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Ponant Kimberley

PONANT is offering savings of up to 30% on bookings for its 2023 Kimberley cruise season.

A total of 20 departures are on offer, with the line to deploy its *Le Soleal* and *Le Laperouse* in the spectacular region from May-Oct 2023 - see the **cover page**.

Travl'r gets \$6.7m funding

SIMON te Hennepe's Travl'r, which powers travel offerings with media groups such as Network 10 (**TD** 18 Dec 2019) and NZ's *Stuff* (**TD** 02 Nov 2020), has secured \$6.7 million in a funding round backed by some of Australia's wealthiest investors.

The move will see the business expand its range of deals with publishers, including a newly announced partnership with BBC Global News, which this morning announced the launch of Discover Beyond, described as "an inspirational consumer travel marketplace that enables BBC audiences to discover, plan and book unforgettable experiences through hundreds of activities, mix and match flights and hotels and carefully crafted travel packages".

The funding boost has been backed by rich-listers Tony Gandel, Antony Catalano, Matt Berriman and Alex Waislitz, with the *AFR* reporting that Travl'r's business model sees media

brands charged a set-up fee to establish a dedicated portal and then sharing 30%-50% of any travel booked via the platform.

Te Hennepe, who last year made an unsuccessful bid for a seat on the AFTA Board (**TD** 23 Sep 2020) said the COVID-19 pandemic had seen media groups which were previously heavily dependent on travel advertising look for new revenue streams, meaning Travl'r was ideally placed to benefit.

Travl'r's new BBC-backed Discover Beyond platform is initially launching in Australia and NZ, and will showcase BBC Travel-inspired itineraries.

NCL cracks the ton!

TRAVEL industry participants in Norwegian Cruise Line's Walk for Wellness (**TD** 01 Sep) have reached their 100,000km target nine days ahead of schedule.

Representing the distance that new flagship *Norwegian Prima* will sail in her inaugural season next year, the milestone has seen walkers trek virtually from Iceland to the Baltics, New York, the Caribbean and finally Miami.

NCL Sales Director Damian Borg urged walkers to keep on stepping until the end of the month to be in the running for the major prize of a free cruise.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news plus a front cover page from Ponant.

Cruise breakthrough

AUTHORITIES in the USA have issued an updated Conditional Sailing Order which will see current restrictions on the cruise sector ease further, with a view to being phased out on 15 Jan.

Full details and more cruise news in today's **Cruise Weekly**.

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Bonza names exec team

AUSTRALIAN domestic startup carrier Bonza (TD 12 Oct) has announced details of its leadership team, with CEO Tim Jordan confirming Peter McNally as the low-cost airline's Chief Operating Officer and Carly Povey as Chief Commercial Officer.

McNally was most recently with ground services provider Swissport, with his career also including eight years at Virgin Blue in its early days, three years

at Qatar Airways and a stint in Darwin as Chief Operating Officer at Airnorth.

Povey will join Bonza next week from her current GM role with Australia Post, prior to which she was at Jetstar for five years as Head of Commercial and Operations Improvement.

Her LCC experience also includes time as Commercial Director for Tigerair Australia and with European carriers Jet2 and easyJet.

Also joining the executive ranks at Bonza is Chief Financial Officer, Lidia Valenzuela, who was most recently with ASX-listed Superloop.

Jordan said "the winning recipe to any success story is people... Peter, Carly and Lidia are up for the challenge to do things differently, whilst also creating an environment our people and partners can feel proud to call home".

MintEFT into NZ

MINT Payments has announced the expansion of its product offering for the Kiwi market, with its new MintEFT B2B payments solution (TD 03 Aug) to roll out in New Zealand by the end of 2021.

The launch will also see Mint as the exclusive payments provider integrated within Helloworld's Resworld platform, which is expected to be live at the time MintEFT launches in NZ.

Mint will charge a NZ\$15 monthly fee, with no charge on payable transactions and NZ\$2.20 on receivables, plus preferential pricing for members of agency groups with Mint partnerships.



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The elephant in the travel tech room...

AUSTRALIAN-FOUNDED travel technology firm Tour Amigo has committed to no longer working with operators who use elephants for human interaction.

The initiative is being announced in partnership with World Animal Protection, with Tour Amigo claiming to be the "first travel technology company boldly committed to the move away from selling and promoting cruel elephant interaction".

Tour Amigo Regional Director EMEA, Isabel Beckermann, said while many customer-facing travel companies had pledged not to work with elephant activities, ancillary industry businesses had not been as active in their commitments, with Tour Amigo to now only work with accredited sanctuaries that "still allow elephants to be elephants".

Qatar, EU pact

QATAR Airways has signed a comprehensive air transport agreement with the European Union, covering rules and standards for flights between Qatar and the EU but also including benchmarks for social and environmental protection.

All EU airlines will be able to operate direct flights from any airport in the EU to Qatar and vice versa, with airports in Germany, France, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands subject to a gradual capacity rise until 2024.

It's the first such deal between the EU and the Gulf region, with European Commissioner for Mobility, Adina Valean, saying it is a "global benchmark for forward-looking aviation agreements".

VA IASC renewals

THE International Air Services Commission (IASC) has issued a renewal determination allocating 880 weekly seats on the Samoa route to Virgin Australia.

VA has also been allocated 300 seats on the Italy route for codeshare services with Etihad Airways and Singapore Airlines.

Last month VA told the IASC it expects to resume Nadi and Queenstown services in Dec, with a Bali restart plotted for Mar.



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Window Seat

WHILE most of us are aware that flying on planes can make our ears pop and change our taste receptors, did you know that planes can also make passengers more gassy?

Yes, experts have confirmed that farting on planes is more prevalent than on the ground and according to a clinical professor at the University of Copenhagen, it's all down to cabin pressure.

"The pressure drops and the air must expand into more space," Jacob Rosenberg said.

But never fear future travellers, there are ways to mitigate the risk of becoming a bag of hot wind in the sky, such as eating more carbohydrates and less fibre at the airport and on the plane, which should in turn limit stomach bloating.

For passengers with chronic gas issues, they can invest in what is being marketed as "flatulence filtering underwear", garments made by Shreddies that feature an activated carbon back panel that absorbs flatulence odours.

While the topic makes most of us giggle like nervous teens, farting on planes can lead to serious consequences, like the gassy chap who was kicked off a flight after deliberately farting non-stop in 2018.

Ignite seeing fast growth

EXCLUSIVE

IGNITE Travel Group Chief Executive Officer Ryan Thomas has told *Travel Daily* his company's sales TTV is expected to be over \$1 billion in the next 18 months.

As Australia moves closer to its borders reopening and both domestic and international travel restarting, Thomas said trends were already emerging as to where Aussies would be heading in the summer months.

"What has sparked again, is Queensland," he revealed, adding the Sunshine State's announcement of a reopening on 17 Dec, combined with its Great Queensland Getaway campaign, has seen Ignite witness a 680% increase in page views, and more enquiries in one week than it had seen throughout the pandemic.

"Things are coming at a rapid rate and we're geared to take advantage of that," he said.

Etihad incentive

ETIHAD Airways is currently running a trade incentive to celebrate the return of international travel, with the major prize winner to score a holiday to Abu Dhabi.

For a chance to win, register **HERE** and book Etihad flights until 10 Dec for travel from 15 Jan to 30 Sep 2022 in any cabin type.

As well as the four grand prizes, weekly spot prizes will also be handed out.

Ignite is also selling more cruises than pre-COVID, largely thanks to the launch of the My Cruises River Collection (**TD 01 Sep**).

The new division's stated goal to bring a younger, more diverse audience to river cruising has thus far borne fruit.

"We're getting a range from 45 to 50 upwards, so the target market is exactly where we want it to be," Thomas explained.

The explosion in interest has sent Ignite on a furious recruiting drive, with Thomas revealing the company is on the hunt for around 50 staff, in sales, cruise, domestic, int'l, IT, and more.

HLO resignation

HELLOWORLD Travel Non-Executive Director Mike Ferraro has resigned from the business, effective immediately.

"Mike has done a great job helping to steer the company through a very challenging period and has decided to step down now that the company is through the worst of the pandemic to pursue other interests," HLO Chairman Garry Hounsell said.

Ferraro remains as the Chief Executive Officer of minerals company Alumina Limited, which is involved in the mining of bauxite and processing of aluminium in Australia, Brazil, Spain and the Middle East.

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Travel & Cruise
Weekly

Refunds are key to travel

CLOSE to 70% of Australians would feel confident in making a travel booking in the next 12 months if it meant they had a guaranteed right to a refund in all situations, new research conducted by consumer group CHOICE has found.

The findings follow a damning report released by CHOICE in Jul which called on the Federal Government to create major reforms of the travel sector in a bid to improve transparency around refunds due to external events (**TD** 08 Jul).

The latest study also found that only one in four Australians "feel confident" in making travel plans over the next 12 months, with issues relating to cancellations and refunds high on the list of worries for travellers.

CHOICE also revealed that close to half of respondents (48%) would feel more confident to book travel if there were

minimum terms around travel credits/vouchers to make them usable, while 53% stated they would feel confident if they had a guaranteed right to refund, minus any reasonable expenses of the travel business.

Meanwhile 47% indicated they would feel better making a travel booking if there was an independent body they could contact with complaints when and if they arise, while 60% said they would feel less anxious about making travel plans if they had access to clear and standard information about what would happen if their booking had to be cancelled after the purchase.

CHOICE spokesperson Alison Elliott said the latest results showed reforms are needed.

"We need stronger and clearer rights to book travel with confidence, particularly as international borders begin to open," she said.

Viking Hawaii cruise

VIKING has launched two new departures for a 17-day ocean itinerary in Hawaii in Dec, priced from \$5,495ppts for a Veranda Stateroom, a saving of up to \$2,000 per couple - call 138 747.

Tehan talks up Bali

FEDERAL Tourism Minister Dan Tehan has revealed there is a "keenness" between Australia and the Indonesian Government to restart travel between Australia and Bali.

While answering questions for the *Herald Sun's* Facebook page yesterday, Tehan noted Bali was obviously an incredibly popular destination for Australians in particular, and tourism is such a huge part of the Balinese economy so we will continue to have discussions.

Tehan said talks were able to progress because the COVID situation on the ground in Bali also continues to improve.

Yay for holiday sale

VIRGIN Australia has announced one of its largest discount promotions ever, with 1.7 million fares on sale from \$49 Economy Lite tickets and from \$189 for Business class.

Destinations included in the promotion include domestic, Fiji, Bali and New Zealand's Queenstown, for travel taken between 02 Nov and 23 Jun 2022.

All fares include Velocity Frequent Flyer Points and bookings can be changed or cancelled with no fees, available for travel up to 30 Apr 2022.

MEANWHILE Virgin Australia has launched a new marketing campaign emphasising its high level of customer service for the family segment.

Since the start of last month, VA has launched 12 new return services throughout Australia and scheduled plans to resume flights to Fiji in Dec, followed by Bali and New Zealand.

View the new campaign **HERE**.

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New 500-bed YHA for Sydney



THE NSW Government has approved a new State Significant Development Application for a new Tech Central building near Sydney's Central Station which will include a headquarters for tech firm Atlassian along with a state-of-the art YHA.

The construction is on the site of the existing Railway Square YHA, with YHA Australia CEO Paul McGrath saying the accommodation created for both international and Australian visitors will "transform perceptions of affordable accommodation with its ultra-modern design and fit-out".

Construction of the \$546 million hybrid timber tower is due to commence next year, with the YHA opening scheduled for 2026.

McGrath said the property would offer abundant light and ventilation, spacious co-living areas and sustainable design to "revolutionise the concept of a 'youth hostel'" with a mix of private and co-living rooms along with dining spaces, activities, local experiences and onward travel options.

Once fully developed the new Sydney Tech Central precinct will cover 24 hectares across the rail corridor, home to 25,000 jobs.

Show us your best New Years Eve Photo!

Rediscover Australia and Unique Cruises are partnering with *Travel Daily* this month to offer readers the chance to win a ticket on the **NYE Hits on the Harbour Cruise**, as well as offering \$100 and \$50 gift vouchers for 2nd and 3rd prize by providing your best picture of your past New Years Eve celebrations.

This ticket gives you access to:

- 6 Hours Sydney Harbour Cruise on Journey Beyond Cruise Sydney's *Spirit of Migloo*
- Continuous premium food
- Unlimited beverages including premium sparkling wines and beers - For more information on what is offered **CLICK HERE**

To enter send a picture of your best New Years Eve along with, in 25 words or less, what made it so memorable.

Entries to competitions@traveldaily.com.au



Access denied to the million dollar club for many of the industry's top execs, a tourism hub like no other and more in the October issue of *travelBulletin*.

travelBulletin

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AFTA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



IT'S an absolute honour to be back at AFTA as CEO.

I am so proud to be working with a dedicated team and Board of

Directors, focused on ensuring we have a clean and clear bridge to recovery and a really strong and prosperous future.

I come back to AFTA after two and half years as CEO of the Accommodation Association, another sector which has been devastated by the health restrictions caused by COVID-19.

During the last 24 months, the unity that the travel sector has shown in its advocacy to Government to ensure our sector was recognised has been incredible to watch.

This success is the envy of the entire tourism industry and while not everyone has been granted the support they believed was owed to them, it was a huge step in the right direction and one we must build on.

During my first webinar with members, it was great to speak to over 500 attendees about AFTA's Roadmap to Sustainability.

The six priorities seek to deliver the immediate support to reopen and to ensure AFTA continues to lead and support your recovery.

• **Advocacy:** we continue to advocate for further support so that our members can reopen, operate and ensure that the important role travel agents and

intermediaries have in providing advice to travellers is understood, embraced and supported by Government. This includes advocating for continued direct support for travel businesses.

• **ATAS and AFTA:** we are reviewing the ATAS Charter and AFTA to ensure all members and potential members find value in AFTA products and services. Importantly, we will ensure we provide the information our members need to reopen safely.

• **Re-engage teams:** we need to make sure that our sector regains its position as a positive, progressive and rewarding sector to be part of. We also need to make sure we have the workforce to underpin and support our members' success.

• **Build & Sustain Collaboration:** we need to ensure that travel and travel intermediaries are recognised as the major economic contributor we are in Australia and across the region.

• **Advocacy sustainability:** making sure that the agency and intermediary community are front and centre in the public policy discussion.

• **Continue to innovate and lead:** we will continue to improve our membership offering. Investing in services and products that make it easier to sell travel.

We can see from the renewal rates already above 80% of members renewing this year, that you support AFTA. Thank you for your ongoing engagement and trust in us.

Agritourism boost

AUSTRALIAN Regional Tourism (ART) has secured \$120,000 in funding from the Federal Govt's Building Better Regions Funding program to support more national agritourism projects.

Funds will be directed to encourage farming tourism guests to spend more and stay longer.

Tourism coalition

THE Saudi Arabian Government has created the Sustainable Tourism Global Center (STGC), a new multi-country coalition designed to "accelerate the tourism sector's transition to net zero emissions and drive action to protect nature and communities", as the industry recovers.

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Travel Daily



EK recruitment drive

EMIRATES has announced plans to recruit more than 6,000 staff over the next six months as it embarks upon a major ramp up of its global operations.

The carrier has already restored 90% of its network and is on target to reach 70% of its pre-pandemic capacity by 31 Dec.

Roles sought include pilots, ground staff and cabin crew.

By Nov, EK will offer more than 165,000 more seats on its flagship A380 aircraft.

Pandaw closure

THE COVID-19 pandemic has claimed another corporate victim, with river cruise operator Pandaw confirming it has ceased trading.

The company cited the ongoing closure of its destinations in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and India as well as the political situation in Myanmar, saying "passengers or their agents will be contacted in due course by the appointed company liquidator".

Scot links SYD/MEL

SCOOT has introduced a series of one-way promotional fares for connecting flights via Singapore, to Sydney and Melbourne for eligible returning travellers.

Scheduled from 01 Nov, travellers who are eligible for reduced quarantine arrangements to Australia, and can verify their vaccination status can apply for tickets.

SQ brand push

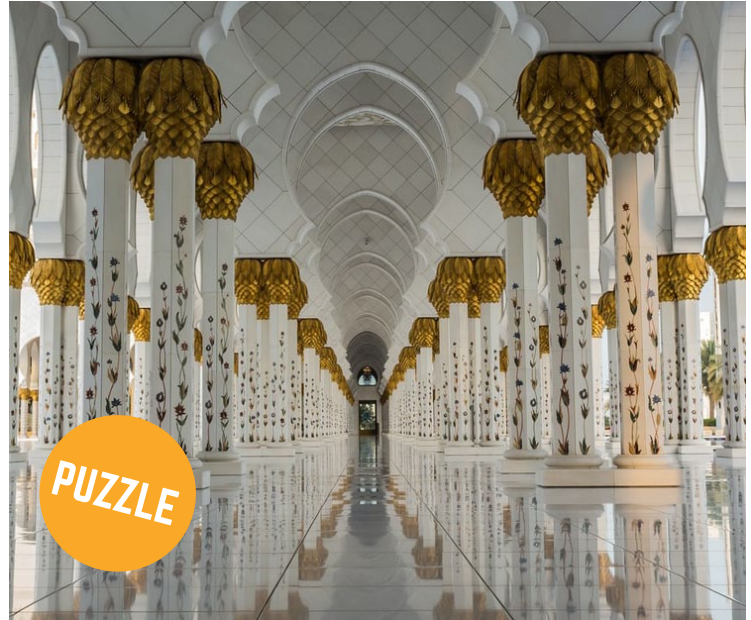
SINGAPORE Airlines has launched a brand campaign called We Look Forward to Seeing You in the Air Again, featuring pax floating from their homes to the plane in an effortless journey.

The marketing push aims to let travellers know that despite the many additional COVID protocols in place, SQ will still make travel as seamless as possible.

"With this video, we hope to reassure our customers that their well-being is our utmost priority, and that we have significantly enhanced the travel journey with their comfort in mind," SQ said.

Watch the campaign ad [HERE](#).

Icon under a microscope



PUZZLE

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?

This incredible structure is the largest mosque in the country

and during Eid, it is visited by more than 41,000 people.

It took a while to complete, more than 10 years in total, with completion finally reached in 2007 at a princely cost of around US\$454 million.

Answer: Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi

Airport student deal

A NEW partnership between Western Sydney Airport and the CSIRO is inviting high school students to visit the airport construction site and potentially prepare for a career at the major air hub when it opens in 2026.

Once operational, at least half of all jobs at the airport will go to Western Sydney locals, across role types such as education, manufacturing, engineering and defence.

RSSC unveils more

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) has revealed several itineraries from its 2023/24 Voyage Collection, including a 14-night Sydney to Auckland leg in Dec 2023.

The newly unveiled sailings also include a Sydney to Tokyo cruise leg aboard *Seven Seas Explorer* departing 19 Jan 2024, as well as a Canary Islands to Ivory Coast voyage, and a Jerusalem to Venice sailing - call 1300 455 200.

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.749

THE Australian dollar has bounced back after falling at the end of last week with the local currency helped by stronger session in US equities.

While the AUDUSD gained 0.4%, the Aussie performed best against the Euro, up 0.7%, while the local currency also made solid ground on the Japanese Yen, rising by 0.5%.

The AUDNZD also climbed by 0.2%.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.749
UK	£0.544
NZ	\$1.045
Euro	€0.645
Japan	¥85.22
Thailand	฿24.76
China	¥4.782
South Africa	11.021
Canada	\$0.927
Crude oil	US\$88.59

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