

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of the latest news, plus a full page from Norwegian Cruise Line.

ETC + Acacia Africa

EVOLUTION Travel Collective (ETC) has been appointed to represent Acacia Africa, which has been selling tours in Southern and Eastern Africa for 27 years.

The Acacia portfolio offers more than 130 itineraries in eight different trip styles, with the ETC team to provide on-the-ground training and support to travel advisors across the country, while all reservations enquiries are directed back to an Acacia Africa reservation team member - more via info@evolutiontc.com.au.

Concert for Ukraine

CONTOURS Travel owner and long-time Rotarian Ted Dziadkiewicz has helped organise an event to raise funds to support humanitarian efforts in Ukraine.

The Rotary Club of North Melbourne, in collaboration with the Association of Ukrainians Victoria, will showcase the country's culture with heartfelt performances alongside keynote speakers discussing the situation and how you can help.

Proceeds will be donated to The Rotary Foundation to provide relief to refugees and victims of the crisis, supplying items such as water, food, shelter, medicine, and clothing - more details [HERE](#).

India top Feb destination

MORE than 20,000 Australian residents returned from short-term trips to India in Feb this year, making the country the leading destination for outbound travel during the month as the VFR market sprang to life.

The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures showed the USA in second position for Aussie travellers at 12,760 trips, followed by the UK with 8,150.

The same three countries were the top for inbound visitation by foreigners during the month, but in a different order, with the UK topping arrivals at 13,440 trips, followed by India at 9,380 and then the USA with 6,590.

The Overseas Arrivals and Departures figures for Feb 2022 showed a total of 271,270 arrivals during the month, up 6,090 on Jan, while overall departures declined by 11,940 month-on-month to 176,260.

Beyond appoints TravelPay B2B

BEYOND Travel Group has appointed TravelPay B2B as an official payments partner, with the destination specialist now live on the TravelPay B2B portal as TPSbeyond.

GM Sales & Marketing Bryce Crampton said Beyond was "excited by the opportunity to further support our agent partners with a seamless, cost-effective, payment method".

While the results show ongoing improvement on travel figures during the depths of the pandemic, Feb 2022 visitor trips were still down 91.3% on pre-COVID levels, while resident travel showed an 84.3% decrease when compared to Feb 2019.

The ABS figures also include provisional estimates for Mar travel, indicating a significant increase to about 380,000 arrivals & 340,000 departures last month.

Info key for agents

DESTINATION Webinars has released the results of a survey of travel agents, with advisors keen to hear from suppliers and destinations around the world "so long as topics are focused, short and provide value".

Interestingly, prizes were not found to be the top reason for attendance, with respondents saying they valued advanced details or "insider information" as a compelling reason to take part in updates so they can differentiate themselves.

Destination Webinars founder Charlie Trevena, who launched the venture two years ago to keep the industry connected through the pandemic, said the survey showed online webinars remain an "essential part of a destination or supplier toolkit".

She's just recruited BDM Sarah Arane, with Destination Webinars now also offering consultation and facilitation services.

PEPR Queenstown

PEPR Agency has been appointed to manage the Australian public relations account for Destination Queenstown, with the move coinciding with today's reopening of the New Zealand border to Australian travellers.



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Special Easter issue

Ahoy there science

HURTIGRUTEN Expeditions has partnered with the Institute for Marine & Antarctic Studies at the University of Tasmania, allowing scientists access to its ships to create a better understanding of Antarctic marine research extending into the next decade.

Refund policy is "unfair"

CONSUMER watchdog CHOICE has labelled Qantas' flight credits policy "unfair and unworkable", claiming the carrier is guilty of placing unreasonable barriers in the way of travellers redeeming credits and refunds.

CHOICE spokesperson Dean Price believes Qantas has gone out of its way to make it "difficult and confusing" for customers to use flight credits.

"This includes forcing many people to spend extra money, limits on available flights, problems with online services, unfair expiry dates, and long wait times in call centres," Price said.

The consumer body was particularly scathing of Qantas' policy update to only allow customers to use credits for flights that cost the same or more than their original fare if they booked after 30 Sep 2021, especially in light of the airline holding around \$1.4 billion in travel credits and advance sales.

"A simpler and more accessible system for re-booking flights and getting refunds would assist customers to get value from the money they have paid to the company - whether that is a flight or a refund," Price said.

In response to the latest claims, Qantas told *Travel Daily* that situations where a customer would have to pay the difference between their credit and an air ticket accounted for less than 5% of the credits it is holding.

"When a customer is looking to use their flight credit and wants to book a more expensive fare than their original booking, a fare difference will apply, as has always been the case," the airline said, adding that "if we cancel a flight, customers have a number of options including a cash refund, re-booking flights, or taking a flight credit.

CHOICE lodged a formal complaint with the ACCC about the policy last month.

A&K's Aussie refresh

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K) has refreshed its portfolio of small group journeys for 2022/23.

The selection of itineraries includes Australian Outback explorations, Tasmanian wine trips, and more - [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

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News TRAVEL NETWORK Jul - Dec 2022

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Travel Daily

Kiwi trains on a new track

AFTER hibernating services since Dec 2021 due to dwindling visitor numbers, KiwiRail's Northern Explorer and Coastal Pacific scenic trains will resume later this year alongside a range of new travel packages and tours.

The Northern Explorer rail service, which travels between Auckland and Wellington, will start moving again from 25 Sep, while the Coastal Pacific (Picton to Christchurch) will resume again four days later on 29 Sep.

The resumption will see KiwiRail offer a range of self-guided tours & customised packages for passengers travelling aboard the trains for the first time, including the chance to do nature walks, dine at local food and wine venues, and become immersed in local stories and experiences.

"Our new products will give visitors a greater choice and convenient new ways to see

New Zealand," KiwiRail General Manager Scenic Journeys Tracey Goodall said.

"Our guests will be able to both travel by train and get off the beaten track and immerse themselves in local tourism experiences...and we are also going a step further by adding a range of high-quality, multi-day guided tours, built around our scenic trains.

"There is a growing international market for this kind of high-quality, rail-cruising experience and this will be a first for KiwiRail," she added.

Day tours will also be added to KiwiRail's third rail service, TranzAlpine, (Christchurch - Greymouth), which already recommenced in Jan.

Bookings for standard travel on the train services open from 26 Apr, with the packages to be launched "in the coming months".

QR links ADL/AKL

QATAR Airways has announced it will be launching a new route from Adelaide to Auckland from 12 Apr, flying three times weekly.

Using a B777-300ER aircraft, the new service will coincide with the opening of New Zealand's borders to Australian tourists, and will take QR's total number of weekly flights to Australia to 34.

Asia 2023 launches

TRAVELMARVEL has introduced its 2023 collection of Asian tours, featuring adventures in Japan, South Korea, India, Sri Lanka, and China.

Trips incorporate travel across sea, land and rail, with highlights including the 12-day Timeless Japan itinerary, encompassing visits to Mt Fuji and Matsumoto Castle, a sake brewery, a stroll through Kyoto, and an exploration of Nara in south-central Honshu.

Call 1300 300 036 for the full suite of tours on offer.



Window Seat

NEW research commissioned by Stayz has revealed that dogs will be travelling more in 2022 than they ever have before, with more than two million Aussies planning a holiday with their canine comrades.

Outside of the obvious benefits of having your best mate with you on a trip, the research showed that dogs had plenty of reasons to be excited about a break from chewing toys around the house, with two in five owners claiming their pet is better behaved while on a holiday, while 40% said they looked happier, 55% suggested they were more playful, and perhaps most importantly, 48% said their canine friends wagged their tails a lot more often while on a leisure trip.

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HORIZONTAL FALLS / GARAANNGADDIM

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



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

CLICK to read

travelBulletin

Atlanta in top spot

AMERICAN airports have dominated the latest busiest airport list compiled by ACI World, with Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson crowned the world's most frequented hub.

Thanks to the ongoing China shutdown, the US took eight of the top 10 spots, with China only managing 8th and 9th spot.

Rockliff nabs tourism

NEWLY appointed Tasmanian Premier Jeremy Rockliff has announced this week that he will take charge of the state's tourism portfolio personally.

"As we recover from the effects of the global pandemic it will be strategically imperative to ensure a diverse and resilient economy, with our culture and brand integral," Rockliff said.

The tourism brief was previously managed by former Premier Peter Gutwein until his shock resignation last week.

Partying in the fast lane



IN A sure sign that things are zooming back to normality, The Travel Corporation (TTC) recently hosted 100 travel agents for a Grand Prix rooftop party, the first time it has been able to do so in three years.

Attendees were able to watch the high octane race from the TTC's office rooftop which overlooks the Albert Park track, as well as tuck into some delicious drinks and finger food.

"Travel is back, and what better underscores that than the return of record-breaking attendance at world class events, such as the Melbourne F1 - events that are a huge driver of travel business for so many local travel agents across Australia and NZ," TTC Tour Brands Oceania GM of Sales Andrew Young said.

Pictured: The TTC team enjoying their new life in the fast lane at the Melbourne Grand Prix.

Pulling up stumps

IHG Hotels & Resorts has confirmed it will be closing down its Moscow office and declining any future investment in Russia for the foreseeable future in response to the crisis in Ukraine.

"These steps follow significant donations to our humanitarian charity partners and a commitment to work with hotel owners in other countries to shelter refugees," IHG said.

The company also flagged plans to disband existing hotel contracts in Russia, but conceded the complicated nature of franchise agreements means this could take some time.

Drives in first gear

50,000 copies of Drive North Queensland's new maps promoting drives such as the Great Barrier Reef Drive and to Cape York will be distributed at caravan shows and info centres in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.



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Argentina changes

AUSTRALIAN travellers are no longer required to have a COVID-19 test or be vaccinated to enter Argentina, DFAT advises.

Non-resident arrivals will however need to show evidence of medical insurance which includes COVID-19 coverage, as well as fill out a declaration 48 hours prior to arrival.

Tourists are also being advised that anyone aged 13 and over may still be required to show evidence of COVID-19 vaccination to attend certain events and locations.

Alan notches up half a century



THE owner of italktravel & cruise Ballarat is a humble man, and without a tip off from work colleague Tim Hickingbotham, we may never have discovered that this week marks Alan Valpied's 50th year in the travel industry.

"I wasn't expecting any recognition but seeing as Tim has dubbed me in I guess I'll talk about it," Valpied joked.

Reflecting on the secret to his longevity, Valpied said he wouldn't be here after all of his career challenges without his amazing staff, government grants, Express Travel Management and even the "kind landlady".

But aside from the help, the travel stalwart said he has been motivated to make sure COVID did not spell the end of his career.

Stumbling into travel as a young man plying his skills as a bookkeeper for the now defunct airline Ansett Australia, his gift of the gab with customers saw

his skills for sales and customer service quickly noticed, and before long he was working as a travel advisor, before opening his own business 39 years ago.

The secret of his success, Valpied says, is that he has always treated his work as his hobby, and also credits his loyal, long-standing staff "with keeping his business going through the really tough times".

Travel Daily Events

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Wed 13 Apr 2022 1pm AEST
"The Tide Turns for Cruise" - to register [CLICK HERE](#).

Tue 03 May - Silversea Cruises

Thu 12 May - Livn Group

Tue 17 May - Amadeus

RECENT EVENTS

Norwegian Cruise Line "The Great Cruise Comeback" - [CLICK HERE](#).

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

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.740

AMERICAN shares extended their losses overnight, with ongoing worries about higher interest rates weighing on sentiment.

The Dow Jones fell 1.2% overnight while the technology focused Nasdaq fell 2.4%, and is now down 7.5% over the last five sessions.

The AUDUSD also fell 0.5% while Australians were sleeping, with the local currency lower in most other markets too.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.740
UK	£0.568
NZ	\$1.079
Euro	€0.680
Japan	¥93.00
Thailand	฿24.76
China	¥4.682
South Africa	10.75
Canada	\$0.931
Crude oil	US\$98.48

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