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## Vale Michelle Papas



**THE** travel and business events sectors in Australia are reeling at the sudden untimely death of former Luxperience Event Director Michelle Papas.

The industry veteran (pictured) suffered an “unexpected coronary episode” on the weekend and tragically was unable to be saved.

As well as a long-time association with the luxury travel showcase both before and after its acquisition by Diversified Communications (TD 05 Mar 2018), Papas had held a range of other industry roles including with Shangri-La Sydney and South Australian Tourism Commission.

Funeral details have not been announced at this stage.

## Air NZ to Adelaide

**AIR** New Zealand is now operating Tasman bubble flights to seven Australian cities, with its first flight to Adelaide in 400 days taking off from Auckland today.

The addition means NZ is now back online to SYD, MEL, BNE, PER, OOL and HBA as well as ADL, with CNS and MCY scheduled to be added by late Jun.

## Express Tickets to the future

### EXCLUSIVE

**EXPRESS** Travel Group (ETG) has unveiled its newly branded Express Tickets platform, implementing the group’s previously announced trans-Tasman partnership with Australian travel technology firm Aeronology (TD 10 Dec 2020).

The new system sees ETG’s offering adapt to the changing market, according to CEO Tom Manwaring, providing industry-first systems to its members. “We have taken the COVID period to implement best-in-class ticket and product solutions for our member agents and advisors,”

## Regent upgrades

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises is offering free two-category upgrades on more than 80 Mediterranean and Northern Europe voyages in 2022, valid for bookings from 03 May-30 Jun. The generous promotion comes along with savings of up to 25% on cruise fares, while travel advisors in Australia and New Zealand will also receive a \$200 Visa Gift Card for each new deposited booking made from 03-17 May, on select sailings departing between 01 Jan 2022 and 25 Apr 2023.

There’s a toolkit for agents to promote the offer which can be accessed at [rssc.com](https://rssc.com), while a webinar to showcase the Upgrade in Europe campaign is now open for registration by **CLICKING HERE**.

Manwaring said.

The new online ticketing system offers a user-friendly point-and-click interface enabling travel advisors to confidently shop and book ticketing, complete reissues, refunds and validation functions all within a single platform - rather than having to swap from GDS into a ticketing environment.

Aeronology’s cloud-based technology includes full NDC capability and API integration backed by AI and industry-focused algorithms to make life easier for agents, ETG said.

Ancillaries can be added in the same booking process, and where offered, NDC deals are displayed alongside traditional airfares.

“It’s becoming clear NDC access and flexibility will win the day, and Express Tickets is well-positioned to take full advantage,” Manwaring said.

The home-based agents who joined ETG as part of the exit of Travel Counsellors from the local market (TD 11 Dec 2020) are the first registered users of the new platform, with access to the new system rolling out to the rest of the group’s members on an opt-in basis over the coming months.

See [etg.travel/express-tickets](https://etg.travel/express-tickets).

## Quark adventures

**QUARK** Expeditions is showcasing multiple departures for 2021, 2022 and 2023 to Antarctica, the Falkland Islands and South Georgia.

For more details on the polar adventures see the **cover page**.



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**Today's issue of TD**  
Travel Daily today has six pages of news including our PUZZLE page plus a cover page from Quark Expeditions.

# WE'RE HIRING!

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## GBT, Expedia deal

EXPEDIA and American Express Global Business Travel (GBT) will enter into a long-term strategic commercial agreement, as part of a deal which will see Expedia's technology-focused Egencia corporate division become part of GBT (**TD** breaking news).

The accommodation supply agreement with Expedia Partner Solutions will enhance the existing GBT Supply Marketplace and "meaningfully further Expedia Group's goal of powering businesses across the entire ecosystem," said Expedia Business Services President Ariane Gorin, who said the company "strongly believes in the robust return of travel, including in the corporate space".

The consolidation will see GBT continue to invest in the Egencia brand as well as its people and technology, while Expedia will become a shareholder in GBT.

"Together, GBT and Egencia would offer comprehensive technology and customer solutions across every segment of business travel," according to GBT CEO Paul Abbott.

## Kimpton comes to Australia

IHG Hotels is going from strength to strength in terms of its Australian presence, this morning announcing the local debut of its Kimpton Hotels and Restaurants brand.

Sydney's Primus Hotel, owned by Pro-invest Group (**TD** 19 Feb) will be rebranded as Australia's first Kimpton Hotel, opening under its new identity in Oct.

The heritage-listed 1930s Art Deco building formerly housed the Sydney Water Board before being redeveloped as a hotel six years ago (**TD** 07 Oct 2015).

It has 172 rooms and suites, a rooftop swimming pool and a range of conference and event spaces including a lobby bar, rooftop restaurant and cafe.

Kimpton prides itself on its "lifestyle programming" which will be delivered through a range of complimentary experiences such as morning kickstart coffee and tea, yoga lessons, bike rentals and a complimentary evening Social Hour.

IHG MD Australia, Japan and Pacific, Leanne Harwood, said "I can't tell you how excited we

are to finally bring the Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants brand to Australia...it's been so important to us that we only bring it to market with the right owner and we have the perfect property to bring it to life," she said.

The deal continues the long partnership between IHG and Pro-invest, which currently includes seven Holiday Inn Express branded hotels, with a further six in the pipeline including the voco, Hotel Indigo and now Kimpton brands.

There are 73 Kimpton properties across the globe, with a further 32 in the IHG pipeline.

## Penny's public job



PENNY Spencer from Penny Spencer Travel has put her arm where her mouth is - or something like that - by being featured in a *Channel 7* news segment on Mon night as she and her mother lined up to get a COVID-19 immunisation at a clinic in Sydney's Bondi Junction.

Spencer (**pictured**) told the interviewer "I'm in the travel industry, so I'm very keen for everyone to get vaccinated so these borders will open".

## Grant: what the FAQ

THE Government overnight released an addendum to the documents for Round Two of the COVID-19 Travel Consumer Support grants program, confirming a "current system error in the application form".

The issue relates to applicants whose Round One claim was initially rejected - even if the decision was later changed due to an appeal under the exceptional services provisions of the grant.

In those cases "you will need to wait until 10 May 2021 to lodge a claim for Round Two," the updated Frequently Asked Questions document notes.

The FAQ also provides clarification on the difference between TTV and turnover, noting that "for the purposes of this grant program, turnover is not TTV" but is rather defined as total business income (not profit) minus GST included in sales to customers and amounts collected on behalf of third parties such as airline taxes - to view the document see [austrade.gov.au](http://austrade.gov.au).

## DL adds bag fee

DELTA Air Lines is now charging \$150 (US\$100) for a second checked bag on its Main Cabin and Comfort+ fares for itineraries between Australia and North America, including flights operated by partner carriers.

The first checked bag is still free, with the maximum weight per piece limited to 23kg.

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## Virgin reveals 2020 result

**VIRGIN** Australia lost more than \$3.1 billion in the 12 months to 30 Jun, according to figures submitted to the Australian Securities and Investments Commission late last month.

The now private company fell into administration during the period, with the COVID-19 pandemic forcing the suspension of international and most of its domestic operations.

Government assistance received by VA over the first three months of the pandemic amounted to about \$165 million including \$80.5 million in JobKeeper payments as well as other income from programs helping repatriate Australians, reduce airport costs and support freight.

Key management personnel were paid a total of \$14.9 million during the year, while fees paid to the airline's Deloitte administrators amounted to \$13.4 million during the year.

The documents estimate the airline was sitting on over \$1 billion in "unearned revenue" including \$620 million in flight bookings and credit vouchers, plus a further \$436 million from the Velocity loyalty program.

Other revelations include a \$125 million unsecured loan provided by the Queensland Investments Corporation, a further investment of \$159.6 million by a subsidiary of the airline's new owner Bain Capital, as well as confirmation that an agreement to utilise the Tiger Airways brand expired on 31 Mar this year.

As part of the Group's restructuring plans about 3,000 people have left Virgin Australia, resulting in redundancy costs between \$83m and \$130m.

The company noted the accounts represented VA's position in mid-2020, with the carrier now having a "much stronger balance sheet".

## P&O pauses again

**P&O Cruises Australia** this morning announced a six week extension to its cruising hiatus, which is now in place through until 17 Sep this year.

Previously operations were on hold until 31 Jul, with the new date interestingly coinciding with exactly three months after the current Federal Biosecurity Order which at this stage is in place until 17 Jun but has been repeatedly extended on a quarterly basis through the pandemic.

P&O Cruises Australia President Sture Myrmell said the move was "consistent with the line's practical approach to the operating environment" and reflected a desire to ensure guests can plan holidays with as much certainty as possible.

"We are supporting our industry association as it works with governments and public health authorities to develop a framework for the successful resumption of cruising," he said.



## Window Seat

**POLICE** in Spain have arrested a pharmacy worker who was allegedly selling fake negative COVID-19 test certificates.

The 24-year-old was charging a hefty €130 for the false documentation, mostly to Moroccan citizens so they could fly home from Spain.

The creative scammer offered a full service, also acting as a travel agent and selling plane tickets to his clientele.

Seven cases of the suspect documentation have been uncovered thus far, with the investigation still ongoing.

Similar fraudsters have been uncovered in the Netherlands, while two laboratories in India have also been forced to close after it emerged they were issuing fake PCR results.

D'ARENBERG CUBE  
FLEURIEU PENINSULA

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## SCouTing for new partnerships



**VISIT** Sunshine Coast yesterday staged the SCouT 2021 tourism exchange, with over 500 tourism industry professionals converging at the Sunshine Coast Convention Centre for the event.

Themed to celebrate the Year of Indigenous Tourism, SCouT 2021 provided a forum for tourism operators to connect make connections, with over 100 local suppliers exhibiting their wares.

The event was held in partnership with Sunshine Coast Council, and attendees were also able to access a Sunshine Coast Business Support Hub with leaders from the Queensland Tourism Industry Council, Study Sunshine Coast, Sunshine Coast Chamber Alliance, Sunshine Coast Council, TAFE, and University of the Sunshine Coast.

One of the highlights of the day was the Ex-BEER-ience display (**pictured**), showcasing 12 of the region's top craft breweries.

Visit Sunshine Coast Chief

### Portugal return

**SCENIC** Group has confirmed its luxury river cruises are set to return in Portugal from 30 Jul.

Both Scenic and Emerald Cruises will preserve their originally published itineraries and included excursions on the Douro River.

General Manager Sales & Marketing Australasia Anthony Laver said it was the first step to getting ships back sailing across all of Europe's rivers.

Executive Officer Matt Stoeckel said encouraging the industry to form partnerships and promote its attractions was vital for ensuring the region continues to recover from the pandemic.

"As an industry it's important we work together to continually expand on our tourism offerings and encourage referrals," he said.

"We have so many fantastic attractions, restaurants, events and immersive encounters across the region for tourists to visit and explore, which all add to the appeal of the Sunshine Coast and importantly encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more in the region."

### QF status extension

**QANTAS** Business Rewards (QBR) is extending the current status of existing members for 12 months, in recognition of the disruption to business travel plans through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Levels are being maintained, and QF Points earned from flying in the previous membership year have also been retained.

A QBR incentive which launched yesterday is also offering members the opportunity to earn a share of 20 million Qantas Points on business expenses via purchases through program partners such as Apple, Microsoft, Vistaprint, BP and Carpet Court.

Companies can also join the program free until 05 Jul - for more details see [qantas.com](https://qantas.com).

## US consul welcomes industry



**LAST** night Australian travel operators specialising in the American market were treated to a special reception at the Sydney home of US Consul General, Sharon Hudson-Dean.

Hudson-Dean, who is **pictured** right with Monique Roos from the US Commercial Service, urged attendees to look to the future.

She noted the successful rollout of COVID-19 vaccinations in the USA so far, which is seen as a key step in facilitating more normal travel between the US & Australia.

"We are at a point where we have a critical mass of people and it keeps going up," she said.

"Hold on, I really hope you are all able to keep your businesses



going, keep your contacts vibrant, not give up, have some faith definitely that from the US government side we are working really hard to get things under control and get people moving again and businesses back on track," Hudson-Dean said.

**Inset** are Jacqui Walshe, CEO of The Walshe Group with Visit USA Committee member Sarah Stevenson, Julie King & Associates.

## Thailand takes a dive



**THE** Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Sydney Office and the Royal Thai Consulate in Sydney recently took part in an underwater clean-up event in Sydney Harbour's Chowder Bay.

Some of the participants took to the water in full SCUBA gear to collect debris, with TAT Director Suladda Sarutilavan saying the organisation was pleased to show its appreciation for these "local

heroes volunteering their time to protect our oceans".

The rewards came in the form of Thai massages and a delicious Thai lunch provided by Spice I Am, followed by a special cooking demonstration and a Siam Classic Dance Group performance at the nearby Taronga Zoo.

Team Thailand is pictured, with more photos from the activity at [facebook.com/traveldaily](https://facebook.com/traveldaily).



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Travel Daily

## Pub quiz

1. Dublin lies within which Irish province?
2. What river flows through the centre of Nairobi?
3. What landmark would you find nestled between Farm and Sydney Coves?
4. Which Japanese city is home to a number of multinational electronic corporations such as Panasonic and Sharp?
5. Through which six countries does the Mekong flow?
6. Which fairy-tale castle is Florida's Magic Kingdom Park based on?
  - a) Sleeping Beauty's castle
  - b) Cinderella's castle
  - c) Snow White's castle
7. Did the modern-day state of Vietnam take North Vietnam or South Vietnam's flag?
8. World wars led to the cancellations of which three Summer Olympic Games?
9. Coonanglebah is four kilometres off the coast of what Queensland town?
10. The Mersey River runs through Cheshire and Lancashire in the United Kingdom, and which far smaller Australian town?

## Seen it at the movies



**THIS** island was previously known for its Gaelic Christian monastery built between the sixth and eighth centuries, and as a prime puffin-spotting location, but has more recently shot to stardom when it was chosen as

the film location for the next movie in a large franchise. The island was a refuge in a galaxy far away for one of the film franchise's main characters. Can you name the movie that was filmed here?

## 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, each column, and each 3x3 box.

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

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

## Funnies Flashback



**WE'VE** trawled through the **TD** Window Seat archives to give you a blast from the past. Here's some gems from 15 Aug 2014:

**BUDGET** travellers are being encouraged to book accommodation via a new "antluxury" website intriguingly titled [hovelstay.com](http://hovelstay.com).

The company's mission is to list "inexpensive and interesting places to stay for travelling college students," with all listings priced under US\$99.

"Hovels are conveniently located, catering to the college student's lifestyle and budget," the website enthuses.

Hovel Hosts are being invited to "monetise free space" and list their properties for a 1% introductory commission rate.

The concept is likely to grow, with Hovelstay having just secured over \$1m in venture capital funding from private investors in London and Dubai.

### ANSWERS 04 MAY

Unscramble: crud, crude, cued, curd, cure, cured, deuce, duenna, dunce, dune, dunner, ecru, educe, endue, **ENDURANCE**, endure, enure, enured, nuance, nuanced, nude, reduce, rude, rued, rune, under, unearned, unread, urea

Celebrity faces: Eyes - Dennis Bunnik, Bunnik Tours, Nose - Robert De Niro, Mouth - Ariana Grande

Wednesday 5th May 2021

## Pacific Resort renos

**THE** Cook Islands' Pacific Resort Hotel Group has completed a \$10 million renovation and repositioning of the Little Polynesian Resort and Pacific Resort in Rarotonga.

The renovation programs have been ongoing over the past five years, and entailed a full remodel of all guestrooms, including new furniture, floor and wall coverings, bathroom remodels, and a full renovation of all public areas and spaces.

## On the road again

**CONTIKI** is running its first international trip since the pandemic, hitting the road in New Zealand with Australian Generation Z travellers embarking on their Gap Year.

To kick off their New Zealand departures, Contiki will run a special one-day trip in Auckland, run in partnership with Letz Live, which since 2005, has created overseas Gap Year and Working Holiday experiences for thousands of young people.

## ACCOMMODATION

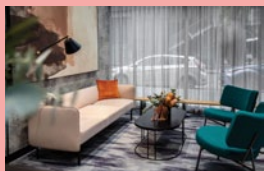
**WELCOME** to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to [accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au).



THE NSW Shoalhaven-based glamping property **Paperbark Camp** near Jervis Bay has announced a major upgrade, with its five original tents to be converted to larger Deluxe Plus safari tents by Sep. Located two-and-a-half hours south of Sydney, the camp's luxury upgrade will mean all 13 accommodations will soon boast bush-view tubs, day beds, open-air baths and showers, and more.



After a complete refurbishment, **Mantra Terrace Brisbane** has reopened. The multi-million-dollar makeover has covered the property's guestrooms, public spaces, restaurant and bar. Inspired by urban retreats, subtropical climates and beachside resorts, the hotel interiors feature a fusion of tropical styling and natural woven pieces, while brass metal fittings aim to bring a touch of "industrial luxe" to the property.



**Travelodge Hotel Melbourne Docklands** has refurbished its "urban-style" lobby, transforming the space into a communal hub for business and leisure travellers. Sporting a new contemporary colour scheme, trendy lighting, and new furniture and interiors, the property's lobby space also features a take-out cafe concept to complement the hotel's onsite restaurant. The lobby is not the only new arrival at the hotel, with Arthur Rojas having recently also taken over as Hotel General Manager.

## Globus is cooking in NZ!



**GLOBUS** family of brands' New Zealand office last week celebrated the opening of the trans-Tasman bubble by hosting a casual barbecue for the local travel industry at the Globus Auckland office.

Managing Director Australasia Gai Tyrrell flew across the Tasman for the occasion, and to reconnect with Globus' New Zealand team, partners, and the local industry, as part of her first international trip in over a year. "My last international trip was in Mar 2020 to New Zealand so it was wonderful to visit again after such a long time," Tyrrell said. "The entire trip was smooth and the customs staff were all so



friendly and polite, just happy to welcome travellers again.

"With no congestion and shorter lines, I hope that Aussies and Kiwis take advantage of the bubble and start exploring."

**Pictured:** Globus' Phoebe Walsh, Alka Thapar, Haleigh O'Brien and Neela Iswar, while **inset** are Malcolm Macleod, First Travel Group CEO; Gai Tyrrell, Gobus; Bruce Blacklock from Helloworld Travel; and Mel Watson, Silversea Cruises.

More pics from the event at [facebook.com/traveldaily](https://facebook.com/traveldaily).

## IATA test cost fears

**HIGH** coronavirus testing costs could stall travel's recovery, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has warned.

The Association overnight called on governments to ensure high costs for testing don't put travel out of reach for individuals and families, and also called for tests to be timely, widely available and effective.

An IATA sampling of costs for PCR tests (most frequently required by governments) in 16 countries showed wide variations, with France the only country surveyed to bear the cost of testing for travellers.

## WA tourism TAFE

**PLANS** for a \$14.67m upgrade to South Metropolitan TAFE's Mandurah campus in Western Australia are moving ahead, with the project now out for tender.

The expanded facility will give the local region greater access to specialty tourism and hospitality training, with WA Tourism Minister David Templeman saying it will "help train up skilled workers for meaningful jobs in our tourism and hospitality sectors".