



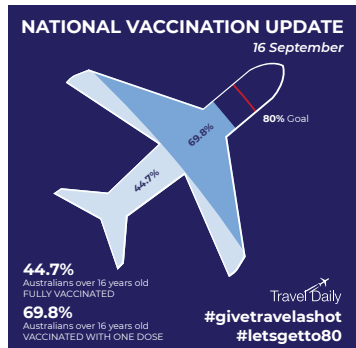
Kirsty Eccles  
Meridian Travel & Cruise

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## Business class filling



**TRAVEL Daily's** "vaccination plane" (pictured) continues to approach a somewhat respectable load factor, yesterday reaching 69.8% of the Australian population having had a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine - meaning the Business class cabin on the aircraft is starting to fill.

Those big tanks on the wings are also being topped up by double doses, with the fully vaxed proportion of the population now sitting at 44.7%.

With plenty of supply, it's expected that next week's update will be even closer to the 80% goal laid out in the National Cabinet-approved reopening plan.

The updated graphic is available for sharing on social media channels, along with plenty of other collateral including an additional Zoom background, on our dedicated #givetravelashot page at [traveldaily.com.au](http://traveldaily.com.au).

## Today's issue of TD

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

## Tasman closure slams NZ

**AIR** New Zealand's bottom line is being hit by about NZ\$25 million a month due to the current suspension of the trans-Tasman bubble, with the carrier providing details of the financial impact of ongoing restrictions.

NZ's earnings guidance was suspended on 26 Aug due to the uncertainty associated with the introduction of a nationwide Alert Level 4 in NZ, and a lack of clarity about when the trans-Tasman bubble might reopen.

The monthly impact of nationwide NZ Level 3 or 4 travel restrictions is up to NZ\$55 million, including the benefit of any wage subsidies received.

If domestic restrictions apply in Auckland only at Level 3 or

Level 4, the estimated impact is NZ\$25m-\$35m a month, the carrier revealed.

NZ said it was currently observing strong demand for air travel across regions in New Zealand that are currently under Level 2 restrictions.

The airline has now drawn down NZ\$435 million of its government-backed standby loan facility (TD 20 Mar 2020), with just over \$1 billion additional headroom available in the facility.

The NZ Govt this morning said the trans-Tasman quarantine-free bubble would remain suspended for a further eight weeks.

## New VA sales chief

**VIRGIN** Australia has announced the promotion of Darren McDermott to become its Group General Manager, Sales.

McDermott joined VA in Feb 2020 as Manager, Sales (East) and has been acting as Head of Sales for the last few months.

Prior to that he was Manager Aviation Business Development at Cairns Airport, a role which followed a 17 year stint in a range of positions with Qantas.

In his expanded role he will oversee the indirect partner channel for Virgin Australia, including corporate, Government and trade partner sales in all markets, the carrier said.

## Ekno - we're still trading!

**EKNO** Experience Tours & Travels has confirmed it continues to operate, despite the AFTA website listing the business as having closed down (TD 14 Sep).

Sharon Thrupp, Director of the Indian subcontinent specialist told TD the firm is an active financial member of the Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO), and accordingly had voluntarily withdrawn from the AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme with plans to participate in CATO's proposed new accreditation program.

She added that the business is temporarily in hibernation until borders reopen.

## JAPAN VIRTUAL ROADSHOW

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## Window Seat

**COULD** it be? The Loch Ness Monster may have finally been caught credibly on camera this month, but not by a local Scotsman this time, but rather a vigilant observer in China.

Yes, it seems the internet may have finally unmasked the elusive beast that reputedly lurks beneath the surface of the famous Scottish lake, with Weiming Jiang in Jiaozhou City claiming to have sighted the monster via a live webcam.

Recorder of the Official Loch Ness Monster Sightings Register, Gary Campbell, claimed Jiang "saw a black dot, then two, very close to the shore".

"They moved on the water for six minutes, it is the first accepted sightings we have had from China but just shows you can see Nessie from anywhere in the world," Campbell added.

The register has so far logged nine sightings this year alone via webcam, but you'd think for such a fabled megastar, Nessie would be on the Gram instead.



## Virgin joins vax mandate

**VIRGIN** Australia has joined Qantas in issuing a mandate for its staff to be fully vaccinated.

Under the terms of the new health policy, frontline and airport-based team members will be required to be fully vaccinated by 15 Nov, with all remaining office-based team members to be double jabbed by 31 Mar 2022.

VA said after consultation with staff it would be reimbursing employees left out of pocket by associated expenses such as GP visits to discuss vaccination concerns, and would provide access to extra leave for those who experience side effects.

The carrier also stated it would issue short extensions to staff who are unable to gain access to vaccines due to availability scarcity, while VA will also issue a clearer process for those who cannot be vaccinated due to medical or other reasons.

"This is the right policy for the

extraordinary times we live in and is a decision that will keep our people safe," VA's CEO Jayne Hrdlicka said.

"We have a responsibility to do our part to protect our people and the community - vaccination is the way to do that," she added.

**MEANWHILE** VA has also announced a raft of benefits for its loyalty members, including the extension of status credits until 2023 for eligible Velocity Platinum, Gold & Silver members.

Members will also be able to receive status credits for travel on reward seat bookings on eligible domestic flights for six months from 01 Oct, as well as redemptions on partner airline bookings to launch shortly.

## NSW pulls trigger

**NSW** Premier Gladys Berejiklian has confirmed the state will conduct a new home isolation trial for returned travellers that will see people only serve seven days of quarantine.

The pilot will involve at least 100 fully vaccinated people and if it meets key objectives, will replace NSW's costly hotel quarantine system altogether.

"We want to be able to open up in Sydney and NSW as quickly as possible, so this is a really crucial step," NSW Tourism Minister Stuart Ayres said.

Qantas staff are reportedly among those flagged to take part in the home isolation trial.

## New Ghan day trip

**JOURNEY** Beyond has launched a new single day regional adventure on The Ghan, taking guests from Adelaide to the Clare Valley for wine tasting and then a three course lunch amongst the vines - followed by an onboard tittle with cheese and chocolate on the return to the SA capital. Four exclusive departures are available, with the first trip scheduled for 08 Oct - see [journeymbeyondrail.com.au](http://journeymbeyondrail.com.au).

## QF raises \$500m

**QANTAS** has completed a seven-year unsecured bond worth \$500 million, with funds to be used to boost liquidity, repay maturing debt and help the balance sheet repair program.

The bond was oversubscribed by a factor of six, the carrier said.

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## Event Hotels is off and racing



**EVENT** Hospitality & Entertainment today announced a management agreement for a newbuild Atura Hotel in the south-west Sydney suburb of Oran Park - at one time the location of one of the country's top motor racing circuits.

The "urban resort" (pictured) is scheduled for completion in late 2023, with 184 rooms, a locally inspired restaurant and bar and an array of meeting facilities.

The \$500 million Oran Park precinct featuring lifestyle, retail

and entertainment offerings, is anticipated to grow significantly in the coming years, as part of the catchment area for the new Western Sydney International Airport.

### Future of travel

**INDUSTRY** leaders have unpacked the future of travel, meetings and events with Marriott International at its first Be There - The Path Forward for Travel and Events hybrid event.

Taking place earlier this month, Be There was attended by more than 1,100 in-person and virtual travel industry professionals across Asia Pacific.

Be There featured a lively panel discussion on the emerging trends and demands in meetings and events, changing business travel policies, luxury travel, and consumer behaviour in the post-pandemic era.

One of the key trends which emerged from Be There was "the customer experience is still key".

### EK ramps up staff

**EMIRATES** is currently seeking 3,500 employees to support its relaunch of wider operations.

The campaign aims to recruit 3,000 cabin crew and 500 airport employees to join its Dubai hub over the next six months.

Candidates interested in joining Emirates as cabin crew or as an airport services agent can find out more about the job requirements [HERE](#).

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## Tourism worker shortage

**QUEENSLAND'S** pandemic-impacted tourism industry is facing another hurdle as operators struggle to find workers, University of Queensland Associate Professor Richard Robinson believes.

The UQ Business School researcher is investigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the state's tourism workforce, developing a Crisis Resilience & Recovery Plan with the support of the Queensland Government.

Robinson has conducted 15 consultation workshops with tourism industry operators across five of the state's regions - Tropical North Queensland, Southern Queensland, Outback Queensland, the Whitsundays and the Gold Coast - finding operators in Tropical North Qld had suffered the most, with a loss of both international tourists and the int'l labour market, such as working holiday visa holders.

The latest tourism figures show a 48.9% drop in visitors to Tropical North Queensland, while the Outback boomed with a record winter season from Australian travellers.

The newly formed crisis strategy is also focused on three industry groups who are experiencing the pandemic differently - employees, businesses, and stakeholders.

Firms in marine and Indigenous tourism were most impacted, while both tourism operators and employees rated job security

as the biggest impact of the pandemic.

Financial support such as JobKeeper improved work opportunities, and a strong sense of community helped boost workforce confidence mid-last year, but this has since declined again in 2021 due to continued lockdowns and border closures.

"Tourism operators are really struggling to get workers in their regions due to the uncertainty of domestic and international border closures," Robinson said.

"The key concerns that came up in the consultations were mostly around job security, financial hardship, wellbeing and skilled labour shortages.

See the full report [HERE](#).

### New Sabre/EY pact

**ETIHAD** and Sabre have announced a long-term key technology partnership - just days after the carrier also announced a major tech deal with the global adoption of the Amadeus Altea platform (**TD** 14 Sep).

Sabre's network planning and revenue management suite "will continue to play a key role in Etihad's recovery," with the new agreement to help the airline drive post-pandemic growth and enhance the pax experience.

Under the new multi-year agreement, Etihad will utilise Sabre's Fare Optimiser, Network Planning & Optimisation, and Inflight technology.

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## CORPORATE UPDATE

### BCD adds pay platform

BCD Travel has announced the launch of a new BCD Pay system which promises to “transform travel and expense spend management,” with the platform built using artificial intelligence, machine learning and open APIs to “simplify, digitise and automate corporate travel payment, reconciliation and invoice management”.

The company cited a recent poll of clients finding more than 50%

of customers still struggle with missing invoices, receipts, credit card reconciliations and managing the quality of expense data.

Clients who subscribe to BCD Pay will utilise a so-called “Smart Payment rules engine” to simplify the management of payment policies and spending limits across various traveller segments.

“At BCD Travel, our vision is to remove the friction and pain points experienced by travellers, travel managers and finance teams related to their travel and expense payment, invoices, reimbursement and reconciliation,” said BCD VP Digital Payment and Expense Products, Ajay Singh.

“BCD Pay eases the burden of travellers, who are looking for a simple process with no need to make payments or expense claims,” he said.

The company said BCD Pay provides seamless orchestration of payment, invoices and receipts during a trip, with an automated console allowing users to review, reconcile and audit T&E spend management, invoices, receipts, credit card and expense transactions.

Pilot testing of the platform had shown a 75% improvement in the cycle time of data ingestion, reconciliation, reporting and data integration across the fragmented ecosystem of various back office, ERP systems and credit card issuer platforms.

See [bcdtravel.com/bcd-pay](http://bcdtravel.com/bcd-pay).

### FCM - It's Now Girl!



FCM Meetings & Events is celebrating International Day of the Girl 2021 by partnering with non-profit Indigenous education organisation Yalari and charity group SolarBuddy to champion change for young women from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

Last year FCM and SolarBuddy produced the first “It’s Now Girl” event, raising over \$10,000 for SolarBuddy lights donated to disadvantaged communities.

This year’s follow-up event is scheduled to take place virtually on 11 Oct, but if Melbourne restrictions lift it may be also possible to attend in person - register to take part [HERE](#).



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### Up, up and away at Western Sydney



**WESTERN** Sydney Airport has granted the contract to design and build its airfield to a joint venture between CBP Contractors and Acciona, with construction of the 3.7km runway and “rapid-exit taxiways” to start next year.

CEO Simon Hickey highlighted the efficiency of the design (**pictured**), which would use the latest technology to reduce taxi times and tarmac delays which are frustrating for passengers and costly for airlines.

“Our airfield’s design means we’ll safely get planes in the air or to the gates faster,” he said.

The long runway will allow Western Sydney International (WSI) to handle the full range of commercial aircraft, including the new generation of ultra long-haul airlines such as the Airbus A350-1000 and Boeing 777X.

Hickey noted that WSI would also be the only airport in Sydney equipped with a CAT III-B instrument landing system, allowing it to continue operating

safely in foggy conditions which currently forces the closure of the city’s skies.

Crushed sandstone from current tunnelling projects across Sydney will be reused to support the construction of the runway, taxiways and roads, with the project including more than 40km of roadway and 3,000 aeronautical ground lights.

Hickey said WSI was on track to open to international, domestic and air cargo services in late 2026.

More renders and images of construction progress at WSI are at [facebook.com/traveldaily](https://facebook.com/traveldaily).

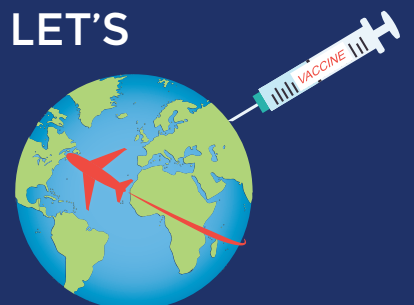
### Hilton extension

**HILTON** has extended the status of members of its Hilton Honors loyalty program through until 31 Mar 2023, while existing point expirations are also paused until the end of next year.

Other changes unveiled include relaxed 2022 status and bonus requirements - see [hilton.com](http://hilton.com).

**AUSTRALIANS WILL BE ALLOWED TO TRAVEL WHEN WE REACH 80% OF THE POPULATION VACCINATED, SO LET'S**

**#givetravelashot  
#letsgetto80**



## 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?

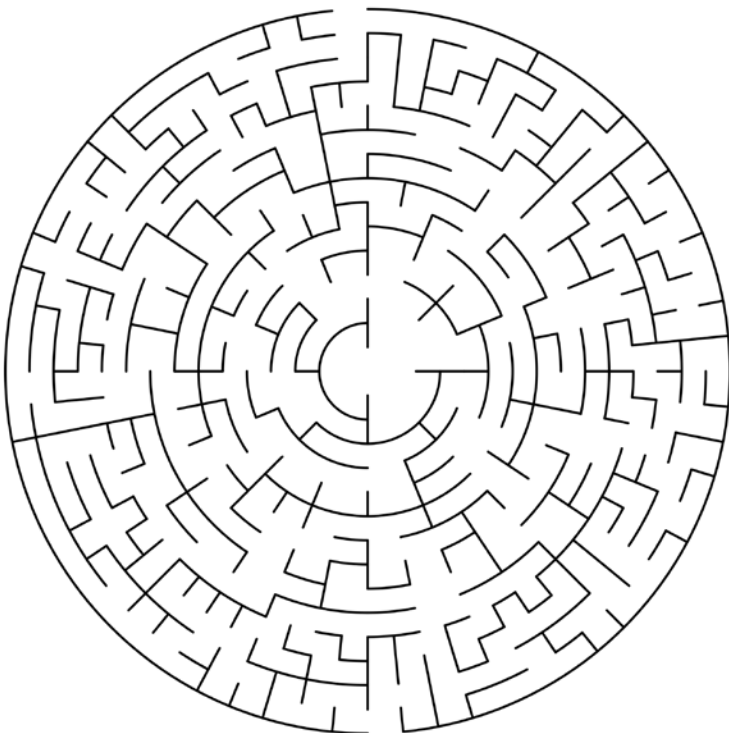
This is part of the most striking and complete ancient Greek

monumental complex that is still standing today.

It sits on a hill which rises around 156m above the city in which it is situated, and this building was once a temple to the patron goddess of the city.

## A-maze-ing

**CAN** you find your way through this maze? Start at the top and finish at the bottom.



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## Funnies Flashback



**WE'VE** trawled through the **TD** Window Seat archives to give you a blast from the past. Here's some gems from 16 Oct 2014:

**A FORMER** Cathay Pacific pilot has pleaded guilty to unlawfully entering the secure area of an airport, with a court in Hawaii hearing that he wore his former uniform and ID badge in order to bypass security at Honolulu International Airport.

Joshu Osmansk departed CX in 2012, but apparently hung onto his Cathay Pacific uniform.

He told the court he wore the outfit at HNL "so that I could cut the line and keep my shoes on while going through Honolulu Airport security".

According to *Hawaii News Now*, the hearing followed a long-running investigation by the FBI after a tip-off from a member of the public.

The incident could earn him up to ten years in prison and a fine of up to US\$250,000.

## 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!

ANSWERS 17 SEP  
Icon under a microscope: The Parthenon, Athens, Greece  
Celebrity faces: Eyes - Fiona Dalton, Virtuoso, Nose - Princess Diana, Mouth - John Lennon

## Qld in the box seat

A NEW survey conducted by Play Travel has revealed Qld to be the most desired state for a holiday for Aussies, garnering 53% of the vote of 1,100 people.

NSW was the next most sought after state with 10.2%, followed by WA with 10%.

The study also found most people want their next trip to be with their families.



Bake along with us in September, with different recipes each week.

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Email [bakeoff@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:bakeoff@traveldaily.com.au)

This week's recipe:

**CARROT CAKE**



Travel Daily

## The sweet taste of Qld



CAIRNS Airport celebrated the introduction of Skytrans Airlines' first services to the Whitsunday Coast and Rockhampton this week, with executives savouring the sweet moment with a plethora of cakes.

The new services will operate five times per week and link three key tourist destinations.

"The introduction of new services like these, offers a much-needed boost to our aviation recovery and will go some way to supporting tourism operators across both regions," Cairns Airport said in a statement.

The launch is the latest move from Qld-based Skytrans which lodged a tender to operate gov-funded routes in Jul (**TD** 27 Jul).

**Pictured:** CEO Tourism Tropical North Queensland Mark Olsen, Skytrans CEO Alan Milne, & Cairns Airport Manager Aviation Business Development David Nye.

## Fiji a step closer

FIJI has undertaken another important step towards accepting international travellers again, with its 60% vaccination rate of the population to instigate a restart of domestic travel.

Domestic flights between Suva and Nadi will be the first to resume, with eased restrictions within Viti Levu also flagged by 04 Oct, paving the way for Fijian citizens to take a holiday.

"Our vaccination drive has always been the pathway back to tourism in the country, so it is a welcoming milestone achievement to have collectively reached," Tourism Fiji CEO Brent Hill said.

## 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](mailto:specials@traveldaily.com.au)

**Airnorth's** Spring Clean Network Sales ends tonight, offering cheap flights across a range of routes in Qld & the Top End. Highlights of the sale include Darwin to Alice Springs one way for \$300. **CLICK HERE** for info.

Holiday package deals have been released by **Jetstar** for the remainder of Sep, bundling flights with accommodation in multiple domestic and international locations. Offers include flights and five nights at Fiji's Hilton Resort and Spa for \$998 for two adults. Expiry dates of the promo varies depending on each package. See further details **HERE**.

Guests who book seats on board the **Rocky Mountaineer** will receive up to four free perks on Canadian Routes. Bonus perks include meals, two additional hotel nights and airport transfers. The offer applies to 2022 departures only and bookings must be made by 08 Oct for select itineraries. Call 1800 821 531 for more information.

**StayWell Holdings** has announced it is joining the throng of travel brands seeking to incentivise Aussies to fully vaccinate and get the industry moving again, offering 25% off available rates to the fully jabbed. Other vaccinated benefits include complimentary room upgrades (subject to availability), late check out, and double the loyalty points for rewards members. **CLICK HERE** for more details.

Got a confidential tip? Contact *Travel Daily* via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click **HERE**