

## Bunnik on a winner

**BUNNIK** Tours is today highlighting its win-win proposition for travel advisors and their clients.

For details see the **last page**.

## The Jury is in!

**GLOBAL** Touring has announced the appointment of Kate Jury as BDM, representing both Topdeck Travel and Back-Roads Touring in Vic, Tas and SA - more industry moves on **page seven**.

## NTIA finalists announced

**THE** Australian Federation of Travel Agents this morning revealed the highly anticipated list of finalists for the 2022 National Travel Industry Awards (**TD** breaking news), with voting to open at 5pm AEST today.

Key supplier categories have this year been rejigged to reflect the "most outstanding industry support" by airlines, cruise lines and accommodation providers, while the new sustainability and marketing awards also look to have been hotly contested.

There are a number of new faces nominated this year, and the innovation of having separate categories for Most Outstanding Sales Executive for Air, Cruise and Land Supply has also seen a strong field of finalist contenders.

There are three finalist companies in the new Most Outstanding Mobile Advisor Network category, while the late addition of the Most Outstanding Non Branded Agency Group has also opened the field to a wider array of entrants.

"NTIA is always an exciting and well-deserved recognition of the

very best in our industry, and this year it's the case more than ever," said AFTA CEO Dean Long.

"AFTA made the decision, given the day-to-day pressures, that we needed to take a slightly different approach in allowing written and video submissions...the entries have been incredibly creative with a mix of powerful and very funny entries, even including a cartoon animation," he said.

Long said it had also been fantastic to see a very strong level of peer nominations, with 90% of the individual finalists nominated by their industry colleagues.

"We are excited to open the voting process, and congratulate all our finalists and semi-finalists," Long said, with the formal voting period continuing through until 5pm AEST on 08 Sep.

The awards will be announced at the industry night of nights on 15 Oct at the Sydney ICC.

**CLICK HERE** to access voting.

### Today's issue of **TD**

**Travel Daily** today features seven pages of news plus a full page from **Bunnik Tours**.

## Island Escape sinks

**NEW** Zealand-based boutique small ship cruise line Island Escape Cruises has had receivers appointed by the Bank of New Zealand, after cancelling almost all of the departures so far on its current Kimberley season.

The company's 32-passenger *Island Escape* is also understood to have been arrested in Broome, with the status of passenger refunds and deposits unknown.

More in today's **Cruise Weekly**.

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## TripADeal delivers

**THE** Qantas acquisition of 51% of TripADeal (**TD** 24 May) is “already delivering”, according to CEO Alan Joyce, who today noted sales in the first month jumped 70%, while QF Frequent Flyers have so far redeemed 150 million points on TripADeal packages.

## Qantas confident in future

**QANTAS** today delivered an upbeat assessment of its prospects, saying that after the pandemic “people are not just flying again - they’ve brought a level of enthusiasm for travel that was beyond our best projections”.

Leisure bookings are already around 125% of pre-COVID levels, while business travel is back to 90% despite many people still working from home.

CEO Alan Joyce detailed a

statutory loss before tax of just under \$1.2 billion (**TD** breaking news), and addressed the “elephant in the room” of the airline’s current poor service levels noting that “it simply wasn’t good enough”.

However Qantas Freight and Loyalty have been performing at record levels, Joyce noted.

He also announced a \$400 million on-market share buyback as a way of starting to repay shareholders for their support.

## QF staff benefits

**QANTAS** today announced a “major improvement” in its staff travel benefits as a way of boosting retention, including better access for family members and expanding the already significant fare discounts offered under the scheme.

**EMERALD**  
CRUISES

## Luxury Yacht Cruising



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## QF lounge upgrades

**NEW** Qantas lounges in Adelaide, Auckland, Port Hedland and Rockhampton were announced today, as part of the carrier’s ongoing investment in the customer experience.

QF CEO Alan Joyce highlighted the planned new Auckland International Lounge, saying it would offer a “step change in comfort” by increasing total capacity by about 40%.

A new Business Lounge will be built at Adelaide Domestic Airport along with a full upgrade of the current ADL Qantas Club and Chairmans Lounge, while a new lounge is planned for Rockhampton along with an upgrade at Port Hedland.

Joyce also detailed a new cabin crew training facility in Sydney which is already operating with the capacity to train up to 200 crew members per day on mock First, Business and Economy cabins and galleys.

## New QF US route

**QANTAS** has announced a new non-stop service between Auckland and New York (**TD** breaking news), with the 787-9 flight to kick off on 14 Jun 2023.

Designated as QF3/4, the return of Qantas to JFK will initially operate three days per week.

QF CEO Alan Joyce said flying via Auckland would provide better connectivity from more destinations in Australia.

The route will see Qantas operate head-to-head with Air New Zealand’s new Big Apple service which launches next month and is currently being heavily promoted in Times Square in central Manhattan.

Sydney-Auckland-New York flights are on sale from today, and QF will operate two Points Planes in the first week of operations with all seats across every cabin available as a Classic Reward flight on 16 Jun.

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## Cruise renaissance in sight



**LAST** night the Australian and New Zealand cruise sectors kicked up their heels in an industry-wide cocktail party to launch today's Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Cruise360

Conference and Trade Exhibition, which has returned after a three-year hiatus.

CLIA MD Joel Katz, **pictured** with CLIA Communications Director Jon Murrie at last night's shindig, said Australia's tourism industry was preparing for a "resurgent summer cruise season, with 46 ships bringing economic opportunities back to ports around the country as part of a carefully managed cruising revival".

As well as home-ported vessels, a series of international ships are also planning to make world cruise and seasonal stopovers.

"Each visit will bring new visitors and new opportunities for local communities, helping to rebuild an industry previously worth more than \$5 billion a year to the Australian economy," Katz said.

Over 20 CLIA cruise lines will operate ships in local waters between now and the end of Apr, including Norwegian Cruise Line, P&O, Princess, Ponant, Silversea, Coral Expeditions, APT, Carnival Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean, Celebrity Cruises, Cunard, Holland America Line, Regent Seven Seas Cruises, Windstar Cruises, Oceania Cruises, Azamara, Seabourn and MSC - as well as Aida, P&O UK and TUI Cruises.

More than 500 industry delegates from across Australia and NZ are attending Cruise360, with a full report in tomorrow's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

## THE PLACE TO BE

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## Bright outlook for FCTG

**FLIGHT** Centre Travel Group CEO Graham Turner said today the company was pleased to start the new financial year with a "considerably brighter outlook," after reporting a \$377.8 million pre-tax loss for the 12 months to 30 Jun (*TD* breaking news).

He said FC had taken positive steps on the path to recovery, including increasing market share in key countries and sectors.

Performance accelerated in the Apr-Jun quarter, leading to a modest second-half profit, driven by rapid sales growth globally after governments relaxed or removed travel restrictions.

TTV rose by 162% to \$10.3 billion over the full year - of which \$5.6 billion was attributed to FLT's corporate operations.

Leisure bookings are also rebounding strongly and are

now tracking at 68% of pre-COVID levels amid market share increasing in both Australia and New Zealand, Turner noted.

On the supply side, Turner said the business was "working closely with those airlines in Australia and New Zealand that are reducing front-end commission payments to deliver new revenue streams", and FC is also proactively targeting opportunities in NDC via its 70% stake in TP Connects.

Turner noted it was still early days for the recovery, with "considerable upside potential" considering Australian outbound departures were still just 60% of pre-pandemic levels in Jun.

## FC recruiting focus

**FLIGHT** Centre Travel Group last month reinitiated its novice recruitment program in earnest, and is now attracting around 4,500 applicants per month in Australia.

The company noted that the travel industry was rapidly regaining its appeal among jobseekers, and newcomers quickly finding their feet seeing their sales figures tracking above pre-COVID levels.

Flight Centre CEO Graham Turner said the added complexity of travel had created stronger demands for human service and advice, fuelling a "renaissance of the travel advisor".

## Shops reopening

**THE** global Flight Centre shop network now comprises 469 stores, with an additional 43 set to open by the end of Dec.

38 of these will be Flight Centre outlets, along with five Travel Money stores, according to an update from CEO Graham Turner.

He said work continues on Flight Centre brand's evolution into a "modern omni-channel retailer with connected offerings that allow customers to move seamlessly between in-store, online, app and phone channels".

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## Rex \$46m loss

**REGIONAL** Express says its operational figures for the new financial year indicate that “we have turned the corner”, after reporting a \$46 million loss for 2021/22 (**TD** breaking news).

Executive Chairman Lim Kim Hai noted that the lingering impact of COVID-19 meant passenger services had not started to recover until Feb this year.

With three quarters of the year devastated by the pandemic and oil prices skyrocketing due to the Ukraine conflict, “I am mildly pleased that our performance is not much worse than it is,” he said.

Strong performance since 01 Jul is “the result of partnerships with corporates and travel agencies”, which are already producing 35% of committed monthly traffic.

“We are continuing to see very strong bookings in Aug... barring further external shocks I am confident that the Group will return to good profitability in FY23,” he said.

## Air NZ in the red

**AIR** New Zealand joined the ranks of pandemic-impacted airlines today, announcing a NZ\$810 million statutory loss for the 12 months to 30 Jun.

CEO Greg Foran said that although the financial year had ended strongly after the phased reopening of NZ’s borders, overall operational revenue of NZ\$2.7 billion was significantly impacted by pandemic-related travel restrictions.

He said the airline “continued to be guided by a clear strategy, moving deftly to address continued change by focusing on doing the right thing for its stakeholders”, including restoring services, maintaining a choice of fares and launching innovations to improve the journey.

A NZ\$2.2 billion recapitalisation had put the carrier on a firmer footing, while strong demand in Jul and Aug underpinned by corporate is trending close to pre-pandemic levels.

## Virgin adds four

**VIRGIN** Australia has announced the addition of four Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft to its fleet, with delivery starting in the second half of 2023.

The new planes are in addition to four MAX 8 announced earlier this year (**TD** 02 May), with CEO Jayne Hrdlicka saying the expansion demonstrated the airline’s commitment to the Australian aviation market “and to sustainably grow its fleet for long-term success”.

The move will boost the total VA Boeing 737 fleet to 92, an increase of almost 60% since the carrier relaunched in Nov 2020.

VA has also gained access to a Boeing 737NG full-flight simulator which will be deployed in Jandakot, WA, as part of a long-term partnership with global aviation training provider CAE.

Hrdlicka noted that this week the Virgin Australia team had grown to over 7,000 staff “which is a real indication of the growth delivered in a very short time”.

**MEANWHILE** a planned ASX relisting for Virgin Australia will not happen this year, according to a staff briefing by Ryan Cotton, MD of the carrier’s private equity owners Bain Capital.

“IPO markets are effectively closed,” he told staff yesterday, *The Australian* reports.



## Window Seat

**BRITISH** carrier TUI Airways has come up with a novel solution to staffing shortages - just stop off en route to pick up extra cabin crew along the way.

Reports in the *Norwich Evening News* confirm the novel practice, which just in the last week has seen flights from Norwich Airport in the UK to holiday islands in southern Europe diverted to operate via Belfast, Northern Ireland - about 500km off course.

Flight tracking data indicates non-stop flight TOM5528 from Norwich to the Greek Island of Corfu landed in Belfast, staying on the ground for just over half an hour and then headed off to its original destination where it arrived two and a half hours later than scheduled.

The carrier apologised for the delays, saying “we fully understand customers’ frustration”.

“We can confirm the flight had to make a short stop via Belfast to provide a replacement crew member for another TUI flight.”

Similar diversions were made from Norwich to Mallorca.



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\$4,941 price based on Q2 Mini Suite aboard MS *Nordnorge* on 28 Nov 2022 Classic Roundtrip Voyage and is subject to availability. Price correct as of 12 Aug 2022. On sale until 30 September 2022.

## That's Bonza Shazza

**UNFORTUNATELY** 'Bonza Bruce' missed out on being the nickname for Bonza's first plane, with 'Shazza' taking the honours after extensive polling conducted over the last month.

While the **TD** team put its weight behind Bonza Bruce in honour of our intrepid Publisher Bruce Piper, Shazza beat out a wide list of names, including Purple Ripper, Kimbo and Sunny.

"Shazza was a clear favourite amongst the Bonza Local Legends who are the eyes and ears of Bonza in the communities where we'll fly to," Chief Commercial Officer Carly Povey said.

"I can also reveal that the close runner up was Bazza."

Interiors are now being fitted out on board Shazza.

## FCTG Supplier Training Days



**FCTG** Independent hosted a group of 60 travel agents last week for three days of Supplier Training in Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane, in what marked its first post-pandemic series of training days.

Agents heard updates from a number of suppliers, including Viking Cruises, Quark Expeditions, Collette, NIB, TTC Touring, Rocky Mountaineer, Regent Seven Seas, Globus family of brands and Entire Travel Group.

The agents also learnt about the benefits they receive from FCTG Independent, such as FC Gift Cards and CBA Rewards, as well as systems and support tips, with each group then given the opportunity to enjoy afternoon drinks and networking.

Those in attendance included mobile agents from Travel Partners, Flight Centre Independent and Travel Associates at Home, as well as independent travel agency owners and managers who align

with FCTG Independent.

General Manager, Astrid Richardson, revealed the training days will become a quarterly event, commenting that "having attended these training days myself, it was such a pleasure to connect with so many of our agents and offer them valuable training opportunities".

"Our support team are constantly looking for new ways to strengthen those connections with our network."

**Pictured:** The Sydney training group enjoying a much-needed networking session.

## Adventure losses

**ADVENTURE** tourism company Experience Co has posted a statutory net loss after tax of \$13.6 million for the 12 months to 30 Jun, a significant slide on the \$4.8 million loss reported during the same period last year.

The company's CEO conceded the last 12 months had been the "most challenging" period for the business since 2020, with Omicron-induced lockdowns, labour shortages, extreme weather and rising fuel prices all placing pressure on profits.

Improved air capacity and pricing are fuelling a rosier outlook for the next 12 months however, with the company expressing "cautious optimism" that from spring this year, there will be improved domestic and international trading conditions.

Overall sales revenue for the last 12 months came in at \$55.8 million, while recent acquisitions are also tipped to strengthen its property portfolio and speed up the post-COVID recovery.

## NIB Travel surge

**STRONG** sales in the fourth quarter of the 2022 financial year has seen NIB Travel Insurance reduce its yearly loss to \$7.4m.

The insurance division attributed the reopening of borders, the inclusion of COVID-19 coverage, white label partnerships, and a surging interest from Aussie travellers for insurance as key drivers for the fourth quarter growth, helping to mitigate loss-making quarters earlier in the financial year.

The bulk of sales have been made from its domestic insurance products, accounting for \$233.7 million, while international trips saw \$158.28 million worth of insurance bought for the year.

Nib indicated in its latest financial report that the business will seek to "differentiate and grow" its travel products over the next 12 months, including a stronger investment on systems and digital customer experiences.

## Japan eases testing

**JAPAN** will remove pre-arrival and pre-departure testing requirements for fully vaccinated travellers from 07 Sep.

The country will also raise daily arrival caps from the current 20,000 once airport staffing issues are sorted, with new cap numbers yet to be named.

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## BESydney new appointments

**BUSINESS** Events Sydney (BESydney) has announced two new senior appointments in its Client Engagement - Association team, effective as of yesterday.

Tina Eggers has been named as Head of Industry, and brings 25 years of sales experience in the industry, including stints at The Venues Collection and ICC Sydney.

Emma Mogus also joins the team as Senior Client Engagement Manager, and has 20 years' event delivery experience under her belt.

Mogus most recently held the position of Director Operations at ICMS Australasia, and prior to that worked at the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre.

## VIC DRAWS 4.5M PEOPLE TO EVENTS

**MORE** than 4.5 million people have attended Victoria's events this year across sport, theatre, food and fashion categories, boosting the state's tourism and aiding in its economic recovery.

The Garden State cemented itself as the home for major sporting events in Australia, kicking off the year with the return of the famed tennis tournament, the Australian Open, followed by the Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix, which drew record crowds.

Rounding off Victoria's stellar line-up of sporting events, boxing lovers were drawn to Marvel Stadium to witness the fight for the lightweight world title, footy enthusiasts flocked to the MCG to watch Manchester United play, and AFL games continue to attract cheering crowds.

Theatre-goers were also enticed to the state, with Melbourne's renowned theatre district one

of only three places in the world staging *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, *Moulin Rouge! The Musical* and *Hamilton* all at once.

Regional Victoria attracted plenty of visitors thanks to events like Bendigo Art Gallery's *Elvis: Direct from Graceland* exhibition, Rip Curl Pro Bells Beach, Foo Fighters in Geelong for ALWAYS LIVE, the Ballarat International Foto Biennale, and White Night Shepparton.

Not to be left behind, Melbourne CBD renewed itself as a hot spot thanks to new initiatives like Art After Dark, which ran over two nights in May, and the RISING festival, which was held in Jun.

Visitors also arrived in the city for the 30th anniversary of the Melbourne Food & Wine Festival, the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, which expanded into more venues around the state, and the Melbourne Fashion

Festival, which showcased the state's best designers.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Steve Dimopoulos, said, "These results cement our reputation as Australia's sporting, major events and cultural capital, while showcasing Victoria as the ultimate destination for audiences and visitors from across the world".

"We're investing in making Victoria's calendar of major events bigger and better, which is delivering more jobs, boosting businesses and attracting more visitors across the state."

The state has plenty of events in the pipeline to see out the remainder of 2022, including the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, Victoria's largest celebration of live music ALWAYS LIVE, the annual rugby union comp, Bledisloe Cup, and the Australian Open golf.

## Outrigger MICE

**OUTRIGGER** Resorts and Hotels has launched a new MICE initiative, 'Meetings Promise', which offers authentic, custom itineraries at its properties across Hawaii, Fiji, Mauritius, Thailand and the Maldives.

The packages include a complimentary pre-planning night, a welcome ceremony, hands-on Environmental, Social and Governance activities, room upgrades for planners and VIPs, and 24-hour on-site support - for more info, [CLICK HERE](#).

## ASM Global top 5

**FOUR** ASM Global Venues have ranked in Pollstar's Top 5 Arenas in the 2022 Australia/New Zealand Focus Chart rankings for total ticket revenue, with Qudos Bank Arena in Sydney taking top position, followed by Newcastle Entertainment Centre coming in third.

## Te Pae recruits

**AUSTRALASIA'S** newest convention centre, Te Pae Christchurch, is on the lookout for new talent after "unprecedented" events demand prompted it to create a host of new permanent, fixed term and casual positions.

Since the Centre opened for business in May, it has hosted more than 60 events for close to 40,000 people, with another 120 events planned before the end of the financial year.

Roles up for grabs include coordinator and supervisory positions in culinary services and event operations, plus specialised audio-visual roles.

Prospective candidates are encouraged to check out the job opportunities listed on the Centre's website, with more to be posted up in the coming weeks - [CLICK HERE](#).

## Adelaide Oval recognised as SA's best

**ADELAIDE** Oval's Functions & Events division was recognised as South Australia's premier events destination on Monday night at the 2022 Restaurant & Catering Awards of Excellence, which was held in Adelaide Oval's William Magarey Room.

The team (**pictured**) took home Caterer of the Year and best Function/Convention Centre Caterer awards, which celebrates exceptional event delivery in a purpose-built



functions facility.

"Adelaide Oval is committed to creating unforgettable event experiences for every guest that walks through our doors," General Manager Food & Beverage, Matt Omond said.

## Opera on Cockatoo

**OPERA** Australia is gearing up to host a brand new, Sydney-exclusive open-air event, Opera on Cockatoo Island, this Nov, complete with customised dining offerings and pop-up bars.

The new production of Bizet's *Carmen* will feature spectacular motorbike stunts and nightly fireworks, with tickets priced from \$79.

## Music in Arnhem

**THE** East Arnhem Live music festival is set to debut in Arnhem Land, NT, from 30 Sep - 02 Oct, featuring First Nations artists and DJs.

The NT Government-funded event is geared to "music lovers looking for fun, adventure & something a little different".

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## 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.

**Ritika Diwan** has been appointed as Director of **CBRE Hotel's** Sydney-based Capital Markets team. Diwan brings more than 15 years of experience in the hotel sector to the role, including the past nine years working at SAMHI Hotels, and prior to that, worked at McKinsey & Company's in its business research division.

**Centara Hotels and Resorts** has announced **Metta Boonyaritipong** as opening General Manager for Centra by Centara Hotel Bangkok Phra Nakhon, which will open in Oct. Boonyaritipong transfers from Centara Sonrisa Residences & Suites Sriracha, which she successfully navigated through the pandemic as General Manager since Jul 2020.

**Lee Quittner** has joined **Crystal Cruises** as its new Director of Consumer Sales. Quittner, who will be based out of Miami, previously worked at Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings as Senior Director, Agency Sales and Service, for two years. He was also Director, Direct Sales International at Regent Seven Seas Cruises for the Europe, Middle East and Africa, Asia Pacific and Latin American markets.

Royal Caribbean veteran **Michael Fettes** has been welcomed aboard **MSC Cruises** as General Manager of the new MSC Miami Cruise Terminal. Fettes clocked up 18 years of experience at Royal Caribbean, most recently as Senior Manager, Terminal Operations at PortMiami.

## Now on the socials

**YOUTH** travel tech company, Global Work & Travel has launched its own custom-built social media platform in order to help its customers connect with other solo travellers on their overseas trips.

The company's CEO and founder Jurgen Himmelmann believes gWorld Social will help remove the "biggest barrier" for young people to travel abroad, which "is that they don't know anyone, and it's scary to go solo and leave your comfort zone back home".

The app took 18 months to develop, and after being trialled in Canada, is now available to Global's customers on every continent apart from Africa.

## SugarCRM ResPax

**SUGARCRM** and ResPax have teamed up to create the first fully integrated CRM and tour booking platform for the travel and tourism industry, in order to help operators fuel growth and rebound following the pandemic.

SugarCRM's AI-driven CRM platform and ResPax's tour reservation system combines to provide a holistic view of customers, concise data integration and collaboration, and enhanced customer insight.

The offering aims to help operators boost scale operations, attract visitor numbers, enhance customer experience and loyalty, encourage job creation, and drive revenues.

## South Korea welcomes Sydney



**KOREA** Tourism Organization (KTO) Sydney is preparing to launch the 'Korea Welcomes You Media Art Cube' experience in Sydney's Darling Square next month from 07-11 Sep.

The event celebrates the return of international travel to Korea, which now allows overseas visitors to enter with no mandatory quarantine or vaccinations required.

Guests can step inside of an immersive 6m<sup>3</sup> video projection cube showcasing scenes of Korea, including its landscape, history and culture, including the coast of Jeju Island and the historic Gwanghwamun Palace.

There will also be photo opportunities with KTO's mascots and Kingdom Friends characters, and the chance to win a return flight ticket to Korea upon completing the event survey.

KTO Sydney representatives will also be present at the event to answer questions and give advice to prospective travellers.

Director of the KTO Sydney, Insook Lee, believes the experience will allow visitors to "take their first step back into travel, inspiring them to make their next trip to Korea".

Attendees who register for the event in advance **HERE** can also collect a free gift on arrival.

## Mt Hotham boost

**MOUNT** Hotham is set to gain a new Snow Play and Activity Hub thanks to a \$4.5 million investment from the Victorian Government's Regional Tourism Investment Fund.

The Hub will feature a day centre and amphitheatre that will serve as an event space and meeting spot for visitors, as well as food and beverage options, new retail spaces and amenities, and a family friendly space where kids can toboggan and build snowmen.

The new space, which will be delivered in two stages, is slated to open in 2024.

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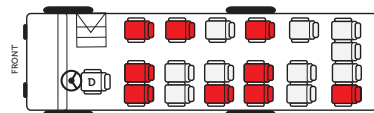
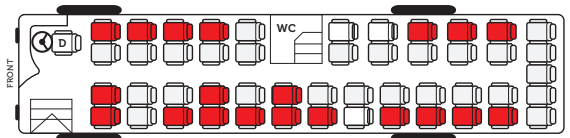
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