

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news.

QF clarifies refunds

QANTAS has responded to questions about comments made by its Domestic and International CEO, Andrew David, earlier this week (**TD** 20 Apr), clarifying the automated refund system which has recently been implemented only applies to new refund requests, not existing flight credit.

The updated system means 80% of new refund requests which come through from this week are able to be processed within seven days, where customers are entitled to a refund.

In terms of refund requests for bookings made by travel agents, the carrier recently reinstated the ability for agencies in Australia and NZ to process refunds on eligible tickets via technology partners or GDSs, which means they are being processed almost immediately as long as requests abide by the fare rules associated with the purchased ticket.

In these cases it can take between three and 10 days for refunds to be returned to the original form of payment.

However where the refund request is associated with a commercial policy or QF conditions of carriage, the processing can take six to eight weeks via BSPLink, which is the same timeframe for complex bookings made through the direct channel.

Trivago hit with \$45m fine

EXPEDIA offshoot Trivago has been ordered by the Federal Court to pay a whopping \$44.7m in penalties for making misleading representations about hotel room rates on its website and via marketing campaigns.

The fine is only half of what the company could have been slugged with however, after the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) recommended to the government that Trivago be hit with a more severe \$90 million fine during court proceedings in Oct last year (**TD** 19 Oct 2021).

In Jan 2020, the Federal Court found that Trivago had breached Australian Consumer Law by using an algorithm which placed

significant weight on hotel listings that paid Trivago the highest cost-per-click fee, and not the cheapest rates on offer for consumers as claimed by the company (**TD** 21 Jan 2020).

Trivago admitted during proceedings that between Dec 2016 and Sep 2019, the business had earned approximately \$58 million in cost-per-click fees from offers that were not the cheapest available for a given hotel, representing around \$38 million in overpaid bookings by its customers as a result.

"Trivago's conduct took advantage of consumers' desire to find the best deal, and the Court's decision to order such a significant penalty reflects the seriousness of Trivago's conduct," the ACCC said.

CemAir enlists GSA

JOHANNESBURG-BASED airline CemAir has appointed APG to be its offline GSA in the Australian and NZ markets.

APG will provide the carrier with sales and marketing services, as well as deliver key reservations and ticketing support as it expands its global operations.

TD back from Tue

THERE will be no issue of *Travel Daily* published this Mon due to the Anzac Day public holiday.

Our team will be back bright and early on Tue morning however to deliver you the latest news in the world of travel.

Tokyo setback

QANTAS has confirmed its planned services to Tokyo from Australia have been delayed after Japan's failure to confirm an open border plan for tourists.

The carrier told **TD** it would now be flying ex-Sydney from 12 Sep and ex Brisbane/Melbourne from 30 Oct, subject to government decisions on entry requirements and quarantine.

Meanwhile Jetstar is scheduled to restart its services to Japan from 15 Jul.

Japan opened its border to all foreign nationals, except for tourists, on 01 Mar 2022.

A&K Australia names Fox as MD

THE appointment of the highly respected Debra Fox as Abercrombie & Kent's new Australian Managing Director for Tour Operations (**TD** breaking news) is set to usher in a new era of growth for the business.

Fox, who was Chief Commercial Officer of APT until a restructure about 18 months ago (**TD** 16 Jul 2020) has more than 30 years of experience, with her appointment welcomed by Kerry Gold A&K Group MD of United Kingdom and Australia.

She will join the business in May, collaborating closely with Graham Wood who will continue as MD of A&K Australia DMC.

Fox will also remain a strategic advisor for The Inspire Collective, the consultancy she established in partnership with Susan Haberle who will continue to be actively involved in the business.

Flight Centre reactivates BOS

FLIGHT Centre this morning released a new prospectus for its Business Ownership Scheme (BOS) which allows its team leaders to invest in the shops or sales businesses they run.

The program, which raises capital through the issuance of Unsecured Notes with respect to nominated business units, was suspended during the pandemic but has now been reinstated, with no material changes made.

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Collette partners with Virtuoso

COLLETTE has become a Virtuoso Preferred Partner in Australia and New Zealand, with the tour operator expanding its existing longstanding relationship with Virtuoso in North America to now cover the local market.

Director of Commercial Partnerships, Amanda McCann Wilson, said the company was delighted to be working more closely with the Virtuoso network.

"Our expanded range of 49 small group immersive tours are what Virtuoso travellers are seeking right now," she said.

Evan Pierce, Virtuoso Partnerships Director ANZ highlighted Collette's "guest-centric and proactive" approach to providing refunds over the last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, while the company's 24-hour cancellation waiver "gives our advisors and clients complete confidence".

UTS ditches tourism study

THE University of Technology Sydney (UTS) has disestablished its tourism degrees, in a decision made late last year amid concerns about declining enrolments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It's understood there was feedback from parents of students that job prospects in the sector may not be good - in a stark contrast to the reality of the massive industry skills shortage already being experienced.

The move means no new tourism studies enrolments were accepted at UTS this year, although students who had enrolled prior to 2022 are able to complete their tourism subjects this year so they can fulfil their degree requirements.

The decision marks the end of an era for tourism studies at UTS, which has run courses for the sector since the 1970s.

It will also see senior lecturer David Beirman finish his term,

although he will retain adjunct status with the university.

As a result he is re-establishing his Struan & Associates consultancy which focuses on business and tourism risk, crisis and recovery management.

Beirman said he also intends to maintain an active involvement in tourism and education.

"Having developed and taught the subject *Managing risk and opportunity* and written the book *Tourism Crises and Destination Recovery*, I now have to practice what I preached," he told *TD*.

NZ cruising plea

THE New Zealand Cruise Association has urged authorities to provide clarity on the reopening of maritime borders, warning that further delay may impact cruise line deployment decisions for the 2022/23 season - more in today's *Cruise Weekly*.



Window Seat

IT'S important to be respectful of other passengers on a plane at all times, but one passenger has just learned this lesson in rather painful detail after harassing a former heavyweight boxing world champion.

Video has emerged of Mike Tyson raining blows on a fellow JetBlue passenger because the man allegedly refused to leave the former athlete alone.

According to *TMZ*, witnesses said the intoxicated man initially took selfies with Tyson before things escalated after he refused to stop chatting in the former boxer's ear, even after Tyson insisted he "chill".

The incident left the man bloodied and bruised, with no word yet on whether charges will be laid against Tyson.



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Hats off to African luxury



LUXURY African lodge provider Singita recently hosted five Aussie travel agents on a ten-day Southern African safari.

The adventure, delayed two years by COVID, saw advisors experience the luxury accommodation of three lodges, including Singita Pamushana in Zimbabwe, Singita Lebombo in

Kruger National Park in South Africa, as well as Singita Ebony, located in South Africa's Sabi Sands Game Reserve.

The itinerary also included twice-daily game drives, a sundowner boat cruise in Zimbabwe, meetings with the K9 anti-poaching team in Singita Sabi Sands, and visiting the local community at Singita Pamushana.

Pictured: Sonia Jones, Sonia Jones Travel; Aaron Ainsworth, Travel Associates; Michael West, TravelCall; Jacqui Keating, Smartflyer; Maddy Lehrer, Tribe Travel; Lea Seguier, Singita; Joanne Bailey, TravelCall, with the group's guide Nick & tracker Vusy.

Tassie confident

TASMANIA'S tourism industry is bouncing back from COVID-19, with 70% of tourism operators stating they are doing "better than expected" since the state's borders reopened in Dec 2021.

The Tourism Industry Council Tasmania survey also found more than 70% of industry operators have a "positive" or "very positive" outlook for the future.

MEANWHILE, Tourism Tasmania is encouraging Australians to embrace the off season, in the latest iteration of the namesake's campaign.

Shot entirely in black & white, the push captures the unique ways Tasmanians embrace the winter season, "from the fiery celebrations of the solstice to the bracing cold of an icy plunge."

"We believe Tasmania offers a different winter holiday, something you need to experience to truly appreciate," said Tourism Tasmania Chief Marketing Officer Emma Terry.

Expedia + Travalyst

EXPEDIA Group has joined the Travalyst sustainable travel coalition, first created by Prince Harry (**TD** 04 Sep 2019).

The Group will sit alongside other participating travel brands such as Booking.com, Trip.com Group and Skyscanner.

"Since its inception, Travalyst's mission has been to transform travel into a wholly positive impact industry," explained Chief Executive Officer Sally Davey.

"Driven by data and the core belief that travel is a force for good, Expedia Group's platforms and data will enable Travalyst to help more travellers make better choices for themselves".



Travel crucial for rebound

THE travel and tourism sectors are expected to be the primary driver behind a rebounding global economy, attendees at World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC) global summit taking place in Manila this week have heard.

According to the latest Economic Impact Report revealed at the event, the two industries will drive the creation of around 126 million new jobs over the next 10 years - accounting for one in three of all new positions created globally.

Travel and tourism's GDP is also predicted to grow at an average rate of 5.8% annually between 2022 and 2032, outstripping the 2.7% overall growth rate for global economy, reaching US\$14.6 trillion (11.3% of the

total global economy).

The report also foreshadowed that travel and tourism's GDP could reach pre-pandemic levels by as early as 2023 - just 0.1% shy of Jan 2020 volumes, with the sectors' contributions to GDP expected to grow by a whopping 43.7% to almost US\$8.4 trillion by the end of 2022.

If the predictions prove accurate, it will amount to 8.5% of the total global economic GDP - only 13.3% behind 2019 levels.

WTTC's summit has also reflected on the theme of "Rediscovering Travel", exploring ways the industry could have performed better during the health crisis across areas such as border closures, furlough schemes and digital solutions.

Where in WA?



THESE spectacular rock formations resemble a herd of elephants playing in the water and are huge, cracked oval boulders overlooking the Great Southern Ocean.

The rocks themselves are a stunning site to behold and are plenty of fun to climb over.

Do you know where in Western Australia these can be visited?

Elephant Rocks, William Bay National Park, WA

CORPORATE UPDATE

Biz travel enjoys spike

GLOBAL business travel recovery has seen a double-digit surge since Feb, up to 86% from 73%, according to new figures released by the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA).

The latest recovery poll reveals more international travel has resumed, and travel bookings, spending, & willingness has also risen, alongside inflation and sustainability factors.

Corporate travel policies are also undergoing a revamp to reflect staff more broadly willing to travel, GBTA found.

"We're seeing significant gains in the return of business travel, especially over the past month

or two," GBTA Chief Executive Officer Suzanne Neufang said.

"GBTA's global data shows more companies are allowing domestic and now also international employee travel.

"Booking levels and travel spending continue to return, and there's high levels of optimism and employee willingness to travel for business."

GBTA added that the latest wave of positivity comes even as the business travel industry faces challenges beyond COVID-19, including rising fuel prices, inflation, supply chain disruption, and the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Recovery is not always on time



CORPORATE travel spend is projected to reach just 36% of 2019 levels by the end of the second quarter of this year, a more sluggish result than many businesses had predicted in 2021, a new report compiled by Deloitte has found.

By the end of the year, spend on corporate travel will rise to around 55% of pre-pandemic volumes, with a full recovery in expenditure not anticipated until 2024 at the earliest.

Suppressing the recovery has been a persistent increase in business travel prices globally, coupled with lingering health and logistical concerns associated

with the pandemic.

Encouragingly, travel managers surveyed for the report said they rated content delivery as more dependable in-person, and less replaceable by technology than they did in 2021, signalling a rise in "Zoom fatigue" towards more face-to-face interactions.

Another challenge facing corporate travel has been a cutting back in services and amenities at hotels for travellers in the wake of lean guest numbers, leading some companies to modify their meetings contracts to ensure the availability of desired amenities in the face of these service cuts.

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It's International Skal Day



THE Skal Club of Melbourne recently celebrated international Skal month with a well attended gastronomical lunch at the Hotel Grand Chancellor, where new members were announced in front of a jubilant crowd.

"It was a joyous day," beamed Skal Melbourne President Tara Strickland.

"We inducted five brand new members, unveiled our hilarious new initiation ceremony 'Skal Melbourne's Hot Seat', and held a book launch for our very own Ed Davis," she added.

While the occasion was mainly

celebratory, the event also paid tribute to the life of the much loved Skalleague Peter McClintock, who passed away suddenly this month (**TD** 14 Apr).

Pictured enjoying the night's festivities were: Harry Isen, The Lyall Hotel and Spa; Richard Kellaway, CRC Travel Jobs; Anne-Marie Mitchell, GET Educational Tours; and Greg McCallum, Entire Travel Group.

Branson is buoyed

VIRGIN Atlantic founder Richard Branson believes the carrier is finally starting to dig itself out of a "deep hole" after a sustained period of debt-laden inertia thanks to the pandemic.

"The last two or three months have been exceptionally good for the airline," Branson told *Bloomberg TV* this week.

"While fuel prices have obviously gone through the roof, every single seat on Virgin Atlantic is pretty much full up, so we're able to pay our bills again, we're able to start paying off debt that we accumulated over COVID, and that's great news," he added.

Virgin Atlantic revealed in its financial update earlier this month that it planned to move sharply from survival to recovery mode, stating an anticipated return to profitability in 2023, driven by demand & cost-cutting.

Few clues gained

THE answers behind a China Eastern Airlines crash which claimed the lives of 123 passengers (**TD** 22 Mar) is no closer to being solved after the badly damaged black boxes recovered from the impact site provided little evidence for aviation investigators.

A preliminary report prepared by the Civil Aviation Administration of China claim the flight and cabin crew were fully qualified and that there were no maintenance faults with the Boeing 737-800 aircraft.

The report also stated that radio communications between the crew and air traffic control were normal before the crash.

TRAVEL SPECIALS

WELCOME to Travel Specials, *Travel Daily's* Friday feature. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of, send the details to specials@traveldaily.com.au

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Do Hawaii differently by small ship and save \$1,600 per couple, when booking through **Cruise Traveller**. Australians can also receive a free hotel night and a low deposit offer on the UnCruise Adventures sailing when booking by the end of Jun. Visit **HERE** for further information.

Get on board with **Intrepid** by taking advantage of 30% off adventure cruises in Europe. The sale ends on 02 May and is for travel before the end of Oct. **CLICK HERE** for further information.

Viking's deal of the week is a Europe river cruise from \$2,695 per person. For a limited time only, Viking's eight-day Rhine Getaway from Amsterdam to Basel or vice versa is now on sale, on selected departures for new bookings made before the end of Jun. For additional information, phone Viking on 138 747.

Get to the chopper!

PASSENGERS on board *Scenic Eclipse* are being offered the opportunity to embark on a helicopter excursion to witness 5,000 breeding pairs of Emperor penguins of Snow Hill Island in Antarctica.

The area is only accessible by helicopter and from Dec, travellers aboard *Scenic's* 16-day Antarctica & The Weddell Sea voyage will have the chance to be one of the few to experience the excursion, pending suitable weather conditions.

The wildlife highlights on the sailing don't stop at penguin spotting either, with rookeries of elephant seals lazing on the beach and pods of humpback whales breaching also viewable.

Bhutan readies

THE quarantine period for international arrivals to Bhutan dropped from 14 days to five days as of yesterday, with the country flagging plans to scrap it completely from as early as Jul.

Currently there are very limited airline schedules into Bhutan, however this is predicted to change swiftly once more concrete quarantine-free travel policies are revealed in mid May.

MEANWHILE operator Bhutan & Beyond has started to take new bookings for Bhutan travel from mid-Sep onwards, with reservations to be deposit-free until there is more certainty around a resumption date.

Agents are paid 8% commission on the total land tour cost.

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Travel Daily



Driving home the message



THE caravan industry is an economic powerhouse that must be respected; that was the message being delivered by the CEO of the Caravan Industry Association Australia when he met with opposition leader Anthony Albanese this week.

In his briefing with the potential PM, Stuart Lamont underscored the sector's importance to industries such as travel and tourism, relaying that caravanning supplies the most number of holiday nights in Australia and the most number of accommodation

nights, regardless of purpose of travel in regional Australia.

The two men also discussed the many important economic strengths of the sector, among them how EV infrastructure needs to be installed to support the growth of regional tourism, and how insurance is crippling the broader tourism industry.

Pictured: Caravan Industry Association Australia CEO Stuart Lamont with aspiring Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

Maldives scraps

TRAVELLERS to the Maldives no longer need a COVID PCR test to enter the country, however inbound visitors must still complete a Traveller Declaration form 72 hours before departure.

Unvaccinated travellers entering under specific visa categories may still be required to undergo PCR testing and mandatory quarantine periods.

Evolve rego open

REGISTRATIONS are now open for Meetings & Events Australia's Evolve 2022 event taking place from 29-30 Jun.

Supported by the Melbourne Convention Bureau, Accor and EventsAIR, the gathering at Sofitel Melbourne On Collins will see the Australian events sector come together to enhance skills for "Building Confidence through Be Practice".

To register, **CLICK HERE**.

Got a confidential tip? Contact *Travel Daily* via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click **HERE**

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EDITORIAL
Editor in Chief and Publisher – Bruce Piper
Associate Editors– Adam Bishop, Myles Stedman
Contributors – Nicholas O'Donoghue, Anna Piper, Jenny Piper
info@traveldaily.com.au

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING
Sean Harrigan and Hoda Alzubaidi
advertising@traveldaily.com.au

BUSINESS MANAGER
Jenny Piper
accounts@traveldaily.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia
Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760)

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