



Meg Hill
Cruise Express

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VA opens job comp

VIRGIN Australia this morning opened entry for its VA-X & WIN competition (**TD** 23 Jun), offering a \$150,000 prize pool including one million Velocity loyalty points.

Fully vaccinated Australians are able to enter the competition up until 31 Dec, with the initiative coming alongside a staff incentive for vaccinated employees who get the job before 15 Nov.

Entry is free, with winners required to provide proof of vaccination via a simple verification process once they are notified of their success.

An associated marketing campaign launches today on social media, and will also debut on TV during the 25 Sep broadcast of the AFL Grand Final - virginaustralia.com/vaxandwin.

HLO targets break-even

HELLOWORLD Travel's long track record in domestic travel in Australia and New Zealand means that open borders within Australia and on the Tasman will be sufficient to generate "break-even TTV levels" across the business, according to the company's 2020/21 update which was released late yesterday (**TD** breaking news yesterday).

The unaudited figures showed \$94 million in revenue, down 68% on the prior year, and an overall pre-tax loss of \$49 million.

The company received \$23 million in Government wage subsidies, and "with very tight cost management across all of our business divisions HLO was able to minimise losses," the report said.

Despite the challenges of sales volumes, revenue and profitability falling by 85% due to circumstances beyond the company's control, "our team has done an extraordinary job maintaining morale and maintaining our presence with minimal costs, while our travel agency network members have shown incredible resilience and done an outstanding job returning billions of dollars in cancelled bookings".

Helloworld has reduced its staff head count by 60% and renegotiated its banking facilities with the support of Westpac, giving the company an "extended liquidity runway beyond end calendar 2022".

Rex delays to 10 Oct

THE board at Rex Airlines has decided to continue the airline's suspension of domestic flights and reduce regional services until at least 10 Oct, following moves by various state governments to extend travel restrictions.

The decision will also see staff furloughs extended until this time - for more details on Rex's financials, see **page 3**.

Investment has continued in technology platforms, with the company noting that having a significantly reduced workforce means "recovery will be contingent on having best of breed technology solutions to deliver maximum productivity throughout the business".

The update also gave a comprehensive breakdown of the group's now 2,224 locations across Australia and NZ, which comprises 1,234 agencies and 991 home-based consultants.

MEANWHILE with yesterday's release being the second year running that Helloworld has not published audited accounts on time, CEO Andrew Burnes cited the challenges of lockdowns over the last eight weeks.

Burnes said every effort had been made to finalise the figures by 31 Aug, but with teams from both HLO and auditors EY working from home "the audit was not quite complete".

However the company and EY both do not expect any material difference when the audited statements are released within the next week, he added.

Walk for Wellness!

REGISTRATIONS have this morning opened for Norwegian Cruise Line's second annual Walk for Wellness campaign.

The mental health initiative, which runs 01-31 Oct, comes with a free app and lots of prizes to encourage the travel industry to get alongside each other and walk a targeted combined 100,000km.

AFTA is backing the campaign, with Executive Chairman Tom Manwaring saying it's a "very practical way of supporting our own mental and physical wellness as well as a chance to come together to have some fun".

The first 200 sign-ups (**CLICK HERE**) will receive a special T-shirt - more in today's **Cruise Weekly**.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news including our **PUZZLE** page plus a product profile from **Rail Europe**.

Rail made easy

RAIL Europe is today showcasing its new Easy Rail Access booking tool, offering live access to inventory, digital ticketing and commissions based on rail revenue - for more details see the product profile on **page 6**.

NSW halves cap

NEW South Wales will halve its number of international arrivals until at least next month.

A new cap of 750 travellers will be allowed to return each week until vaccination targets are met.



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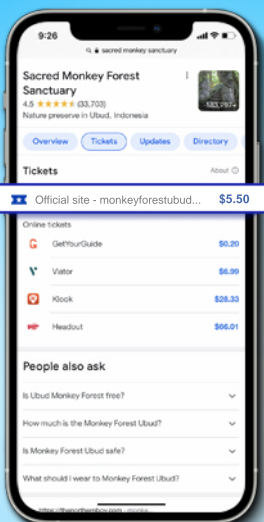
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Travel Daily

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Vic agent pleads guilty

THE owners of a Victorian travel agency have been forced to delay retirement and sell properties to compensate clients, after one of their consultants stole \$670,000 in customer funds to fuel an online gambling habit.

Details of the case were aired yesterday, as the outcome of an investigation into the theft by 58-year-old travel agent Annette Roberts who was charged two months ago (**TD 21 Jun**).

Kay and Bruce Reid from Travel and Cruise North East in Wangaratta told the *ABC* that while they were pleased that none of their clients were out of pocket due to the embezzlement, "we are now deeply concerned and anxious" after the triple whammy of the fraud along with the impacts of last year's bushfires and the pandemic.

The thefts, which saw Roberts plead guilty in the County Court of Vic yesterday, started in 2017

not long after she began working at the travel agency.

Court documents indicated the diversion of 522 client refunds worth \$628,598 to her own bank accounts between Apr 2018 and Sep last year.

Roberts also stole more than \$40,000 by putting refunded cash onto prepaid travel money cards in the names of clients.

The thefts were uncovered after a client enquired about a refund, with Roberts eventually admitting to taking the money when she was confronted by the Reids.

The consultant had attempted to make amends by repaying about \$22,500, and then proposed a \$250 per week payment plan and a lump sum of \$30,000, before the fraud was referred to police.

After yesterday's plea hearing she was taken into custody, with sentencing expected to be finalised later this month.

Igniting river cruise

FLIGHT Centre-owned Ignite Travel Group has unveiled a new specialist river cruise division called My Cruises River Collection - a dedicated arm of the company which it believes will tap into "one of the fastest-growing segments in the country".

The new division will join Ignite's existing My Cruises brand, with the company stating Australians are looking for ways to book river cruises in places like Europe - more in **CW** tomorrow.

Celebrity learning

CELEBRITY Cruises has launched Celebrity Learning, a new platform offering agents better ways to keep abreast of the line's latest developments.

To mark the launch, advisors who graduate by 31 Oct can win one of 10 prizes, including a luxury cruise in Europe with airfares included, as well as champagne, vouchers and merch.



Window Seat

THE jig is up folks, the animals of the world now realise just how good we've got it.

Despite the re-emergence of tourists, a herd of Corsican cows are refusing to 'moo-ve' out of their new home at Mare E Sole.

It is normal for the 30-strong herd of wild cows to take up residency on the same beach every year, but this season they have been unusually resistant to our return.

There have been reports of tourists even being injured by the cows, which are clearly not 'a-moo-sed' by the human invasion of 'their' beach.



NCL'S
2ND ANNUAL
WALK FOR WELLNESS
1-31 OCTOBER 2021

Join the NCL team in October for a walking challenge like no other, celebrating health and wellbeing within the travel industry.

Get active and track your steps alongside your travel agent friends as we follow Norwegian Prima's inaugural season. As we journey around an interactive map, there'll be fun weekly challenges and exciting prizes up for grabs, including an NCL cruise, Apple Watch Series 6, gift cards and much more!

Register now and we'll provide information on how to get started, including downloading our free app.

[REGISTER NOW](#)



Rex maintains altitude

REGIONAL Express Group Executive Chairman Lim Kim Hai believes the business has performed “relatively well” over the last 12 months, especially in light of the extremely challenging aviation climate the company has been operating in.

Hai made the comments yesterday while Regional Express Group, the parent of the Rex Airlines brand, handed down its full year financial results, which showed passenger revenue for the 12 months to 30 Jun fell by 41.3% to \$125.2m on the back of domestic border restrictions.

The bulk of the passenger drop-off occurred in the second half of the financial year, with the first half delivering the group an after tax profit of \$4.9 million before a resurgence in COVID cases in the country crunched flights.

The carrier delivered an overall after tax loss of \$4.86 million for the latest period, encouragingly a vastly reduced deficit on the previous period which recorded a \$19.4 million loss, helped along by an \$87.42 million government grant which included JobKeeper

payments.

Charter revenue also helped Rex mitigate its overall losses, contributing close to \$31 million in revenue, while freight services also brought in \$1.1 million.

Employee-related expenses led the list of costs during the year, accounting for \$108 million of outgoings, while flight and port operations (\$47.6 million), engineering and maintenance (\$45.9 million) and fuel (\$24.76 million) all factored heavily on the bottom line.

Hai said that looking forward the business was far from being out of the woods, citing the prospect of a likely continuation of travel shutdowns and border closures in the first half of the next financial year.

“The outlook for the year is highly uncertain,” he conceded.

“In these circumstances, Rex has performed relatively well in a full year of operations under the pandemic and I am pleased that we have managed to improve on our performance over the prior year which was only affected...for a third of the time.”

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Travel & Cruise
Weekly

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Travel Daily



Ponant treats Toowoomba



PONANT treated the Toowoomba travel fraternity to a delicious meal in a long overdue catch-up this week (**pictured**).

While there, the company showcased all of the latest developments happening with the Ponant and Paul Gauguin Cruises brands over dinner at

Fitzy's Toowoomba.

National Business Development Manager Australia, New Zealand, India, Southeast Asia, Julie Rogers, had the pleasure of leading the group in drinks and merriment, before strapping on her tennis shoes for an exploration of Queens Park before departing The Garden City.

Ski with confidence

CLUB Med and Mogul Ski World have partnered to provide travel advisors with additional support when selling the travel operator's ski holiday packages.

Acting as a bridge between Club Med and advisors, Mogul Ski World's team of avid skiers and snowboarders will use their expertise to assist agents, especially those with minimal personal skiing experience, to confidently sell Club Med ski holidays to their clients.

Qatar + Sabre

QATAR Airways is planning for a new distribution agreement with Sabre, which will pave the way for richer offers, including new distribution capability.

Long-term access to Qatar's content through the Sabre travel marketplace will be provided, as the airline strengthens its distribution partnerships.

NZ pause extended

AUSTRALIA'S Chief Medical Officer Paul Kelly has made the decision to extend the pause on New Zealand green zone flights, as the number of New Zealand's locally acquired COVID-19 cases continues to increase.

APT boosts Qld

APT has added a new Queensland departure to its growing portfolio of domestic cruises, with the latest sailing taking place aboard *MS Caledonian Sky* to explore a selection of Qld destinations.

Setting sail from Cairns on 05 Nov, the 12-night voyage will visit a range of islands including Thursday, Lizard, Stanley, Fraser and Restoration Islands.

The sailing is priced from \$12,995ppts, including a 15% discount when booked by 31 Oct - more details **HERE**.

COVID-19 word search

B	B	M	P	C	M	S	R	E	D	R	O	B	Q	I
D	L	A	U	O	N	X	M	C	H	M	X	O	C	V
J	P	S	C	T	E	X	B	R	O	P	X	L	S	A
N	M	K	O	W	N	Z	T	E	A	U	C	N	E	C
W	Y	S	R	Q	I	G	Z	V	S	J	G	Y	S	C
O	K	S	O	R	T	O	R	E	T	G	S	H	A	I
D	D	S	N	L	N	Q	E	F	R	F	P	V	E	N
K	B	E	A	Q	A	G	Z	A	A	A	X	D	S	E
C	G	N	V	W	R	C	I	A	Z	N	W	E	I	M
O	A	K	I	A	A	N	F	L	E	R	U	L	D	H
L	T	C	R	I	U	I	P	P	N	E	H	T	Y	T
Y	P	I	U	R	Q	N	B	H	E	D	A	A	K	F
U	B	S	S	A	I	R	N	A	C	O	N	B	Z	B
H	F	W	U	C	S	H	E	F	A	M	X	R	K	F
L	N	W	P	K	J	D	Y	Q	H	B	X	P	A	N

SEE if you can find these words. They are hidden horizontally, vertically and diagonally, forwards and backwards.

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| ALPHA | LOCKDOWN |
| ASTRAZENECA | MASKS |
| BORDERS | MODERNA |
| CORONAVIRUS | PFIZER |
| COUGH | QUARANTINE |
| DELTA | SICKNESS |
| DISEASE | VACCINE |
| FEVER | WUHAN |

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.

O	E	I
B	N	D
D	F	R

- Good – 23 words
- Very good – 35 words
- Excellent – 47 words

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

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Travel Daily

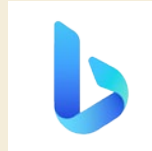


Know your brands

LOGOS are the main way that companies distinguish themselves, and some logos are so famous that you don't even need to see the company's name to know who it is.

See if you can identify these four logos.

1



2



3



4



Whose flag is this?



THIS flag is almost identical to that of the Arab Liberation Flag of 1952, and has served as the inspiration for this nation's flag, as well as those of Egypt, Iraq, Sudan and Syria.

This country was previously split

into north and south but was unified into a republic in 1990.

The red stands for unity and the bloodshed of martyrs, the white for a bright future and the black for the supposed dark past.

Do you know whose flag this is?

ANSWERS 01 SEP
 Know your brands: 1 Microsoft Bing, 2 Le Coq Sportif, 3 Celebrity Cruises, 4 Quest Apartment Hotels
 Whose flag is this: Yemen
 Unscramble: bend, bidden, bind, binder, bond, bonded, bone, boned, bonfire, bonier, born, borne, brine, brined, dine, dined, diner, done, drone, droned, fern, fend, find, finder, fine, fined, finer, fond, fonder, FORBIDDEN, friend, frond, inbred, infer, info, iron, ironed, nerd, node, noir, rebound, rein, fend, ridden, rind, robin

Bula to the chief



STARTING a new job is a frantic and nervous experience for most, but perhaps businesses should take a leaf out of Tourism Fiji's human resources manual, who this week welcomed its new CEO Brent Hill and his wife Kellie (pictured) with the full colour and warmth of the Bula spirit.

While still respecting important social distancing regulations, the team at the Nadi-based tourism body made Hill know how optimistic they are for the professional successes he will bring to the country's tourism sector in the months and years ahead as global travel bounces back from the pandemic.

Hill was recruited in Jul (**TD** 13 Jul) to fill the void left by Matt Stoeckel, who departed the position to take up the leadership role of Chief Executive Officer with Visit Sunshine Coast.



Hill has made the sea change to work in Fiji from his native Adelaide, where he held a number of important marketing roles over the last 15 years, including a six-year stint as the South Australian Tourism Commission's Executive Director of Marketing and two years as the National Marketing Manager for Harris Scarfe Australia.

Hill also knows what it takes to deliver upon the expectations of discerning customers, having owned a cafe called Lavazza Cafe 227 for three years between 2007 and 2010.

Winery joins UWEA

ULTIMATE Winery Experiences Australia (UWEA) has expanded its Yarra Valley winery appeal, with Dominique Portet joining De Bortoli in its collection of handpicked premium wineries.

Dominique Portet is a young winery influenced by European winemaking, with the site featuring a cellar door and bistro with French design elements.

The winery said joining UWEA "aligns perfectly" with its goal of increasing the reach and impact of Australian wine tourism.

G gets to the point

G ADVENTURES has launched its new Vaccinated Tours program, a collection of trips featuring fully vaccinated tour guides and fellow travellers.

The operator said its new set of fully vaccinated tours will ensure equitable access to tourism employment opportunities for tour guides in destinations which have not yet been able to administer vaccinations.

All travellers must receive their final jab at least 14 days prior to day one of the tour.

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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.



The 234-room **Nikko Style Niseko Hanazono** will open its doors in 2024, offering guests private hot spring baths, open air springs overlooking Mount Yotei, a club lounge and a fitness centre. Other amenities will include an all-day dining restaurant with an open kitchen offering cuisine sourced from local ingredients in Hokkaido. Okura Nikko Hotel Management's latest Japanese property will open in early 2024.



Upscale brand Cambria Hotels continues on its United States expansion push, recently announcing the 90-room **Cambria Hotel Napa Valley Silverado Trail** in California's popular wine region. The four-storey property is the brand's fourth in the US state, with features including spa-style bathrooms with Bluetooth mirrors, multi-function meeting and event spaces and a gym.



The Outrigger Hospitality Group has this week welcomed **Outrigger Kona Resort and Spa** in Hawaii to its portfolio. Formerly known as the Sheraton Kona Resort & Spa at Keauhou Bay before its acquisition last year, the property offers 500 rooms/suites, while common area amenities include a Ho'ola Spa, a wedding chapel, a fitness centre and two restaurants. Kids can also enjoy a 200-foot winding waterslide at the oceanfront pool and take advantage of the Outrigger's Coral Kids Club which is set to open later this year.



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