Travel Daily First with the news



Air Mauritius returns

AIR Mauritius has revealed it will resume services from Perth to Mauritius from 02 Nov, starting with two weekly flights.

The services will be operated by an Airbus 330 aircraft and depart Perth on Sun and Wed and leave Mauritius on Tue and Sat.

> EMERALD CRUISES

Emerald Azzurra is here

Commenced cruising 11th March 2022



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Thursday 7th April 2022

TA Virtuoso double-down

EXCLUSIVE

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group will send all 66 of its Travel Associates Business Leaders from across Australia and New Zealand to attend Virtuoso Travel Week in Las Vegas later this year, as the brand continues its relentless focus on the luxury sector. Flight Centre GM of Premium

Leisure, Dani Galloway, announced the move on Tue at the close of this week's Travel Associates Business Leaders Reunion Conference on the Gold Coast (**TD** 04 Apr).

She said the invitation was part of "the brand's intention to invest in the professional development of its senior leadership group", having negotiated with Virtuoso to secure attendance for the entire cohort.

"This is part of our push to dominate the premium travel market," she told *Travel Daily*. "The combined experience

Swissport SQ win

SWISSPORT has been awarded the ground services business for Singapore Airlines in Melbourne and Brisbane, and will provide full ramp handling and passenger services for over 40 weekly SQ flights from 21 May.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has seven pages of news including Business Events News. and professionalism of our business leaders and expert advisors is second to none in Australia and New Zealand, and we are determined to ensure we maintain an unshakeable position with this investment in Virtuoso Travel Week 2022," Galloway said.

Virtuoso Travel Week is this year taking place 13-18 Aug, and will offer both in-person or hybrid experiences to bring together Virtuoso travel advisors with supplier representatives for six days of relentless networking, updates and connections.

The event is in its 34th year, once again taking place across the Bellagio, Aria and Vdara Las Vegas resort properties.

NCL launches NFTs

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has announced it will "sail into the metaverse" with the launch of what's being claimed as the cruise sector's first ever collection of non-fungible tokens (NFTs).

Six special art pieces will go on sale on a soon-to-debut NCL NFT marketplace, with the items created by Italian artist Manuel "Peeta" Di Rita, who designed the hull art on the new *Norwegian Prima* and sister *Norwegian Viva*.

The first item will be auctioned with a starting price of US\$2,500 and the others will be sold for prices beginning at US\$250, with all proceeds donated to educational charity Teach For America.

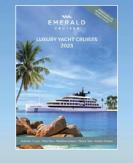
Janis back to AC

JANIS McDonald has returned to the aviation sector, having been reappointed as Air Canada's Brisbane-based Sales Account Manager.

She was most recently with Outback Qld Tourism Association - more appointments on **page 7**.



Yacht Cruising 2023 New Program OUT NOW!





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Thursday 7th April 2022

Say g'day to Lahnee

REGIONAL accommodation provider G'day Group has appointed Lahnee White to be its new Chief Marketing Officer.

She joins the company with more than 15 years of senior marketing experience, including with Westpac and Sportsbet.

In her new position, White will be charged with ensuring G'day's customers are fully engaged across its growing accommodation portfolio, which stands at over 300 properties.

"Coupled with the significant growth of our G'day Rewards loyalty program, there was a need for the business to bring in an experienced marketer to oversee and build our customer experience across all touchpoints," the company's Chief Executive Officer Grant Wilckens said.



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Qantas wait time apology

QANTAS has issued a formal apology to its customers over its call centre wait times, which have blown out in recent months as travel demand surges.

An email to Qantas Frequent Flyers from QF Group Chief Customer Officer Stephanie Tully this morning admitted "our recent call wait times have not been acceptable...we apologise to you and all our customers who have experienced challenges in getting through to us, and want to reassure you that we've made fixing this issue a top priority and we know we need to do better".

Tully said the blow-out in wait times had occurred despite QF now having more staff in its contact centres than before the pandemic.

However call volumes are at an all-time high - from a previous

Jetstar in Vietnam

JETSTAR has returned to Vietnam for the first time in more than two years, with flights from Melbourne to Ho Chi Minh City taking off today.

Three weekly flights to Ho Chi Minh City from Melbourne are on offer, and two weekly flights from Sydney will start on 09 Apr. average of 7,500 calls per day to about 14,000.

OF FINNAIR

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"With border restrictions easing across the world, each change brings more calls," she said.

Tully said the time QF call centre consultants are speaking to each customer had also increased by about 50% as people try to rearrange travel plans that are as much as two years old.

She asked customers to be patient with QF front line staff members who "are doing all they can," while the carrier continues to recruit and train more people as well as invest in better tech.

Tully also noted that more than half of the calls currently being received can be resolved online, with QF developing a series of 'how to' videos to help explain common questions received by contact centres that can actually be resolved via the carrier's website.

Dublin US ramp-up

AER Lingus is expanding its transatlantic operations over the upcoming northern summer period, with the restart of Dublin flights to Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Seattle, as well as boosting frequencies to Chicago and Washington Dulles.

Indonesia easings

Travel Daily

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AUTHORITIES in Indonesia have further reduced COVID-19 travel restrictions, expanding the country's visa-on-arrival (VoA) program and removing the previous requirement for a PCR arrival test for asymptomatic incoming passengers who are fully vaccinated.

The visa-free policy for ASEAN countries is being reinstated, however an obligation to show a negative PCR test result in the country of origin within 48 hours of departure remains in effect.

The most recent update saw the reintroduction of VoA in Bali, and this has now been extended to other ports incl Jakarta, Medan, Yogyakarta, Makassar, Surabaya & Manado as well as designated sea and land border crossings.



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Thursday 7th April 2022

ETG catches Pelikin

EXPRESS Travel Group (ETG) has formed a new preferred partnership agreement with digital travel money company Pelikin, which will see its money cards distributed through the agency's member networks.

Select Travel Group, Independent Travel Group, Independent Travel Advisors and italktravel & cruise will all benefit from the partnership, offering agents an extra avenue to earn commission through Pelikin's affiliate partner program.

"Our member agents are always looking for innovative solutions to meet the needs of the modern traveller... and the Pelikin affiliate program is a low-touch way for an agency to earn new and ongoing revenue," ETG Head of Product & Events, Amber Kelly said.

Only Aussie grub

BONZA has committed to serving 100% Australian food and drink on all its flights.

The "global aviation first" was announced at an event in Mildura this morning, with Bonza confident it will be a great opportunity for food and drink producers around the country, particularly in rural areas.

"We know Australians love their tucker and we also know Australia produces some of the world's best - so why wouldn't we support locals and give Bonza customers the chance to enjoy an all Aussie menu on board," Bonza's Chief Commercial Officer Carly Povey said.

"Not only will Bonza give Aussie food & drink brands the chance to showcase products, they'll bring more people to the regions".





UNESCO World Heritage Sites and their economic implications, cruise is coming back, travel's surprise win and more in the April issue of *travelBulletin*.



AFTA talks up corporate travel

CLICK

to read



THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) recently participated in this year's Maximum Occupancy Hotel + Accommodation Industry Conference in Sydney.

AFTA Members Tass Messinis, David Goldman, and Penny Spencer joined AFTA CEO Dean Long and Minor Hotels Head of Commercial John Thompson to discuss the recovery of corporate travel, and how working in partnership with agencies and suppliers generates a win-win.

Pictured: Thompson, Messinis, Goldman, Spencer and Long.

Hawaiian offsets

HAWAIIAN Airlines guests can now balance out their carbon impact, with the carrier pledging to match all offsets this month.

In recognition of Earth Day, Hawaiian's partnership with Conservation International will help travellers measure and reduce the impact of their flight's carbon emissions using their carbon calculator **HERE**.

Hawaiian Airlines has also committed to offsetting all future employee business travel activities across its flights.



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Travel Dailv



Thursday 7th April 2022

The 1000 ticks first cohort

THE first batch of travel advisors have been added to The 1000, a network of the most influential travel advisors around the world.

The exclusive club received more than 1,000 applications to join internationally, accounting

Small and creative

CREATIVE Cruising has announced the formation of several new small ship cruise line partnerships to create a range of new exclusive packages & offers.

Hapag Lloyd Cruises, Albatros Expeditions, Heritage Expeditions, European Waterways and nicko cruises have all come on board as new suppliers to Creative Cruising's wholesale portfolio, brands expected to present strong booking patterns in 2022.

The decision increases Creative's reach into luxury expedition cruises, river voyages and luxury barges throughout Europe.

for over US\$2 billion in annual sales production, averaging US\$2.3 million per advisor.

Founded in late 2021 by Tim Morgan (formerly of Virtuoso) and Jeff Sirota (formerly of Small Luxury Hotels of the World), The 1000 is intended to be a club for the world's most influential travel advisors, providing them with a forum to promote sales efforts and build relationships.

Morgan told **TD** that around 5% of the applications have been from Australian agents so far, with a number of these requests successfully joining the club, however, formal numbers and names are yet to be revealed.

"We have been moved by the hundreds of passionate emails, phone calls, direct messages, and conversations that we have had with travel advisors around the world," Morgan added.

Applications are still open until 15 Apr - CLICK HERE for details.

% OF

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Travel & Cruise Weekly

Virgin Voyages in Oz

THE rarely sighted Virgin Voyages brand will be on the ground in Australia later this month as part of a meet and greet with the Australian trade.

The First Mates Roadshow 2022 will travel to Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Register to attend the upcoming events by CLICKING HERE.

Airbus beats Boeing

BOEING has fallen well behind rival Airbus in terms of aircraft deliveries during the pandemic, new data from Finbold shows.

Airbus delivered three times more planes than Boeing, with 1,376 aircraft distributed to airlines, well ahead of Boeing's 1,569 allocation.

The controversial 737 MAX proved to be the most sought after model for Boeing customers, while Airbus' A320neo topped the list of its jets delivered during the pandemic.

Bali Minister on way

Click to

read

Special

Easter

issue

THE lure of a Balinese holiday is set to be put to Australian travellers first-hand by Indonesia's Tourism Minster, who is planning to visit our shores in Jul.

Local newspapers report that Sandiaga Uno is scheduled to visit Australia from 06 to 12 Jul in a bid to accelerate the recovery of Bali's tourism sector, one that is historically propped up by swathes of Australian travellers visiting every year.

"This will be my first official visit since I started my term...we see that Australia is still a potential market to increase tourist arrivals to Bali as the main destination, but naturally there are other destinations that we have prepared as well," he said.

The Indonesian Ministry noted that around 15,000 travellers have arrived in Bali so far this year, most of whom have arrived from Australia, Singapore, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom.

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Iconic keel laying

ROYAL Caribbean International has celebrated the keel-laving for its new ship, Icon of the Seas.

Taking place at Finnish shipyard Meyer Turku, the keel-laying of the 5,600-passenger vessel officially marked the start of Icon's construction, ahead of her official 2023 debut.

Royal Caribbean and Meyer Turku senior executives were in attendance, as the keel was laid atop two freshly minted coins, a maritime tradition.

A bunch of fives

LINDBLAD Expeditions has created five new itineraries as it continues to adjust its global program in response to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.

Among the new cruises is a 16day Coastal Japan trip, departing 29 Aug and exploring the shores of Honshu, the islands of the Seto and the historic town of Edo.

Also on offer is a range of 11-day departures for an Extraordinary Alaska cruise to check out the US state's best glaciers and fjords, as well as a 13-day voyage of the waters of Iceland and Greenland.

Setting sail 02 Jul aboard National Geographic Endurance, the cruise stops by the remote settlement of Ittoggortoormiit, and Iceland's Flatey Island.

Lindblad is also offering 25% off select 2022 departures. Check out the five new itineraries by CLICKING HERE.

Thursday 7th April 2022

Agents enjoy a private dancer



THE Oceania Cruises sales team recently treated a group of more than 50 Queensland travel agency partners to an exclusive ballet experience to meet performers rehearsing for their next big production.

The VIP event saw travel advisors meet and watch dancers going through their paces for Queensland Ballet, and hobnob with respected Artistic Director Li Cunxin, who was a surprise host for the evening.

The "money can't buy experience" evening concluded with a Q&A with the principal dancers and Li Cunxin himself.

Oceania Cruises has been a long-standing partner of the Queensland Ballet and continues to offer unique experiences on board its fleet of ships, all of which have now returned to sea.



Pictured: Kerry Cleasby, TravelManagers; Rose Febo, TravelManagers; James Sitters, Oceania Cruises; Martine Nunes, Oceania Cruises; and Terri Dillon, TravelManagers, and inset the ballet master himself, Li Cunxin.

Peru warning

THE Government of Peru has announced a state of emergency, following protests and unrest.

Smartraveller is instructing Australians to avoid demonstrations, as well as events that draw large groups.

The cities of Lima and Callao were also placed under a curfew, which was lifted yesterday.



AN APRIL Fool's joke isn't going down so well with the Thai royal family it would appear, after a budget carrier in Thailand was recently scolded by local authorities for allegedly making fun of the country's king.

Thai Vietjet posted a sincedeleted joke on its official Twitter account to say it was launching a new international route from the province of Nan in Thailand to Munich in Germany, the birthplace of King Maha Vajiralongkorn's consort and a city the eccentric royal frequently visits for leisure.

Late last year, tabloid newspapers published images of the King lounging around the Hilton Airport hotel in Munich with a "younger woman", where he was also staying with his 30 poodles and entourage of 250 employees, and wearing some scantily clad vests (pictured).



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business events news

Thursday 7th April 2022

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MEETINGSPACEBOOKINGSMADEEASY

MEETING space booking platform MeetingPackage has announced a global partnership with Amadeus, allowing hoteliers to streamline their group business processes.

Amadeus' hotel customers can now automate and digitally transform their meetings & events sales processes across direct and indirect channels, while hoteliers can use MeetingPackage for their booking engine and to manage channel distribution strategies.

The partnership delivers benefits on all sides of the meetings & event sales process: for hoteliers, it will support increased conversion of group business and streamline operational processes, while meeting planners looking to book events on the MeetingPackage platform will be able to quickly identify where function space is

Auckland sell-off?

THE future of New Zealand's Auckland Showgrounds hangs in the balance, with an alleged confidential deal between the facility's owners The Cornwall Park Trust and a film studio taking place.

Local reporting suggests the deal would see the end of many of Auckland's events, such as the Royal Easter Show, the Food Show, the Gift Fairs, the Baby Show, Armageddon, Big Boys' Toys, the Home Show, and more.

X3 Studios has reportedly been agreed to as the new leaseholder for Auckland Showgrounds, and the accord appears to rule out shows.

Those in the local exhibition sector warn if the Showgrounds are shut for the exclusive use of the film studio, the country's economy will be impacted.



available & how much it will cost. When hoteliers integrate

their Amadeus Sales & Event Management solution with MeetingPackage capabilities, they can configure event packages including food and beverage, audiovisual equipment and other services, which can be easily booked online by meeting planners up to the day of arrival.

"We're excited to partner with Amadeus on this new integration," said MeetingPackage founder & Chief Executive Officer

AIME 2023 details

THE Asia Pacific Incentives

and Meetings Event (AIME) has confirmed that next

year's event will take place

from 13 to 15 Feb at the

Melbourne Convention &

Exhibition Centre (MCEC).

The 2023 gathering will

follow a successful return to

in-person attendance at the

2022 event, which also ran

Queenstown surge

a spike in events enquiries.

from next Wed, interest for

conferences, incentives and

QUEENSTOWN in NZ is seeing

Following PM Jacinda Ardern's

announcement that vaccinated

foreigners can enter the country

corporate meetings have surged.

The return of business events

to the region is accompanied by

a number of recent significant investments in local venues.

More details on 2023 HERE.

select online elements.

increased revenue, integration of

Joonas Ahola.

technology solutions is critical. "Providing an online booking capability for group and event business is a key component of hotel sales digitalisation as manual processes have become unsustainable and meeting planners want to quickly confirm budget and availability before booking the business."

"As hoteliers look for new

their business processes for

ways to streamline and optimise

In-person returns

AUSTRALIA'S event sector may have turned an important corner in its rebound from the travel shutdown, with event management company ICMS Australasia noting int'l delegates are returning.

Two of its upcoming managed conferences, the 20th International Conference on Soil **Mechanics and Geotechnical** Engineering and the 21st International Meeting on Lithium Batteries, are both seeing high in-person delegate registrations of 60% and 75% respectively.

"Over half of those [attending the soil conference] are from outside Australia, with the largest delegations at this stage coming from South Korea and the US," ICMS said.



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Casinos under fire

CROWN Resorts is facing a fine of up to \$100 million over an alleged bank card scam.

The company is accused of accepting Chinese UnionPay bank cards to withdraw funds at Crown Melbourne - a scam which breached Victorian laws banning the sale of gambling chips on a transaction using a card.

The Victorian Gambling & Casino Control Commission said on Tue it would start disciplinary proceedings against Crown over the fraud, which involved disguising up to \$160 million of gambling transactions between 2012 and 2016.

MEANWHILE, rival gambling/ resort company The Star Entertainment Group glossed over money laundering in one of its own private game rooms, a public inquiry has heard.

The inquiry also heard that The Star worked with a junket operator linked to crime outfits.

A new Iron Curtain

Thursday 7th April 2022

THE results of the latest Henley Passport Index suggests the war in Ukraine is creating a new "Iron Curtain" in travel.

Six weeks after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the impact on travel freedom and mobility has been more dramatic than even the most pessimistic commentators were predicting at the war's outset, Henley found.

The closure of airspaces to Russian airlines, the imposition of stiff travel bans on individual Russian citizens, and the halting of processing of Russian visa applications altogether have effectively condemned the country's passport to "junk status" throughout much of the developed world, Henley said.

The latest Passport Index "clearly illustrates the war's profound and perhaps irreversible impact on freedom of movement within the region as a new Iron Curtain descends," Henley added.

APPOINTMENTS

WELCOME to Industry Appointments, *Travel Daily*'s Thursday feature which has the latest job appointments from across the industry. If you have just appointed someone to a new position and would like to update the industry email appointments@traveldaily.com.au.

Erin King has started a new position as Group Account Manager for **Virgin Australia**. Previously, King had worked with Royal Caribbean International, as well as The Constance Hotel in Brisbane.

Tessa Gorman has been appointed General Manager at **One&Only Portonovi,** the ultra-luxe retreat on the Adriatic Coast in Montenegro. Gorman joins One&Only from Bulgari Resort Bali, where she drove success across numerous metrics, including room rate and more.

Nicholas Wright is starting a new position as Global Hotel Partnerships Manager with **StayWell Holdings**. He was mostly recently employed with StayWell as the General Manager of Leisure Inn Penny Royal.

Phil Gennaoui has started a new position as Head of Sales Asia Pacific at the **International Air Transport Association**. Gennaoui was previously Senior Manager Industry Solutions for IATA.

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Using your header for charity



CREW members from easyJet have beaten their adversaries from Virgin Atlantic in a charity soccer game to support humanitarian efforts in Ukraine.

In the first on-field meeting between the two airlines, easyJet beat the full-service carrier 6-5 in a game which was played in aid of UNICEF and the United Kingdom for UNHCR.

The airline versus airline match took place at Camping World Community Stadium on Mon.

Tourism jobs spike

HOSPITALITY & tourism roles recorded the greatest job ad increase in Mar compared to any other sector, rising 16.7% from the prior month, new figures from Seek has shown.

Encouragingly for the industry, the total number of tourism and hospitality jobs have increased by more than 160% since Mar 2020, and by almost 50% when compared to Mar last year.

The numbers are part of a wider job revival, with all job ads up by 5% over the last month. Virgin's onboard beverage partner NICE Drinks donated free recyclable cans of NICE Wines to attendees on the day.

The game was organised by easyJet Captain Jesse Loan and Virgin player Kyle Reynolds.

The Club is greener

CLUB Med has announced a range of new social responsibility commitments which will see the introduction of a number of initiatives at their resorts across the Americas.

Grogenics and The Ocean Foundation have both partnered with Club Med Miches Playa Esmeralda to address a myriad of concerns for coastal communities in the Caribbean.

The pair will pilot the first sargassum-harvesting project of its kind in the Dominican Republic later this year, and will reuse it for on-site composting and regenerative gardening.

Beginning this month, Beyond Meat's plant-based meat products will also be available to guests at the location.

Travel Daily

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