The Member visits to gather stories.

"The ability for example, to be able to share the frontline reality from agents and member businesses in Kooyong, the Federal Treasurer's electorate, should not be underestimated in boosting our case," he said.

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Icon under a microscope



THIS landmark is iconic and easily recognisable when you see the whole picture, but can you identify it from this small portion of the image?

Despite most people referring to

this landmark by one name, that is actually the nickname of the bell inside this tower.

It is actually called Elizabeth Tower and is built in a neo-Gothic style and stands 96m tall.

Test your knowledge

FOR travel, flying is a key part of our industry, and it's also full of symbols and acronyms.

Agents have to know airport codes, airline codes, airline liveries and more.

How well do you know the aviation industry? Do you know what airports these codes stand for, and what plane liveries are pictured?

AIRPORT CODES

1. CMB
2. BAH
3. PLO
4. ZHR

2



AIRLINE LIVERIES

1



3



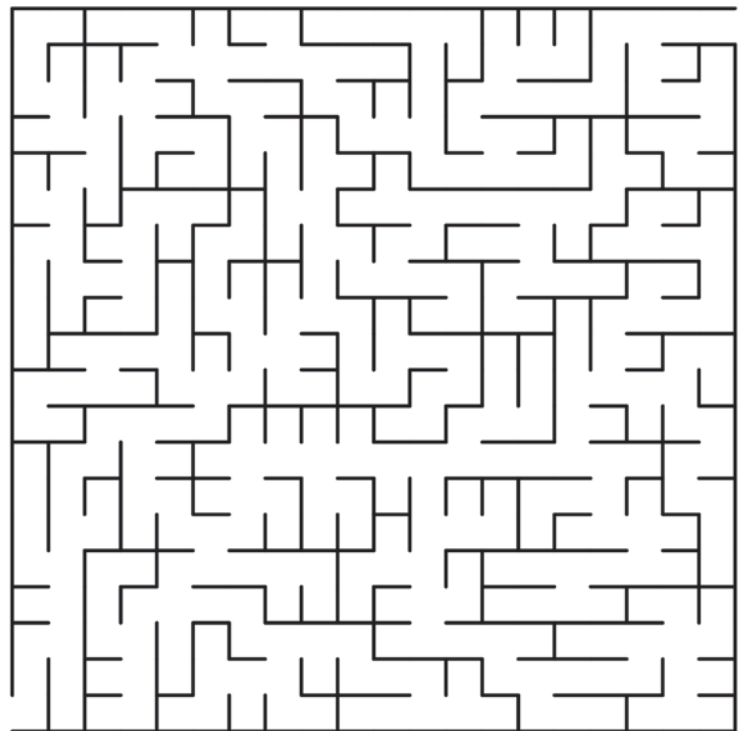
Pub quiz

1. Las Vegas' Bellagio was built on the site of what demolished hotel-casino?
2. The Brooklyn Bridge spans which waterway?
3. Which London landmark sits on Ludgate Hill?
 - a) Big Ben
 - b) Tower of London
 - c) St Paul's Cathedral
4. Which was the first Australian city to be lit by hydroelectricity?
5. What is the largest island in the Bass Strait?
6. What golf course is rated as Australia's top public access course?
7. After Slovaks, which is the second most-represented ethnic group in Slovakia?
8. Which four countries have territory in the region known as Fennoscandia?
9. Melville and Bathurst Islands are part of which island group?
10. True or false: Japan is one of the world's 10 most populous countries?

A-maze-ing

CAN you find your way through this maze?

Start at the top right and finish in the bottom left.



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ANSWERS 18 MAR

Pub quiz: 1 Richmond, 2 April, 3 Cobbold Gorge, 4 Survivor, 5 Spirit of the Outback, 6 Charleville, 7 26, 8 Barcardine, 9 Cloncurry, 10 Longreach

Where in the world: Australian Age of Dinosaurs, Winton, Queensland, Australia

Whose animal is this: Markhor - Pakistan

Know your brands: 1 Adelaide Airport, 2 Reddit, 3 Oronot, 4 Caltex

CX ticks digital trial

CATHAY Pacific is pursuing the adoption of digital travel passes, having completed its latest trial of the technology on a Hong Kong-Los Angeles flight on Mon.

Flight CX880's pilots and cabin crew volunteered to trial CommonPass, which involved a pre-departure rapid PCR test to personalise the technology.

CommonPass includes a traveller's name, document number, and negative COVID-19 PCR test confirmation, as required by authorities.

MEANWHILE, Korean Air will trial the International Air Transport Association's Travel Pass on the airline's Incheon-Los Angeles KE011 flight in May, which will be preceded by an internal test.

Pre- and post-trends

BOOKING.COM has revealed the top 20 destinations in Australia, both pre-pandemic and now, comparing how demand has shifted since international borders closed 12 months ago.

In good news for Australian destinations struggling to attract travellers due to uncertainty over state border closures, escapes from urban life remain at the top of the list, with beach locales such as Port Douglas, Airlie Beach and Port Macquarie dominating.

Sunshine Coast town Mooloolaba enjoyed the same amount of search demand last month as New York City did in Feb last year, while the NSW coastal city of Coffs Harbour equalled the search demand seen by Tokyo before the shutdown.

TRAVEL SPECIALS

WELCOME to Travel Specials, *Travel Daily's* Friday feature. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of, send the details to specials@traveldaily.com.au

A Tasmanian earlybird sale is currently available with **World Expeditions**. Deals are valid for the company's 2021-22 adventures for those booking before 16 Apr, and travelling between 01 Oct 2021 and 30 Apr 2022. For more information, call 1300 720 000.

The deal of the week from **Viking** is its In Search of the Northern Lights itinerary. The 13-day trip, priced from \$6,995 per person, includes savings up to \$1,000 per couple when booked before the end of the month. For additional information, phone Viking on 138 747.

Book a cruise with **Virgin Voyages** and get 10% off your cruise and up to \$400 onboard credit. Cruisers can also currently get an extra \$100 credit when pre-purchasing a bar tab. Valid for bookings made by the end of the month. **CLICK HERE** to book now.

Guests booking with **Norwegian Cruise Line** can enjoy US\$2,900 of added value on their future European holiday with the cruise line's Take 5 offer. Passengers can choose from a free beverage package, a free specialty dining package, a free shore excursion credit, a free wi-fi package and more - **CLICK HERE** to book now.

Skal Perth President inauguration



SKAL International Perth gathered for cocktails and canapes at the newly refurbished Parmelia Hilton Perth last Thu.

Inducting five new members on the night, attendees also took a tour of the hotel to soak up the Parmelia Perth's new look.

The evening also marked the first event presided over by 2021 Club President Owen Frankhouser, who is **pictured** with last year's President Nicola Strudwick from Travellers Choice, and Tourism Western Australia Exec Director Industry Aviation & Markets Carolyn Turnbull.

Aman refresh

AMAN Resorts has unveiled a new website to offer visitors a more streamlined browsing and booking experience.

The project has been part of a company-wide digital overhaul, aiming to revise Aman's online presence, driven by a mobile-first e-commerce style.

The website will also facilitate the integration of other verticals where necessary in the future, including the e-commerce Aman Shop, Aman Residences & more.

Wine not join us?

AUSTRALIAN wine guide Halliday Wine Companion has launched the inaugural Halliday Barnbogle Cup.

Running from 14-16 May, the luxury wine and golfing getaway pairs fine oenology with a golfing experience at Barnbogle's the Dunes and Lost Farm in Tas, one of Australia's top golf courses.

Guests will enjoy a four-course food and wine masterclass complete with matched highly rated wines - for more info see winecompanion.com.au.

EU travel pass

THE European Commission is proposing to create a Digital Green Certificate to facilitate safe free movement inside the European Union as it emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The program will be available to both vaccinated and unvaccinated citizens, covering three types of certificates providing proof of vaccination, recovery from COVID-19 and/or negative test results.

It will be available free of charge in digital or paper format, and will include a QR code to ensure security and authenticity.

The Commission will build a gateway to ensure all certificates can be verified across the Union, and support members in its technical implementation.

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



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