



New Swiss role for Anne Hathaway

SWITZERLAND Tourism continues to tap some major star power for its marketing campaigns, with Hollywood superstar Anne Hathaway taking part in the latest iteration of the comedic series featuring tennis giant Roger Federer and actor Robert De Niro (**TD** 07 May 2021).

Federer is the global brand ambassador for Switzerland Tourism (**TD** 30 Mar 2021), and in the new promotional segment takes the Grand Tour of Switzerland with Hathaway.

However in the final cut the director has basically eliminated both of the celebrities, saying “no one upstages the Grand Tour of Switzerland”.

Adding insult to injury, one of the members of the crew suggests the campaign tag line could be “The Grand Tour of Switzerland - even more magnificent than Roger Federer’s abs” - view it now at traveldaily.com.au/videos.

FC completes buy

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group has this morning formally completed its acquisition of an additional 47.5% stake in travel technology business TP Connects.

The purchase was originally revealed to the market last month (**TD** 14 Mar) and follows an initial investment made in the business in Feb 2020, with Flight Centre keen to shape travel distribution through TP Connects’ unique aggregator capabilities.

HOT OTA crosses Tasman

NEW Zealand travel giant House of Travel (HOT) has today confirmed the Australian launch of its Mix & Match online travel agency (OTA) operation.

House of Travel already has significant business activities in Australia, including the TravelManagers home-based agency group, package specialist Hoot Holidays and a stake in corporate agency Orbit World Travel, formerly known as World Travel Professionals.

Tim Paulsen, CEO of Mix & Match, said “we believe the Australian travel market contains significant pent-up demand”.

“We’ll be offering consumers the freedom to search and book an extensive range of great priced flights, hotels and other products launching soon, all with the reassurance of a professional call centre when in-person support is needed,” Paulsen said.

He said Mix & Match was NZ’s largest OTA for flights, offering “comprehensive aggregation technology developed over the past 17 years”.

The NZ Mix & Match website, at mixandmatch.co.nz, promises “a whole heap of airfares, many are exclusive deals so only available to book online with Mix & Match”, supported by a call centre based in Christchurch.

The new Australian site is at mixandmatchtravel.com.au and is set to launch with a bang, with News Corp Australia highlighting the venture via its growing News

Travel Network.

News Corp MD of Food & Travel, Fiona Nilsson, said “we are delighted to be the strategic partner of Mix & Match and we share their ambition for the Australian travel market at a time when the sector begins its post-COVID recovery”.

As well as the website, Mix & Match’s offering includes a smartphone app, exclusive deals and competitions as well as buy now pay later options.

The Australian site notes that air tickets purchased through Mix & Match are “provided in association with World Travel Professionals Pty Ltd - a registered IATA agent”.

Paulsen said he was “excited by the opportunity to offer the Australian traveller a unique flight booking experience”.

Europe resurgence

THE European Travel Commission (ETC) is forecasting Aussie tourist arrivals to the continent to reach 40% of pre-pandemic levels this year, with a full rebound by 2024-25.

Sofia Hansson from Tourism Ireland, who is also Chair of ETC’s Australian chapter, urged travel advisors to take note of the available resources on hand to help them keep up with ongoing changes to border restrictions.

A dedicated site to check for entry requirements to each country is at reopen.europa.eu.

Today’s issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news.

VA’s Boost, Betty’s Burgers pact

VIRGIN Australia has launched a “unique collaboration” with Noosa Heads-based Betty’s Burgers which will see exclusive menu items offered in VA lounges in Sydney, Melbourne & Brisbane.

The new menu includes a Betty’s Truffle Cheeseburger and Betty’s Crispy Popcorn Chicken, both of which will be on offer for Lounge members for dinner on Thu and Fri each week.

Boost Juice products will also be stocked on Virgin Australia flights nationally as part of a revamped in-flight buy on board menu, including fresh juices and snacks.

The updated flying food offering includes an innovative Kids’ Reverse Menu, where dessert is served before the main meal.

Available as part of a bundled package for \$17 including a drink, the childrens’ meal comes on an “interactive placemat” along with coloured pencils.

VA Group Chief Customer & Digital Officer, Paul Jones, described the new partnerships as “a game changer for the Virgin Australia guest offering”.

“Betty’s Burgers and Boost Juice are such vibrant and energetic brands, with an awesome range of product that Australians already love, and we are so proud to welcome them to the Virgin Australia family,” he said.

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MTA Advisor - Jessica Hellak

New Hodges role

LAURA Hodges has been appointed as Marketing Manager for The Sydney Collective, which comprises 16 event, wedding and corporate meeting venues across the NSW capital.

Hodges was formerly a PR exec with The Travel Corporation - and in 2012 interned with *Travel Daily!*



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VIEW HIGHLIGHTS

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Vote for tourism: ATEC

THE Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) is calling on all political parties to make bigger commitments to tourism recovery in the lead up to the Federal Election on 21 May.

The industry body wants to see parties support policy platforms that endorse key recovery initiatives, these include increased funding for Tourism Australia, extending the WHM fee waiver, more money to develop Indigenous product development, invest in tour guide training, and improvements in distribution and payment processes.

"It's time for tourism and it's time for our political parties to recognise the important contribution the tourism export sector - Australia's largest service export - makes to our economy by supporting these simple but effective requests that will enable tourism businesses across Australia to get back to what they

do best," ATEC Managing Director Peter Shelley said.

"Now we have our borders open we are seeing the green shoots of recovery and with export tourism businesses looking to rebuild their markets, this an important time for government focus on investing in getting the industry back on its feet," he added.

ATEC is also calling for policy-makers to provide extra funding and better targeting of the Export Market Development Grants program, visa innovation and subsidies for businesses to attend trade events, as well as create more flexible student visas to allow longer working hours.

"While we rebuild our industry we also have the opportunity to support a more sustainable industry and create a tourism sector of the future," Shelley said.

The pandemic is estimated to have cost the export tourism industry more than \$45 billion.

We want India too!

PERTH Airport is trying to tee up direct flights to India by pitching business travel between the subcontinent and WA booming mining sector, the *AFR* has reported this week.

CEO Kevin Brown has met with Indian officials about the flights.



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Travel & Cruise Weekly

Special Easter issue

Expedia does AA direct

A NEW direct NDC connection between American Airlines and Expedia promises to give travellers booking AA flights via the OTA “more options to customise their travel and choose elevated offers”.

An expanded range of fare products has been facilitated by the New Distribution Capability link which makes all of American’s offers available to bookers through any Expedia Group site.

Expedia is AA’s largest third party agency, with the expanded pact including North American points-of-sale, building on several years of cooperation between the companies on certain European points of sale.

“The collaboration will result in two of travel’s biggest players being able to offer travellers around the world more opportunities to customise their travel experience,” they said.

Offers now available via Expedia

include AA’s Main Plus fare class, which is exclusively available via NDC and aa.com.

Main Plus offers complimentary access to Main Cabin Extra, preferred seats and boarding and a free checked bag.

Future enhancements planned for the AA NDC connection will also result in the ability to offer additional elevated offers and other options such as carbon offsetting, the carrier said.

Expedia Group VP of Global Air Partnerships, Julie Kyse, said the OTA was “uniquely positioned to be able to offer this because of our scale, in order to better serve the end traveller”.

“This move is a significant milestone in the industry’s general adoption of NDC-enabled connections between suppliers and sellers, and we look forward to continuing to work with our travel partners to determine the best connectivity options.”

No plan in place

THE final version of the Senate COVID-19 committee report has concluded the Federal Government did not have a proper plan in place to close Australia’s borders to travellers in the instance of a pandemic.

“The Australian Government was poorly prepared to manage the closure of its international border, and had made no plans for managing international arrivals,” the report stated.

“When the government began introducing travel restrictions and mandatory self-isolation requirements from 01 Feb 2020 there was no blueprint for implementation of the restrictions, and it was unclear which level of government was responsible for monitoring compliance, and there was a similar lack of clarity regarding quarantine arrangements.”

The Morrison Govt has labelled the report a Labor-led vehicle to pursue “partisan attacks”.



Window Seat

A FORMER island prison off the coast of Mexico is set to become the country’s newest tourist attraction, with the Mexican Navy to manage a redevelopment and run tours of the ecotourism destination.

The Islas Marinas penal colony was founded in 1905, and is 100km offshore from Nayarit state on the Pacific.

The prison was closed in 2019, with President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador this week announcing plans to expand the island’s airport and add high-speed ferries which can make the trip in 2.5 hours.

The project will usher in a new era for Islas Marinas, with Lopez Obrador saying “what was a hell is becoming a paradise”.

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TO MARK the imminent resumption of flights from Australia to Tahiti, Aranui Cruises has introduced a range of discounts on sailings to the Marquesas Islands in 2022 & 23.

Twelve cruises aboard the mixed freight/passenger vessel *Aranui 5* have had rates slashed, offering Aussies savings of \$1,200 per Stateroom, \$1,500 for Superior Deluxe rooms, \$1,800 on Premium Suites, and \$2,500 off the price of Presidential Suites.

“With up to 250 guests on board *Aranui 5*, we hope that our small size, and our classic voyage to some of the most far-flung islands in the world where social distancing is the norm, will be the right combination to allow our guests to ease back into cruising after the pandemic,” Regional Representative Australia New Zealand Laurent Wong said.

Air Tahiti Nui will resume regional flights from Australia to Papeete via Auckland on 05 May.

Listen and learn

NEWCASTLE is incentivising family holidays by setting up QR signs along the city’s popular Macquarie Pier to Nobbys Headland walk, providing visitors with an in-depth audio history of the area dating right back to the ancient dinosaurs.

The audio tour is complemented by ten signs inscribed with interesting information along the walkway visitors can read as they listen to the historical stories, such as the shelling of Newcastle by a Japanese submarine that entered the harbour during World War 2.

MH nose dive finding

A MALAYSIAN Airlines Boeing 737 aircraft which made a rapid descent that lasted for close to 10 minutes during a flight between Kuala Lumpur and Tawau, was caused by a malfunctioning pitot-static system, producing a false speed indication on board.

Finally, we can say g'day!



THE first Australian travellers have touched down in New Zealand today following the removal of all quarantine requirements and formal reopening of borders.

It is expected more than 3,000

Aussies will land in Auckland Airport alone today, with visitors being greeted with Whittaker’s Peanut Slabs as a welcome gift.

Pictured: Just one of the many happy Kiwis awaiting the arrival of Aussie friends and family.

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Heritage lifts 23/24

HERITAGE Expeditions has released its 2023-2024 Southern Ocean season, including a range of new destinations.

Komodo National Park, land of the Komodo Dragon, and Jacques Cousteau's "underwater nirvana" Wakatobi National Park will join the tropical paradises of Raja Ampat and Kwatisore Bay as new destinations on the 18-day Indonesian Explorer voyage from Bali to Madang.

"These itinerary revisions turn what was already an unforgettable voyage into a real Indonesia bucket list adventure," said Commercial Director & Expedition Leader Aaron Russ.

He added that the 2023-24 season proudly continues Heritage's tradition of exceptional, personalised adventures sharing unforgettable, intimate explorations, cultural encounters, and wilderness & wildlife hotspots.

Globus QFF partnership

THE Globus Family of Brands (GFOB) this morning announced a new partnership with Qantas Frequent Flyer, allowing travellers to earn QF points on holidays booked with Globus, Cosmos and Avalon Waterways.

Effective immediately, travel agents will be able to offer their clients the ability to receive one point per dollar on Globus and Cosmos tours, and two Qantas Points per dollar on Avalon river cruises, with a launch offer of double points on all eligible bookings made by 25 May.

"Globus Family of Brands is thrilled to be partnering with Qantas Frequent Flyer, an iconic Aussie household name, to open up a world of opportunity for our travel partners, giving them the chance to help their clients earn Qantas Points on their next holiday with us," said GFOB MD Australasia, Gai Tyrrell.

"There's a lot of excitement

around booking 2022 and 2023 trips, and while customers can earn Qantas Points with us any time, our double Qantas Points offer will see a lot of people lock in their travel plans in the weeks ahead," Tyrrell hoped.

Agents can allocate points when making bookings, while customers can also add their QFF details to the GFOB MyAccount portal prior to departure.

Customers who are not yet QF Frequent Flyer members can also sign up to the loyalty program at no charge, with a waiver of the nominal \$99.50 fee.

Qantas Loyalty CEO Olivia Wirth said "we've seen incredible demand for travel among frequent flyers, both domestically and internationally, and are thrilled to offer members yet another way to build their points balance through travel".

"The option to earn points on escorted touring experiences

ADL ready for rush

WITH traffic chaos continuing to take place in Australia's east coast airports, Adelaide Airport said it was putting all available resources in place to avoid a similar scenario in Adelaide as it anticipates record passenger volumes this weekend.

However Managing Director Brenton Cox conceded that staffing issues may still pose a problem moving into the long weekend regardless.

"We're doing everything we can to get people through the terminal and onto their flights, but the one thing we can't control is last-minute staff absenteeism due to COVID," Cox said.

"We're asking all domestic passengers to arrive at the airport two hours before their flight, and for international travellers, three hours before their flight."

The airport is opening up additional check-in counters and will have third-party resources on stand by in case of shortages.

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Bags packed for Doha



CONGRATULATIONS to Helloworld Bowral's Michele Goulder (**pictured**), who is the first prizewinner of the Qatar stopover incentive competition (**TD 04 Mar**).

Goulder will experience the country first-hand on Qatar Tourism's VIP Famil next month.

The Helloworld Bowral travel advisor was said to be wowed by the opportunity, upon hearing she'd received the great prize.

"I am very excited to hear the news that I will be discovering Doha in May," Goulder said.

"It is a destination I have always wanted to visit so I am very grateful," she added.

Qatar Tourism teamed up with **Travel Daily** last month to give one lucky reader the opportunity to win a spot on the amazing VIP mega famil, which involved viewing Sunrise's live broadcasts from the country.

AFTA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



ON THE weekend, Prime Minister Scott Morrison finally announced that the Federal Election will take place on the second

last Sat in May.

While you will be hearing many messages and slogans, I thought it'd be useful to provide some key insights to what needs to occur to keep or change the government.

There are around 20 marginal electorates that will decide who wins the Federal Election on 21 May as both leaders embark on a gruelling six-week campaign to woo undecided voters.

For Labor they will be needing to pick up seats in WA and Qld, while the Coalition will be seeking to pick up a few seats in NSW and hold in Qld to offset the expected losses in WA.

While the campaign has been underway for some time, we are now in the final phase and a lot can go wrong over a six-week campaign period from both sides.

Elections have been won and lost on the impact of cutting or not cutting cake, remembering a six-point plan or my personal favourite from a US Vice President, misspelling the word potato by adding an 'e'.

All candidates will need to be on point as people will be paying greater attention to what is said and how it will impact them.

Elections can be fun, exhausting and in some instances, downright painful but they are also critical for the successful operation of our community.

For AFTA, elections are an important time to keep advocating for support when politicians are looking for votes.

We are finalising our election commitments for travel in the coming weeks which will focus on rebuilding our teams.

As I round out this week, I hope everyone has some downtime over the Easter break. The industry's recovery is starting to speed up, but it is critical we also take some time out to ensure we focus on our families and friends.

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

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VA bullying claim

VIRGIN Australia Chief Executive Officer Jayne Hrdlicka has been hit with a bullying claim by a senior pilot.

VA confirmed a Fair Work court case launched in the Federal Court yesterday contained allegations which had been made directly against Hrdlicka.

Virgin said during a seven-month period of paid absence from the airline, options were discussed regarding a return to his post, but his employment was terminated following an independent assessments of his fitness to work.

A real Ernest getaway



A NEW boutique hotel has opened in Bendigo offering holidaymakers a “luxurious, modern, and ambient getaway” to the Victorian town.

The 10-suite Bendigo Ernest Hotel, housed in Bendigo’s oldest bank building, is the brainchild of owners David Cook-Doulton and Martin Shew, and is designed to provide visitors with a combination of historic grandeur and modern features, with many furnishings inspired by the area’s famous gold rush era.

Each room (**pictured**) is styled differently, but all are adorned with Australian art and luxurious bedding, and are also equipped with wi-fi, a flat screen smart TV, coffee pod machine and a bevy of complimentary bathroom amenities.

The opening of the property is also a timely one, with the Bendigo Ernest Hotel located only a stone’s throw away from the popular Bendigo Art Gallery, which is currently hosting the four-month long Elvis: Direct from Graceland exhibition.

Time for a detour

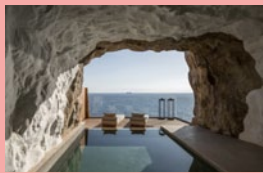
SUBARU Australia will soon headline its own show designed to inspire Australians to explore more of the less driven roads around the country.

The Great Australian Detour will be hosted by popular Aussie personality Andrew Daddo and will air on Channel Nine at 1pm each Sat until 04 Jun.

Viewers will be encouraged to go the long way, or follow “those old tourist signs” that people rarely have time to explore.

ACCOMMODATION

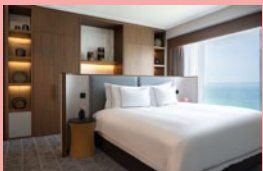
WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



Luxury wellness hotel **Acro Wellness Suites - Adults Only**, one of Crete’s newest properties, aims to “fuse a sense of place, design, and serenity”. With its first full season beginning this month, Acro Wellness Suites pays homage to its surrounding nature through its use of materials and textures. The best local Greek designers and craftsmen worked on the hotel’s authentic Cretan feel.



Hilton has expanded its presence in Japan’s cultural capital with the signing of **Hilton Kyoto**. Launching in 2024, Hilton Kyoto will bring together the unique qualities of the city – old and new, culture and history, people and their stories – while serving as a conduit to connect guests with the community. Situated in Sanjo-Kawaramachi, Hilton Kyoto is surrounded by classic Buddhist temples.



The David Kempinski Tel Aviv has officially opened on the city’s beachfront. The hotel is the renowned brand’s 80th opening around the world, and its first in Israel. Housed in a 34-storey skyscraper, the 194-room and 56-suite property opened today, on the heels of the recent announcement of Israel’s borders opening to international tourism.

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