



Justine Sealey
Ramsgate Travel Service

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Sabre APAC head

NICOLE Regel was today announced as the new local Senior Director for Sabre, overseeing the Sabre Travel Solutions agency business across Australia, NZ and the Pacific.

Regel has been with the company since 2018, and her expanded role will also see her continuing to oversee Sabre's relationship with the Flight Centre Travel Group.

Her industry career has also included six years at Virgin Australia, as well as positions at CT Connections, Creative Holidays and Explore Holidays.

She takes over from Sabre's Director Southern Region, Richard Morgan, who is now undertaking special projects for the firm prior to his retirement early in 2022.

Industry mourns Tuamoto

SOUTH Pacific tourism leader Jo Tuamoto died yesterday in Fiji, with the industry hailing his extensive achievements to build the travel sector and resulting economic prosperity in both Fiji and the Solomon Islands.

The shock news was announced by Tourism Solomons board Chairman, Chris Hapa, who said his team was devastated at the loss of Tuamoto who had led the organisation since 2013, heading up many initiatives including the Solomon Is. branding which "truly positioned us as a force to be reckoned with on the international tourism stage".

Prior to joining Tourism Solomons, Tuamoto had played a leading role in the Fiji tourism

sector, including as MD of Blue Lagoon Cruises and then with Tourism Fiji, initially as Regional Director Australia and The Americas and then as global CEO where he championed the successful "Fiji Me" branding.

He was also Deputy Chair of the South Pacific Tourism Organisation and had acted as a senior consultant to governments and major businesses across the South Pacific region.

He was a graduate in physics and mathematics from the University of the South Pacific, and had undertaken management studies at the University of Wales, Harvard, Wharton and the University of Hawai'i.

Tuamoto had recently experienced a medical episode in Honiara, and was undergoing care in Suva when he died.

He is survived by his wife, four children and one grandchild.

Princess cancels

PRINCESS Cruises has cancelled its planned upcoming *Royal Princess* and *Sapphire Princess* deployments in Australia and NZ.

The company's local pause is now extended until 27 Jan 2022, when *Coral Princess* is still scheduled to resume a curtailed season if restrictions ease.

Today's issue of **TD**

Travel Daily today has five pages of news.

Sealink buys in WA

SEALINK Travel Group has confirmed the acquisition of boutique Perth coach tour operator Swan Valley Tours, further expanding the company's footprint in WA after the recent \$85 million purchase of Go West Tours (**TD** 07 May).

The Swan Valley deal includes three vehicles and "a strong brand that has championed tourism in the Swan Valley for over two decades," Sealink CEO Clint Feuerherdt said.

The tours complement Sealink's existing Captain Cook Cruises WA business which operates regular Swan Valley Wine Cruises.



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Prima revelations

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line this morning unveiled some of the "numerous cruise industry firsts" which will feature aboard its new *Norwegian Prima* when she debuts next year.

Innovations include a venue that transforms from a three-storey theatre into a Vegas-style nightclub, the largest racetrack at sea and The Drop, described as the world's first "freefall dry slide" where guests experience an exhilarating 10-storey plunge.

Entertainment will include *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical* tracing the rise of the Queen of Disco as well as Tee Time, a supercharged version of mini golf, the Improv at Sea comedy club and much more.

More details in today's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.

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Explorer Society launches

FORMER Bench Africa GMs Martin Edwards and Cameron Neill have combined forces to launch their own travel business.

Dubbed The Explorer Society, the fledgling operator will begin by offering “a range of tailored explorations in a variety of travel styles throughout Africa, the Middle East and South America,” according to Edwards, who with unlucky timing resigned from Bench to take up a new role just a week before the onset of the pandemic (**TD** 06 Mar 2020).

Neill succeeded him at Bench but stepped down earlier this year (**TD** 22 Jan), with the pair now focusing together on “developing modern and innovative ways to travel and to ensure smooth and seamless journeys for the post pandemic traveller”.

The Explorer Society is launching now in preparation for the expected 2022 boom, to

capitalise on enormous pent-up demand from consumers.

“We want to use our lengthy travel experience to bring the fun back into travel,” Edwards and Neill said, foreshadowing the addition of further destinations to The Explorer Society portfolio along with “a range of utterly unique exploration experiences from around the world”.

The company will aim to avoid the crowds and manufactured experiences, focusing on “the real, the raw and the revealing”.

“Looking for positives, the pandemic has given us a great chance to do something new and look at what we think could be improved,” Neill said.

“This is our opportunity to do things our way and to explore destinations with all of their elements, its nuances and its lessons,” he added.

For more information see theexplorersociety.com.

ATAC adds Snaffle

EQUESTRIAN travel specialists Snaffle Travel has joined the membership ranks of the Australian Travel Agents Co-operative (ATAC).

The company offers 19 years of travel experience, offering clients equestrian tours featuring a blend of riding, sightseeing, culture explorations and escorted tours.

Commenting on the announcement, ATAC said Snaffle’s CEO Tania Huppatz is an “experienced travel agent and horse woman”, managing trips to some of the top equestrian events around the world.

Supply on suppliers

INSIDEJAPAN has launched a new survey for trade partners designed to learn more about how agents go about finding and securing new suppliers.

There are five gift cards to be won for those who complete the survey - access it **HERE**.



Window Seat

MORE pressure has been applied to Scott Morrison to end the country’s tough travel ban, this time from UK counterpart Boris Johnson who says it should end for no other reason than to allow the Barmy Army in to watch some cricket.

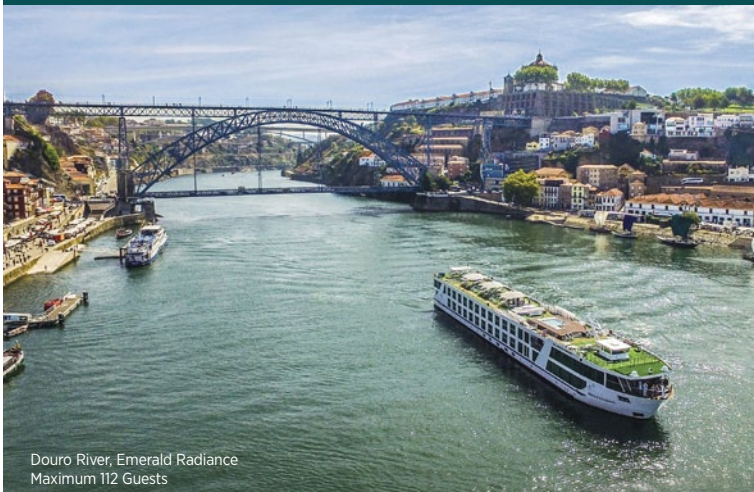
Yes, The Ashes is almost upon us and the UK Prime Minister is imploring Morrison to allow more than just the players to travel Down Under and compete, asking that vaccinated British nationals be allowed in to enjoy the series which commences on 07 Dec.



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Fukuoka retains GTI

FUKUOKA Prefecture Tourist Association has reappointed GTI Tourism to manage its marketing strategy in the Australian market, with the Japanese region keen to leverage a predicted upturn in overseas bookings in Dec.

The agency will be charged with driving sales through marketing, PR, social and digital activities.

Thai travel breach

DATA from more than 100 million travellers to Thailand over the last decade may have been breached, according to Leader of Cybersecurity Research at Comparitech Bob Diachenko.

The cyber security expert made the discovery after finding his own details stashed in an unprotected Elasticsearch database, which contained full names, arrival dates, gender, residency status, passport numbers, visa information, and Thai arrival card numbers.

Expedia to unify loyalty

EXPEDIA Group has today announced it will expand its loyalty program to offer “unique member pricing discounts” and the ability to earn and redeem rewards across all of its brands and products worldwide.

The initiative will cover sites including Expedia, Hotels.com, Orbitz, Travelocity, Vrbo and Wotif, and span flights, hotels, car rentals, vacation homes, cruises and activities, the company said, claiming the move sees it provide “the most complete travel rewards offering in the industry”.

Expedia Brands President, Jon Gieselman, said the company’s Member Only Deals and loyalty rewards had already saved customers almost US\$10 billion on travel alone.

“Soon their current rewards will be even more valuable, as they will gain access to the world of Expedia Group through one consolidated, easy-to-use

program,” he promised.

Expedia benefits already in place include member pricing, reward boosters and upgrades and amenities offered at thousands of properties worldwide.

The unified program, to roll out in the coming months, will continue to be free to join, and all current members will keep earning rewards through their existing programs, with the addition of more flexibility and value in the future.

DOJ blocks AA, B6

THE US Department of Justice (DOJ) has launched legal action seeking to stop the already approved north-east US strategic alliance between American Airlines & JetBlue (**TD** 17 Jul 2020).

Several states are participating in the case, claiming the pact is anticompetitive and would cost consumers hundreds of millions.

Harwood AA role

LEANNE Harwood, IHG Hotels & Resorts MD for Japan, Australasia and the Pacific, has been elected President of the Accommodation Association (AA), taking over from Julian Clark who has led the organisation for seven years.

Harwood is the first woman to hold the position in the Association’s 54-year history.

Harwood said she and the AA Council would be working closely with interim CEO Richard Munro (**TD** 15 Sep) to serve members, and to progress the merger with the Australian Hotels Association/ Tourism Accommodation Australia (**TD** 11 Sep 2020).

TAANZ recruitment

THE Travel Agents Association of New Zealand (TAANZ) has confirmed plans to recruit for a new General Manager, 12 months after a restructure saw former CEO Andrew Olsen depart the organisation (**TD** 08 Sep 2020).

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Phishing on the rise: study

THE travel sector is experiencing a spike in the number of new phishing attacks, according to American cyber security company Palo Alto Networks.

In the company's *Phishing eager travellers* report, the data noted a rise in the number of travel-themed phishing URLs created between Oct 2019 and Aug 2021, with the most noticeable spike occurring in Jun of this year.

Commenting on the findings contained in the report, co-author Anna Chung claimed cyber criminals are seeking to monetise data such as credit card numbers stolen from travellers through phishing schemes by selling them on the dark web, or to conduct more theft by reselling airline or hotel loyalty points, or making fraudulent travel bookings.

One of the key ways cyber criminals have been carrying out their activities is by using key terms in travel like "airline" and

"vacation", creating a gateway to fool consumers into downloading the infostealer Dridex from tainted Dropbox links.

Google Cloud Storage has also been used to distribute malware to travel companies as well.

Palo Alto noted over 6,000 new fake URLs are created every day.

We've had it worse

ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of the govt's support for airlines (*TD* yesterday), Tourism Accommodation Australia (TAA) CEO Michael Johnson told *TD* the hotel industry has had it tougher in 2021 than 2020, but has enjoyed less govt support this year.

Johnson noted the sector had not been able to trade back to profitability since Mar 2020, and many members have not been eligible for JobSaver payments, which replaced JobKeeper.

Outrigger progress

OUTRIGGER Fiji Beach Resort has confirmed it will open its doors again to local visitors from 01 Oct after gaining accreditation through the Care Fiji Commitment 100% Vaccinated seal of approval program.

The property will open from Fri to Sun initially, offering packages for its wood and straw accommodation, with hopes of boosting staff to pre-COVID levels when overseas travel returns.

VA links HBA-ADL

VIRGIN Australia has launched two new routes between Hobart-Adelaide and Hobart-Perth in line with plans revealed back in May to ramp up capacity for the summer holidays (*TD* 20 May).

To mark the launch, the carrier is offering cheap fares from \$49 between Hobart and Adelaide, and \$149 between Hobart and Perth, available until midnight Sun 26 Sep.

TTNQ incentive

A NEW \$2 million tourism campaign has been launched by Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ), incentivising Aussies to book a domestic holiday to the region.

The promotion has seen the release of 8,000 travel vouchers, enabling travellers who spend \$1,000 on a Tropical North Queensland holiday to receive an extra \$250 to spend on tours.

The vouchers can be used until 20 Apr 2022 - more info [HERE](#).

Kakadu discounts

KAKADU Tourism has introduced a number of discounted cruises, accommodation and touring packages to encourage travellers to book a holiday to the region this summer.

Packages include the Fish For The Million in Kakadu deal, including a Yellow Water fishing tour - call 08 8979 9000 for info.



*The Great Travel Daily
Bake Off continues!*

In September, we're encouraging our readers to bake along with us, with different recipes each week.

Send us a picture of your baked goods, along with any extra tips or secret ingredients or variations, and the best one will win a \$50 gift voucher. Email bakeoff@traveldaily.com.au

This week's recipe:

**CHOC CHIP
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Icon under a microscope



THIS mountain is usually depicted from the ground, and is very recognisable from that angle.

The mountain is the highest in the country and is an active

volcano.

It is located about 100km from the capital of the nation and on a clear day can be seen from there.

Can you name this landmark?

Answer: Mt Fuji, Japan

Air NZ adds flights

AIR New Zealand has added new temporary services between Whangarei and Wellington/Auckland which will operate between 29 Sep and 05 Oct, and will deploy Q300 turboprop aircraft on the routes.

“These flights will keep residents in Northland connected with the rest of the country, while also giving local tourists the opportunity to visit us for a short break and help boost our economy,” Air New Zealand Chief Customer and Sales Officer Leanne Geraghty said.

Valor Africa deal

HOTELIER Valor Hospitality Partners has signed a partnership agreement with African hotel chain CityBlue Hotels to form a new joint-venture entity called Valor Diar.

Under the terms of the arrangement, the combined company will operate Divine Residences by CityBlue in Riverside, Nairobi which is set to open in Apr 2023, before bringing a significant pipeline of East African properties, including scaling up the CityBlue brand in the Sub-Saharan market.



CATO is forging its own future with a new constitution, accreditation scheme and other reforms. Read more in the September issue of *travelBulletin*.

CLICK to read

P&O cancels Melbourne

P&O Cruises has been forced to cancel its planned upcoming summer season of Melbourne voyages, which is “no longer feasible to deliver” due to ongoing uncertainty about a cruise restart.

The cruise line has also extended its pause in operations for departures from Sydney and Brisbane by a further month until mid-Jan, to give guests greater confidence in planning their Christmas and New Year holidays. The voluntary suspension now

applies to cruises leaving up to 14 Jan 2022 for Brisbane, and 18 Jan 2022 for Sydney.

P&O Australia President Sture Myrmell said “unfortunately we are not yet clear on the requirements from governments and public health authorities for a phased return of domestic cruising, but we remain hopeful these conversations will gather pace now there is real momentum around society reopening”.

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.



Located on the private island hideaway of Lhaviyani Atoll, **Six Senses Kanuhura** will become the brand's second property in the Maldives. Encompassing three private islands – two deserted neighboring isles and Kanuhura itself – this laid-back retreat will

epitomise white sands, turquoise lagoons, lush tropical greenery and gently swaying palm trees. It will be Six Senses' second collaboration with Hotel Properties Limited.



Event Hospitality & Entertainment has announced it has entered into a management agreement with Greenfields Development Company for **Atura Oran Park**, located within the south-west Sydney suburb. Anchored within the \$500 million

Oran Park Podium, the urban resort is due for completion in late 2023, and will be a key offering for the region, in addition to providing a gateway to Western Sydney International Airport.



Radisson Bhopal is a new hotel situated in the heart of the capital city of the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, and is located within a 40-minute driving distance from Raja Bhoj Airport and 10 minutes from Habibganj railway station. The hotel spans across 4,500m², and provides an ideal stay for business travellers, as well as vacationers visiting the city, providing easy access to tourist attractions like Sanchi, Bhojtal, and Van Vihar Wildlife Sanctuary.