



Rock to Colorado

TRAVELLERS can explore the American southwest by rail with Rocky Mountaineer's amazing new route, Rockies to the Red Rocks from Moab to Denver.

The two-day trip includes an overnight hotel stay - for more information, see **page seven**.



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VA seeks 33% market share

VIRGIN Australia's new small and medium enterprise (SME)-focused loyalty program (**TD** breaking news) is part of ongoing efforts to target a 33% Australian domestic market share.

The new Virgin Australia Business Flyer scheme is free to join and allows members to "double-dip" by earning Velocity loyalty points for both their business and themselves.

There's no minimum spend requirement, and three program tiers offering a reduction of up to 6% off base published airfares.

Higher tiers also benefit from a faster points earning rate, and points can be transferred to any personal Velocity account to use for flights, upgrades, hotels, car hire and through other partners.

Discounted lounge memberships are available for \$379 per year, and two Velocity Pilot Gold memberships will be gifted to Business Flyer members who spend at least \$2,000 on flights within the first three months of joining the scheme.

In addition, a dedicated VA Business Flyer "travel management portal" will be accessible via the VA website.

DL daily from May

TRAVEL Daily would like to clarify that Delta Air Lines has been flying daily between LAX and SYD since 01 May 2021, and not six times weekly as was stated in yesterday's issue.

VA CEO Jayne Hrdlicka said the move set the carrier apart from its competitors.

"There is no other Australian airline that offers a free rewards program for businesses, lounges in every capital city, three types of domestic seating choices including Business class, jet services to hundreds of destinations around the country, and all the bells and whistles at such an excellent value-for-money price point," she said.

More info at virginaustralia.com.

No action on stake

QANTAS' controversial purchase of a 19.9% stake in Alliance Airlines (**TD** 01 Feb 2019) has officially passed scrutiny, with Australia's competition watchdog this morning revealing it would not be taking any enforcement action over the acquisition.

The ACCC raised concerns over the move back in 2019 (**TD** 01 Aug 2019), stating it would investigate whether the acquisition would hinder competition between Qantas and Alliance Airlines or adversely affect Alliance's ability to grow and compete in the longer term.

However, the ACCC said that based on information it examined over the last three years, it will not propose any further action.

The watchdog did leave the door open on further investigations however, pending future Qantas/Alliance activity.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news, including a photo page from **Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia** plus full pages from:

- Rocky Mountaineer
- Qatar Tourism

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INDEPENDENT HOLIDAY PACKAGE EXPERTS

Cover-More to lift AMT age

THE current maximum age limit of 74 for Cover-More Travel Insurance's Annual Multi-Trip (AMT) policies will be removed, under a revamp of the insurance provider's PDS which is set to roll out in the coming weeks.

Unveiled this week on the Gold Coast at the Travel Associates Business Leaders conference (**TD** yesterday) by National Accounts Manager Simon McNally, the update is part of a raft of changes being introduced in response to client and agent feedback.

McNally said while Cover-More had released COVID-19 policies for travel insurance ahead of other providers, the ongoing evolution of the pandemic meant tweaks were now possible.

"We've been negotiating with our underwriter to create new policy conditions," he said, having listened to what agents and their clients need.

"We'll continue to adapt and evolve as conditions change."

Also new is a more "granular" approach to destinations, with policy pricing based on individual countries in some cases, rather than regions, which may reduce the cost of travel insurance, and the removal of a previous \$10,000 cap on cancellation coverage for domestic trips.

The company is also for the first time removing a cruise exclusion from its COVID-19 coverage, meaning medical costs and evacuation while on a cruise will

now be claimable.

McNally said it was a "golden age for insurance" at present, with travellers keen to ensure they are covered for COVID-19, with insurance now a "must have" rather than a reluctant add-on for any booking.

A staged rollout of the new policy arrangements will start from tomorrow - more in today's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.

NT redevelopment

IRIS Capital will spend \$70 million on redeveloping its Lasseters Casino and Hotel in Alice Springs, which will add more accommodation, a rooftop bar and swimming pool to the site.

The renovation, which will commence later this year, will see the number of rooms at Lasseters close to double, with a focus on dual and family rooms, and will be made available to tourists in stages over the next three years.

Iris' expansion plan follows a funding announcement by the NT Govt to build the National Aboriginal Art Gallery in Alice Springs, as well as a Federal Government commitment to upgrade roads and infrastructures in the Red Centre (**TD** 31 Mar).

MEANWHILE the NT Govt has offered funding of up to \$14,500 to support local operators to develop new evening tourism offerings, with 14 operators already co-investing \$82,000.



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QR expands NDC

QATAR Airways has expanded its NDC Distribution via a partnership with TPConnects.

The cooperation enables travel service providers to integrate with Oyrx Connect, Qatar's NDC-offering, through TPConnects' NDC Aggregator solution and NDC Combined API.

Head back to Bali

FINNS Beach Club in Bali has launched its new "Back to Bali" campaign (**TD** 28 Sep), billed as the biggest in the island's history.

The push offers major savings when Aussies pre-purchase Bali holiday credit through the Back to Bali portal for \$500, and includes \$1,500 worth of food & beverage, accommodation and Finns VIP membership value.

The limited time promo can be secured through a \$99 deposit.

Access the Back to Bali offer by **CLICKING HERE**.



Window Seat

IT'S not quite the same as a career in the cockpit, but a pair of New Zealanders are doing the next best thing by participating in the world's largest paper plane throwing competition.

The exciting event takes place in Austria, and is naturally one of the many competitions created or sponsored by energy drink maker Red Bull.

The Kiwi men won the "longest hang time" and "longest distance" categories at Auckland's recent national Red Bull Paper Wings final, and will now compete against fellow throwers from 60 countries across the world next month.

The event has strict requirements, with contestants only allowed to use a single A4 page to create their aircraft.

Club Med

Club Med operates 70+ Premium to Luxury all-Inclusive beach and snow resorts worldwide.

Business Development Manager Queensland, Northern NSW & NT.

"The purpose of life is to be happy... the time to be happy is now and the place to be happy is here"

Club Med Founder Gerard Blitz 1950

Club Med Pacific are looking for their next superstar to join their dynamic team as Business Development Manager - Queensland, Northern NSW and NT.

- The successful applicant will be responsible for driving revenue and sales activities for the region through our strategic partnerships, whilst also exploring new opportunities to increase our Brand positioning and awareness.
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- As part of a wider sales team, the successful applicant will also need to be a team player and represent Club Med's premium upscale positioning.

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Ireland 

Travel Daily on location on the Gold Coast

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Travel Associates, which is hosting its "Reunion" Business Leaders Conference at the Gold Coast Star's new Dorsett Hotel.

THE Travel Associates conference wraps up this afternoon after two days of networking, education, inspiration and supplier updates.

Yesterday morning's business sessions were followed by an afternoon of speed-dating style interactions with key partners including cruise lines, tour operators, hoteliers and destinations - and then it was onto a celebratory gathering poolside at the Star.

Today the conference wraps up, with GM Dani Galloway likely to make some big announcements.

Indian WHM boost

AUSTRALIA has agreed to provide increased access for younger Indian nationals to participate in working holiday programs to the country as part of its recently signed Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement.

Places in Australia's Work and Holiday program will initially be set at 1,000 spots per year in a bid to revive its tourism sector, with Australia to have two years to implement the outcome.

The agreement will also see younger Aussies who complete their studies access similar work/travel options in India.

"There are benefits in terms of longer post-study visas for highly skilled Indian graduates and also an option for backpackers to come into the country to ease the pressure on Australian employers, so it's a win-win situation for both countries," Melbourne's Migration and Education Experts Chair Chaman Preet said.



LAST night at the Travel Associates conference on the Gold Coast, attendees paid tribute to a remarkable milestone.

One of the business leaders at the event, Wayne Ackerfield from Ackerfield & Goldberg Travel Associates in Melbourne, will this month celebrate his 40th anniversary with the Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG).

Ackerfield is actually the sixth person ever put onto the FCTG payroll, as evidenced by his 006 staff number.

The landmark achievement was commemorated with a big cake and the help of a couple of



Gold Coast meter maids (inset), while FCTG GM Premium Leisure, Dani Galloway paid tribute to Ackerfield as being "truly one of a kind" in an evocation of Travel Associates' upcoming brand campaign.

Ackerfield is pictured above with Galloway and Travel Associates GM Rachel Kingswell.

IT'S TIME FOR YOUR CLIENTS TO WANDER OUT YONDER IN WA

To a place where they can explore the otherworldly landscapes of the Kimberley, swim with gentle whale sharks in Ningaloo Reef, explore the otherworldly landscapes of the Kimberley or sip their way through Australia's most premium wine country in the Margaret River Region.

FIND OUT MORE

HORIZONTAL FALLS / GARAANGADDIM

WESTERN
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Travel & Cruise Weekly

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Special Easter issue



Hey sushi lovers!

“THE sushi tour of a lifetime” has arrived, with Plan Japan and Melbourne sushi boutique UMINONO joining forces to launch an “insider’s tour” of the country’s most exclusive sushi restaurants later this year in the capital Tokyo.

Running from 25-30 Sep, the inaugural ‘Luxury Sushi Discovery Experience’ will offer gourmet travellers a gastronomic tour of Tokyo, guided by Plan Japan culture connoisseur Rachel Lang, and UMINONO sushi chef Arnaud Laidebeur – known for his mastery of traditional Omakese dining experiences - [CLICK HERE](#).

Scenic Rim program

THE Scenic Rim Region near the Gold Coast has unveiled a revamped adventure tourism program to target a returning visitor demand.

The new eco and adventure celebration, Escape in the Scenic Rim, will be staged in the Gondwana Rainforests and run from 29 Apr to 29 May.

Escape in the Scenic Rim will feature more than 100 activities, including guided and hikes, rock climbs, hang-gliding, a mountain bike marathon, hot air ballooning, nature play programs for kids, and adventure races - more information [HERE](#).

Reef pontoon starts operating



EXPERIENCE Co has today begun operating its new \$7 million marine science and tourism pontoon on the Great Barrier Reef (*TD* 12 Nov 2020).

The new three-level floating platform is moored at Moore Reef, a large horseshoe-shaped reef system almost 45km offshore from Cairns.

A range of activities are on offer including guided snorkelling, introductory and certified diving and helmet diving, with the water easily accessible via a 15m wide staircase on either side.

Helmet diving is undertaken on an undersea platform which loops around the pontoon, offering one of the longest circuits on the Great Barrier Reef.

As well as activities, there’s a spacious sundeck and extensive shaded retreat area, while onboard catering from the well-known Ochre restaurant in Cairns offers morning and afternoon teas as well as hot and cold lunchtime offerings - complemented by a fully stocked

licenced bar.

Local Traditional Owners will work closely with Experience Co’s marine biologists to offer guests a “narrative of Indigenous knowledge along with western science,” while scientific groups will be able to utilise a purpose-built onboard marine laboratory, along with accommodation allowing for multi-day stays during major reef events such as coral spawning.

Experience Co CEO John O’Sullivan said sustainability was also a key feature of the design of the pontoon which is equipped with three wind turbines and 16 solar panels.

Effective from today, Reef Magic pontoon experiences will depart from the Cairns Marina at 9am, returning at 5pm with prices starting from \$279 per person for adults, \$139 per person for children or \$679 for a family including the return cruise to Moore Reef, snorkelling equipment, wetsuits, local commentary, all meals and more.

Travel Daily Events PRESENTS **AN EXECUTIVE INTERVIEW**

with publisher Bruce Piper and the Norwegian Cruise Line executive leadership and sales team

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Angela Middleton

FRIDAY 8th APRIL
1.00pm (AEST)

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Tour booking platform for sale





You've GoCA get to Ayers Rock Resort!

VOYAGES Indigenous Tourism Australia celebrated the first anniversary of the opening of the Gallery of Central Australia (GoCA) and the 10th anniversary of their dune top dining experience, Tali Wiru at Ayers Rock Resort last week.

Travel and lifestyle media, trade partners, as well as artists and art centre managers from the Central Desert region celebrated together by exploring the GoCA and were treated to a private performance by Indigenous Aria, award-winning artist, Miiesha.

Guests also got to taste the new 10 year anniversary menu at Tali Wiru, explore Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park with SEIT's Uluru Highlights experience, as well as AAT King's Valley of the Winds tour at Kata Tjuta and Sunrise Field of Light.



FABIOLA Martinez-Hinojosa, Matt Cameron-Smith, Rhoda Roberts AO and Rene Kulitja celebrate one year of GoCA.



CHEFS at Tali Wiru showcase native ingredients.



TRADE and media exploring the Gallery of Central Australia.



GUESTS hiked the Valley of the Winds at Kata Tjuta with AAT Kings.



A MEMBER of the all Indigenous team at Tali Wiru.



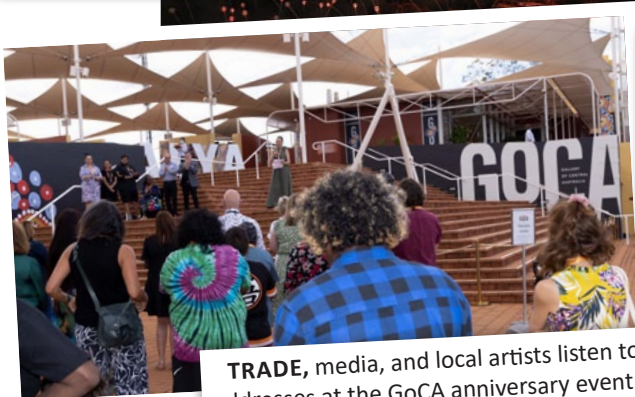
SUNRISE at the Field of Lights was nothing short of spectacular.



DOMINIQUE Atzenhoffer from Helloworld, Collette's Roger Clulow and Annika Leslie of All Pacific Travel Concept celebrate 10 years of Tali Wiru.



ABOVE: Voyages' Raphaella Drachsler and Kathy Majetic with Kathy Georgiou of ATS Pacific enjoying Tali Wiru.



TRADE, media, and local artists listen to addresses at the GoCA anniversary event.



BELOW: Miiesha performs at the anniversary event.



Maximum orders

AIR Lease Corporation (ALC) has added 32 Boeing 737 MAX jets to its orderbook.

The commissioning will support the narrow-body market as air travel continues to recover.

"We believe that the economic and operating advantages of the 737 MAX will serve our airline customers well as they favour modern, fuel efficient aircraft," said ALC Chief Executive Officer & President John Plueger.

The aircraft leasing company has almost 120 airline customers in over 60 countries, and added 18 737 MAXs to its portfolio in Feb.

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.752

THE AUDUSD has hit nine-month highs ahead of the Reserve Bank of Australia's meeting today.

The Australian dollar was also higher in Europe, with the AUDEUR gaining 0.6%, despite the Euro dropping sharply on fears of new sanctions against Russia.

In other finance news, the benchmark Dow Jones gained another 0.3% overnight.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.752
UK	£0.573
NZ	\$1.077
Euro	€0.685
Japan	¥92.51
Thailand	฿25.05
China	¥4.749
South Africa	10.92
Canada	\$0.935
Crude oil	US\$107.5

Art soars to new heights



LAST week, Melbourne Skydeck hosted a special "sip & paint" event in collaboration with KKday and Champainting.

The sell-out artistic gathering welcomed more than 30 guests to level 88 of the Eureka Tower – the highest observation deck in the region.

Guests created their very own masterpiece, "City by Night", with assistance from Champainting's creative artist.

With Champagne in hand, the call to paint brushes was organised by KKday, a new and leading online travel platform.

Pictured: Amateur artists display their works of art.

Travel Daily sinks

THE good people at Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines have taken the writers at *Travel Daily* for a ride, but certainly not in their supposed yellow submarine.

An article we published yesterday suggesting the line was about to operate a Magical Music of The Beatles world cruise from Liverpool in 2024 was, alas, just an April Fool's joke, so cancel your hopes of a yellow submarine ride and just let it be folks.

The King of vouchers

REGISTRATIONS for the King Island Holiday Voucher scheme opens this week, with hundreds of \$300 credits up for grabs to spend on accommodation and experiences from May to Jul.

The travel incentive seeks to accelerate visitation to King Island during the traditionally quieter winter season to support the island's tourism operators after a lean COVID-affected period.

Tourism Tasmania will also support the voucher program with a marketing campaign targeting Tasmanians as well as travellers from Melbourne.

Euriba sales open

SALES have opened for MSC Cruises' *MSC Euriba's* inaugural season itineraries in Northern Europe in 2023.

Cruising in next year's northern hemisphere summer, *Euriba* will sail from Kiel in Jun 2023, with the ship to become the most environmentally advanced ship in the MSC fleet, and the second powered by liquified natural gas, once she emerges from the Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard.

Travel Daily Events

UPCOMING EVENTS

TD Events is the new way to showcase your product or service to the travel industry.

Fri 08 Apr 2022 1pm AEST
Norwegian Cruise Line "The Great Cruise Comeback" - to register [CLICK HERE](#).

Wed 13 Apr 2022 1pm AEST
Interview with CLIA MD Joel Katz and ACA CEO Jill Abel "The Tide Turns for Cruise" - to register [CLICK HERE](#).

Tue 03 May 2022
Silversea Cruises - more details coming soon

Thu 12 May 2022 1pm AEST
Executive interview with Livn Group - more details soon.

Tue 17 May 2022 1pm AEST
Amadeus executive interview - more details soon

Other events - date TBA

- Abercrombie & Kent
- Switzerland Tourism - more details coming soon.

Missed an event? Watch the recordings via the links below.

RECENT EVENTS

Quark Expeditions showcase of *Ultramarine* - [CLICK HERE](#).

AFTA CEO Dean Long Executive Interview - [CLICK HERE](#).

Entire Travel Group with Brad McDonnell and Greg McCallum - [CLICK HERE](#).

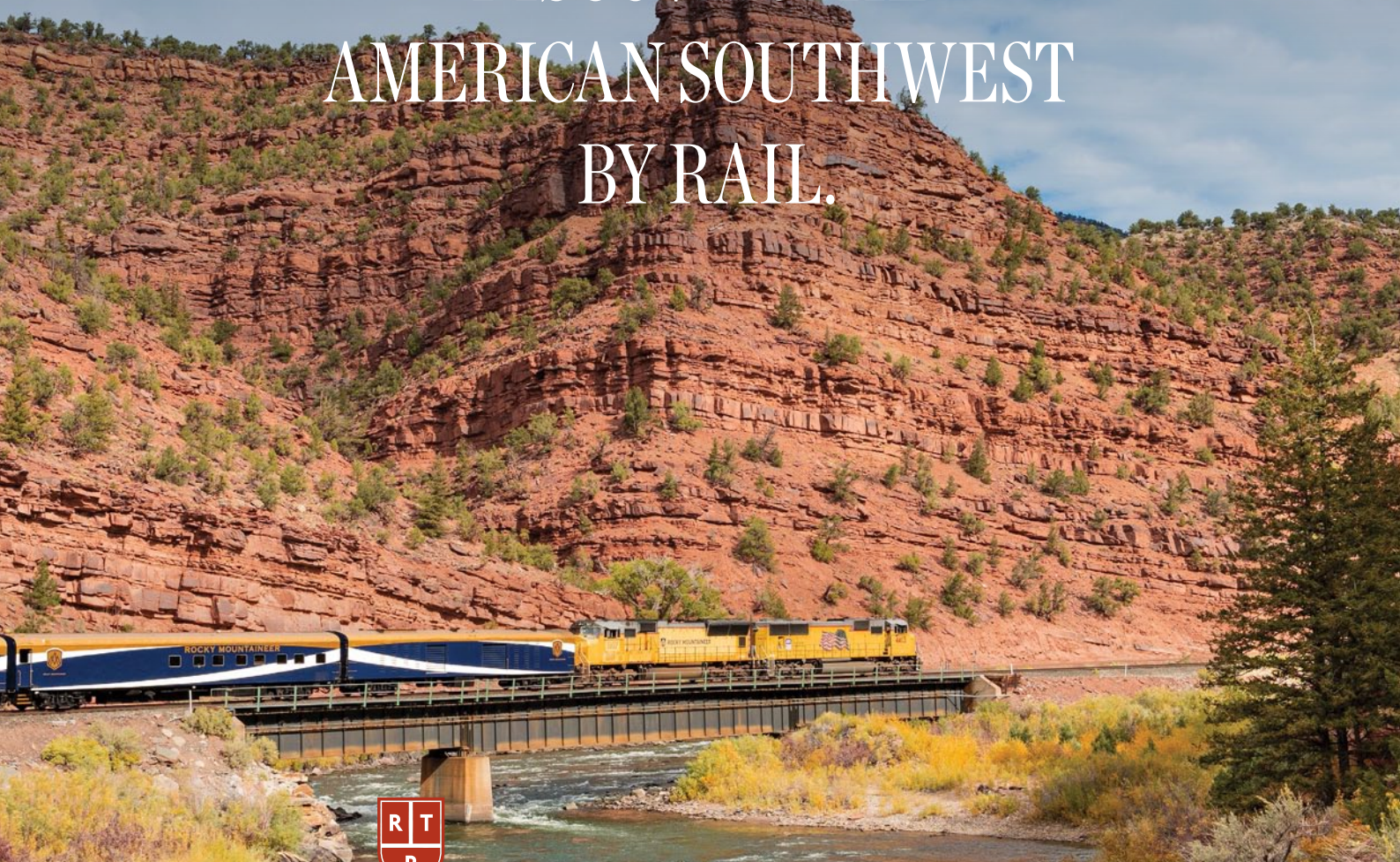
To organise an event for your company, enquire at traveldaily.com.au/events

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