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THE travel industry's best-kept secret has been revealed - TravelManagers' Customer Fund is now the most comprehensive and transparent financial protection in Australia!

Find out why on **page seven** of today's *Travel Daily*.

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Virtuoso already up on 2019

THE Virtuoso consortium today released its latest trading figures, confirming the business is now recording sales significantly ahead of pre-pandemic levels.

While the overall travel market is not expected to recover until 2024, for Virtuoso in the US, sales for the first half of 2022 are about 108% of the corresponding period in 2019, with hotel production particularly strong at 173% of the figures before COVID-19.

Forward bookings are also much better than in 2019, with global "future sales" figures up 147% for Jan-Jun 2022, meaning 2023 is likely to be a record-breaking year for Virtuoso, according to Executive VP David Kolner.

Kolner's presentation during the opening session of Virtuoso Travel Week also detailed new research conducted in partnership with YouGov, which showed a significant shift in consumer sentiment towards travel advisors.

In 2019 the global study of affluent travellers in 11 countries found that those who used Virtuoso travel advisors spent about 2.9 x those who made their own travel bookings.

This trend has accelerated over the past two years, with the comparative results for 2022 showing that travellers who had used a Virtuoso travel advisor this year spent 4.25 times on travel than do-it-yourself bookers, and more than three times those who used non-Virtuoso travel agents. "Preferred partners, you're in

the right place with the right people who have the right clients," Kolner enthused.

He also noted internal research among the Virtuoso network showing strongly recovering optimism among advisors and their clients who are increasingly becoming accustomed to the "new normal".

MEANWHILE Virtuoso Senior VP of Marketing, Helen McCabe-Young, launched the group's first ever consumer campaign (*TD* breaking news), aiming to highlight the difference booking through a Virtuoso advisor can make to a holiday experience.

"This campaign idea was created with all of you in mind... it's time to tell the world just how amazing you all are," she told delegates at the event.

Creative collateral will centre on the "So Virtuoso" theme, collating stories from Virtuoso customers from around the globe to showcase preferred partners and the experiences they offer.

CEO Matthew Upchurch hailed the initiative, noting "we believe there's a huge opportunity to accelerate the brand attraction of affluent travellers to us".

Uniworld info sesh

UNIWORLD is inviting travel agents and their clients to free information sessions about river cruising, taking place in Aussie cities from 30 Aug - see the **back page** for more exiting details.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news, including a photo page from **Virtuoso** and full pages from:

- TravelManagers
- Uniworld Boutique River Cruises



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Canberra webinar

TOURISM Australia is inviting agents to join its latest Aussie Specialist Canberra webinar.

Join Caroline from Tourism Australia, as well as Visit Canberra's Alison Beer this Thu at 10am to hear about the city's bookable touring experiences.

Session content will cover food tours, walking adventures, Aboriginal cultural experiences, lake cruises, helicopter tours, as well as golf tours.

The webinar will run for 30 minutes, and those who complete the Aussie Specialist Canberra training course can win a stay in the city - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Retail guru joins

WESTERN Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport has appointed Glyn Williams to lead its retail development as General Manager Retail, which will see him shape the shopping and dining experience for future travellers passing through.

"This terminal will be a destination in its own right - with specialty retail, restaurants and cafes, as well as an outdoor plaza that can host events like local food festivals, markets and community celebrations," Williams said.

Previous roles for Williams include General Manager Retail at Sydney Airport, Senior Vice President Asia Pacific for Harding Retail, and Regional General Manager at Westfield.

Western Sydney International will open in late 2026.

Mr Long goes to Canberra

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) was reinforcing the value of the sector in Canberra last week, ahead of the federal government's Jobs & Skills Summit next month.

AFTA is continuing to meet with key decision makers at a political and policy level to reinforce awareness and preferred solutions to its members' vacancy rates, which linger at 30%-plus in front line positions.

"At an absolute minimum given the current fiscal challenges, it is essential that the planned 10+10+5% wage subsidy for those on the priority list be converted immediately to a 25% wage subsidy for year one, as this addresses the need to keep commencements up," Chief Executive Officer Dean Long said, as he navigated the Nationals Corporate Observers Program.

AFTA is also recommending the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System operates for

the next two years with a wage subsidy of 30% for 12 months for both trade apprenticeships and two-year traineeships, as well as for six months regarding one-year traineeships.

"Although retention of apprentices is also an important policy objective, the second- and third-year wage subsidies are not going to make a material impact on retention as it not the cost to employer that is the key barrier to retention," Long argued.

"AFTA has and will continue to invest in making sure those making the decisions at a political and policy level understand what the problems are," he added.

Scenic showcase

SCENIC is inviting travel advisors and their clients to learn about its all-inclusive luxury river and ocean cruises and land journeys via a program of showcase presentations.

The events will include an interactive Q&A session with the Scenic sales team, a chance to learn more about the newest itineraries for 2023/24, the benefits of small ship cruising, and access to a special bonus offer.

There will be five sessions available on the day, with presentations taking place in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Canberra and Perth from 29 Aug through to Oct-Mar - [CLICK HERE](#) for more information and to register.

Maldives education

MACANA Maldives and Tweet World Cruises are co-hosting a Maldives Liveaboards & Destinations Webinar on 24 Aug at 4pm Adelaide time.

The one-hour session will feature Macana's entire fleet, Maldives destination, and updates on COVID restrictions, with participants given the chance to win two \$50 e-gift cards - [CLICK HERE](#) to register.

Travel Daily on location in Las Vegas

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Travel Associates and Virtuoso which is hosting its annual Virtuoso Travel Week luxury extravaganza here.

THOUSANDS of travel advisors are set to meet with a host of key industry suppliers in Las Vegas as part of the 34th Virtuoso Travel Week which is being held at the Aria and Bellagio casino resort complexes on the iconic Las Vegas Strip.

Virtuoso bills the gathering as the "Fashion Week of Luxury Travel", with the show attracting the top echelon of the luxury and experiential travel space and is seen as the launchpad for major industry trends and innovations.

As well as opportunities for one-on-one meetings, the event features a plethora of networking gatherings, panel discussions on key topics such as sustainability and technology, social events, announcements and professional development sessions.

Attendees include a large Australian contingent on both the advisor and supplier side, including almost all of Travel Associates' business leaders as well as travel agency members of Helloworld, Express Travel Group, CT Partners and Link Travel Group.



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INDEPENDENT HOLIDAY PACKAGE EXPERTS

Goldman named Virtuoso Chair



LINK Travel Group's Anthony Goldman was yesterday named the Chairman of the Virtuoso Global Member Advisory Board - the first time anyone from outside North America has held the role.

The appointment was confirmed in Las Vegas during the 34th annual Virtuoso Travel Week, with Goldman (pictured with Virtuoso Regional GM APAC Fiona Dalton by the pool at the Bellagio Resort yesterday) to now hold the

position for the next two years.

The Global Advisory Board meets bi-monthly to discuss current industry issues & trends, as well as provide feedback to the Virtuoso management team.

Virtuoso's Regional Member Advisory Boards from across the globe also report into the Global Board now chaired by Goldman.

SIA centralises ops

SINGAPORE Airlines has today transitioned to a centralised Global Sales Operation Team.

Having already been managing email enquiries from Australian trade partners and other markets over the last couple of months, the new centre will also this week start to handle a portion of Australian phone enquiries, and will progressively increase the proportion of calls handled over the next few months.

The new phone number for general enquiries is 1300 507 656 and the global team's operation hours are being extended to Mon-Fri 0830 AEST-1730 AWST.

EK Mauritius boost

EMIRATES has announced the addition of a third daily flight between Dubai and Mauritius, with the seasonal capacity expansion to operate from 01 Oct through to 31 Jan 2023.

The additional EK709/710 flight is on top of the existing double daily A380 services, with the carrier citing surging demand during the peak travel season.

Authorities in Mauritius are targeting a total of 1.4 million annual visitors by Jun 2023.

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Alloggio buys Aabode.com

ASX-LISTED short-term accommodation provider Alloggio Group Limited has acquired Sydney-based marketing and distribution platform Aabode.com.

The deal effectively gives Alloggio its own channel manager for the distribution of hundreds of luxury-focused holiday rental properties through its operations on Australia's east coast.

Overall Alloggio has invested over \$16 million in acquisitions in some of the country's favourite holiday hotspots over the last six months, including Great Ocean Road Holidays, Coolum's Prestige Holiday Homes and management portfolios in Coffs Harbour, Noosa and Magnetic Island.

The purchase of Aabode will facilitate distribution of the

Alloggio line-up through key travel retailers, as well as help the company tap into the Asia and Pacific markets, according to CEO Will Creedon.

The Dec 2021 purchase of Great Ocean Road Accommodation Centre for \$8 million included offices managing holiday properties in Torquay, Anglesea, Lorne, Apollo Bay, Fairhaven and Wye River, while the company paid \$4.5 million for Accom Noosa along with the management rights to Fairshore and Noosa International Resort, making Alloggio the destination's largest holiday management firm.

The company also has a presence in Maitland, Port Stephens, Bathurst, Bega, Mollymook and Jervis Bay.

"We look forward to leveraging our current platform to make further strategic acquisitions, implement organic growth initiatives and extract operational efficiencies for the remainder of 2022 and beyond," Creedon said.

Uber axes loyalty

RIDESHARING giant Uber has confirmed the shutdown of its 'Uber Rewards' loyalty program which debuted locally just over two and a half years ago (**TD** 29 Jan 2020).

The scheme offered users the opportunity to earn points on rides and Uber Eats purchases, with benefits such as discounts on future transactions and the ability to earn higher tier status which offered accelerated earning and ride upgrades.

Uber Rewards is being "retired" effective 31 Aug, with points able to be redeemed until 31 Oct.

Customers are instead being urged to join the Uber One subscription program which involves monthly fees in return for discounted Uber Eats deliveries and access to higher rated Uber drivers.

Carnival brands drop vax mandate

SEVERAL Carnival Corporation cruise brands have announced a lifting of requirements for passengers to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Cunard and Princess announced changes over the weekend, with the update also removing pre-cruise testing requirements for vaccinated cruisers.

Both cruise lines will still require COVID-19 testing for longer, more complicated itineraries - in most cases referring to voyages of more than 16 nights.



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Travel & Cruise
Weekly

Swan Hellenic show

SWAN Hellenic is holding its first-ever travel advisor roadshow in Australia next month.

The line is welcoming agents to join it for an evening cocktail event during which attendees will have the opportunity to meet the Swan Hellenic team members, who will showcase the company's in-depth range of itineraries.

The highlight of the evening will be Swan Hellenic's recently unveiled Kimberley sailings.

CLICK HERE to join the event.

QF expands freight

QANTAS Freight is increasing its domestic fleet by adding six Airbus A321 aircraft, which will be progressively rolled out between early 2024 and mid-2026.

The jets will replace the long-term fleet of five Boeing 737 freighters that are approaching the end of their economic life, with the new planes capable of carrying nine tonnes more cargo.

Domestic spend spikes

WHILE visitor numbers have not returned to pre-pandemic levels, May showed improved domestic travel spend after two COVID-impacted years, new figures from Tourism Research Australia's National Visitor Survey show.

In a positive sign, overnight spend (up 33%) and nights spent away (up 2%) were higher than pre-pandemic levels, while the report also showed visitors spent 30.8 million nights away during May, with travellers spending more money on average, up \$1.9 billion to \$7.7 billion.

The increase in spend when compared to May 2019 saw strong results in all states and territories, with the highest increases in the NT (up 144% or \$223 million), Tasmania (up 61% or \$107 million) and South Australia (up 50% or \$163m).

The average spend per trip was up \$219, or 35%, to \$842, when compared to May 2019.

In May 2022, Australians took 2.9 million interstate overnight trips, up 12% on the 2.6 million trips recorded in May 2021, and on par with the 2.9 million trips recorded in May 2019.

However, total overnight trips remained down slightly (-2%), at 9.2 million in total.

We are hopefully seeing the last of the down months for this category though, with early data showing domestic overnight trip rates for Jun and the first three weeks of Jul up compared to the prior corresponding period last year; despite still coming in below pre-pandemic levels.

Other highlights included increased spending on accommodation, food & drink, shopping, and gas.

Meanwhile intrastate travel saw 6.3 million overnight trips made in May, up 13% on the 5.6 million in May 2021, but down by 2% on the same period in 2019.



Window Seat

AFTER spending two months pouring over hundreds of route and flight options, a man chose to travel via Brisbane Airport as part of his feat of breaking the Guinness World Record for the fastest circumnavigation of the planet by scheduled flights.

Umit Sabanci (**pictured**) chose Brisbane Airport due to its high level of connectivity, passing through on his journey across the globe in 46 hours & 23 mins.

The itinerary included LA to Doha, followed by Doha to Brisbane with Qatar Airways, finishing with Brisbane to Los Angeles on board a Qantas jet.



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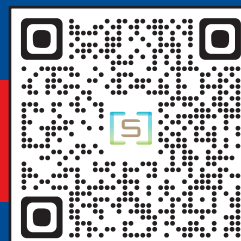
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Viva Las Vegas for Virtuoso!

THE largest Australian contingent ever has descended on Las Vegas for Virtuoso Travel Week (VTW) 2022 - the 34th edition of a gathering which this year welcomes more than 5,000 attendees. More than 4,200 of those are in Las Vegas in person, plus another 800 taking part online as part of an extensive hybrid offering. Over 180,000 one-on-one appointments will take place during the week, alongside a score of networking opportunities, professional development sessions, major announcements and more. VTW kicked off with a

welcome reception at the Bellagio Casino & Resort last night, with delegates enjoying the opportunity to kick up their heels and network in an informal setting.

Virtuoso now comprises over 1,200 agency locations and over 20,000 travel advisors in 50 plus countries - selling products from 2,200 preferred partners including top hotels, cruise lines, tour operators, tourism boards, airlines, DMCs and other providers.



AURORA Expeditions' Steve McLaughlin with the line's new CEO Michael Heath.



THE huge group from Travel Associates, which has brought all of its business leaders to VTW for the first time ever (**TD** 07 Apr).



SOME Aussie delegates with Tourism Fiji CEO Brent Hill, who is in Vegas as part of a multi-city roadshow in conjunction with the newly announced Fiji Airways non-stop Nadi-Vancouver flight.



THE Aussie Virtuoso team: Michele Duncan, Fiona Dalton, Jen Pagett and Zoe Dean.



GUESTS at a special welcome event for the Travel Associates team.



Canberra shooting

A 63-YEAR-OLD man from NSW will appear in the ACT Magistrates Court this morning after firing a gun at Canberra Airport on Sun afternoon.

The man fired five shots towards glass windows at around 1.30pm near the security screening, with no shots directed towards any passengers, staff or other people.

Australian Federal Police charged the man with discharging a firearm at a building, unlawful possession of a firearm and discharging a firearm near a person causing alarm.

Museum milestone

THE WA Museum Boola Bardip has welcomed its one millionth visitor, marking a significant milestone for the \$400 million cultural tourism attraction, which has seen strong attendance and positive feedback since opening in Perth CBD in Nov 2020.

The lucky visitor received a prize package including a cocktail function for 20 of their friends with after-hours access to the current Dinosaurs of Patagonia exhibition, a VIP invitation for four to the launch event of the Wonderland exhibition and more.

Tourism Tasmania heads to NZ



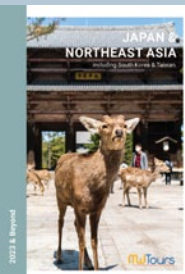
TOURISM Tasmania recently led a group of 15 Tasmanian tourism operators to participate in the State Government's tourism and trade mission in New Zealand from 31 Jul to 04 Aug (pictured).

The Tasmanian tourism businesses were able to meet face-to-face in Auckland with New Zealand travel partners to showcase Tasmania as an attractive holiday destination.

During the trip, delegates were also able to strengthen existing relationships, enhance awareness of Tasmania's world-class tourism experiences, and secure business with key New Zealand travel partners.

BROCHURES

WELCOME to Brochures of the Week, *Travel Daily's* Monday feature. If your firm is releasing a new brochure you'd like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description summarising its features and itineraries, including a PDF of the front cover, and contact details to brochures@traveldaily.com.au.



MW Tours - Japan & Northeast Asia 2023

MW Tours has published its brand-new brochures for 2023 and beyond, including Japan & Northeast Asia, which introduces self-guided tours through the Kii Peninsula in Kumano Kodo and Nakasendo, Japan. The brochure also showcases new eight-day Kyushu island tours, which takes travellers on a walking tour of Beppu, an exploration of Aoshima Island, a visit to the Kamikaze Bomber Museum and Samurai House, and a city tram tour in Kumamoto.



P&O Cruises - Like No Place on Earth 2022-24

P&O Cruises has unveiled its latest 35-page brochure filled with Australia and South Pacific cruising inspiration for 2022-24. Highlighted among the pages are new special event cruises, including PRIDE cruises departing Sydney and Melbourne, as well as itineraries to mark Australia Day and the Melbourne Cup. The five-night Ningaloo King of Eclipse cruise departing Fremantle is also showcased as a once-in-a-lifetime journey, giving travellers the chance to view the first hybrid solar eclipse that will be visible from Australia in 1,000 years, tracking over the North West Cape of Western Australia, near Exmouth.

Studio Ghibli Park

TICKETS are now available to purchase for entry to Japan's new Studio Ghibli Park, which is preparing for its grand opening on 01 Nov.

Located in Aichi Earth Expo Memorial Park, the seven hectare park will feature three open areas which include Ghibli's Grand Warehouse, exhibits and recreated locations from some of the studio's most popular films, and a Totoro-themed playground.

Two more areas, the Mononoke Village and the Valley of Witches, will open later next year.

Schiphol Airport pax compensated

AMSTERDAM'S Schiphol Airport announced it will compensate travellers who missed their flights due to lengthy delays caused by staff shortages and skyrocketing demand.

The compensation program will apply to travellers who were booked to fly from 23 Apr to 11 Aug, and will cover the cost of replacement flights, extra travel costs and accommodation, transport and activities booked at the travellers' destination.

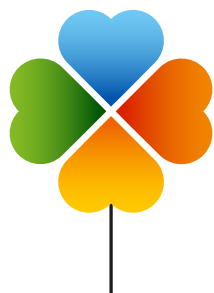
CEO Dick Benschop released a statement saying the airport was "extremely sorry", and added, "we must not let these people fall through the cracks".



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We invite you and your clients to one of our free information sessions. At our trade events, we invite you to celebrate our new 2023/24 brochure, win prizes and share a glass of wine and nibbles with our team.

Your clients are invited to learn about the art of river cruising in 2023 and beyond with Uniworld. From our one-of-a-kind, award-winning ships, our all-inclusive amenities and our carefully curated experiences, Uniworld offers a truly luxurious and immersive way to travel.

We look forward to seeing you. Space is limited, so please RSVP.

BRISBANE	Tuesday 30 August	Cloudland – Fortitude Valley
GOLD COAST	Wednesday 31 August	Mercure – Carrara
SYDNEY	Monday 12 September	The Kirribilli Club – Lavender Bay
CANBERRA	Wednesday 14 September	The Boathouse – Barton
MELBOURNE	Wednesday 21 September	The Savoy – Little Collins St
ADELAIDE	Thursday 13 October	Adelaide Pavilion – Veale Gardens
HOBART	Date to be announced soon	Pre-register here
PERTH	Date to be announced soon	Pre-register here

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