



MTA Advisor Jessica Hellak

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Border questions remain

WHILE the announcement that Australia's borders will reopen to all international tourists from 21 Feb (**TD** breaking news) was met with widespread elation from the country's travel and tourism sectors, key stakeholders have raised concerns about the need for more details to be presented.

Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) MD Brett Jardine told **Travel Daily** that while the decision was a welcome boost to consumer travel confidence, more understanding and details around quarantining

Purchase attraction

SHORT-TERM rental accommodation Alloggio Group has acquired a leading Magnetic Island property management business for \$2.95 million.

The purchase of Best of Magnetic is the first for Alloggio in North Qld and adds 160 properties and a car rental businesses to its portfolio, with the company expecting a big surge in demand with Australian borders to open later this month.

Best of Magnetic generated around \$6.5 million in gross booking value and \$1.5 million in gross revenue for the 12 months ended 31 Dec 2021.

Alloggio's cloud-based platform currently manages 1,800 holiday properties on Australia's east coast, which provides end-to-end solutions for travellers and holiday property owners.

needed to be understood.

"International leisure travel will not work if quarantining is still in place, a vaccinated international visitor is the same as a vaccinated Australian - let's get on with it," Jardine said.

Meanwhile AFTA CEO Dean Long described the news as a "major step forward", but also cautioned more details were needed regarding how state and territory leaders plan to implement the green light, as well as policies around vaccine recognition, testing and quarantine.

Long also confirmed that AFTA would continue to push for a \$190m Travel Sector Skills Retention and Recovery Package (**TD** 01 Feb), as travel agents will still need the support until international travel normalises.

Another key stakeholder still waiting for answers is the cruise industry, with Scott Morrison's announcement omitting any details about a cruise restart.

"Opening up to int'l visitors is great news for the inbound tourism industry, but Australia is still the only major cruise market in the world with no govt plan for reviving domestic cruising," CLIA Australasia MD Joel Katz said.

More details in today's **CW**.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has four pages of all the latest news plus full pages from **Celebrity Cruises** and **Tokyo Tourism**.

It's now time to sail

AUSTRALIA and New Zealand sailings on board Celebrity Cruises' *Celebrity Edge* ship in 2023 & 2024 are now on sale.

The cruise line is asking Aussies "isn't it time" to start booking your next amazing voyage today - see **page five** for information.



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Window Seat

HAVE you ever wondered what it would be like to take a holiday as a blue heeler?

Neither have we, but just so you know the opportunity is there nonetheless, with Airbnb offering one lucky Aussie family the chance to live like the iconic kids canine character Bluey for a weekend.

The Heeler family home in Brisbane has been customised to bring the kids cartoon experience to life, featuring quirky details that *Bluey* fans will recognise from the show, as well as an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of the Ludo Studio, where the show is created.

A puppet making craft session is also part of the package, featuring *Bluey's* famous Bob Bilby character.

Stays will only set you back \$20 if you're lucky enough to be selected, with the house able to accommodate two adults and two children on 18-20 Feb.

The promotion is being run to put the spotlight back on Brisbane as a travel destination after a turbulent period caused by the pandemic.



VA taps SIA for loyalty

VIRGIN Australia's Velocity members can once again access Economy seat redemptions with Singapore Airlines for the first time since the carrier has been owned by Bain Capital.

The return of the feature, which went live at midday yesterday, allows VA's loyalty members to use points to book select Economy seats on Singapore Airlines flights to more than 30 countries, with the cost of Economy class trips leading in at 10,000 points (Jakarta), while a Sydney to Singapore seat will set members back 35,000 points.

"We know how much our members value the incredible service and expansive network of destinations across Asia and Europe that Singapore Airlines offers, and we are really thrilled to have their seats back in the program," Velocity Frequent Flyer CEO Nick Rohrlach said.

VA also revealed it would be opening up further redemption

access to Singapore Airlines' premium cabins, along with the ability to transfer points between KrisFlyer and Velocity "shortly".

The news follows a VA announcement that Velocity Frequent Flyer will partner with United Airlines from Apr 2022, tripling the number of direct US cities travellers can reach from Australian ports, while offering members more earning potential.

VA has also ramped up its loyalty flexibility via several airlines since Nov 2021, including Air Canada, DL, EY and HA.

NCL Viva learning

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line is inviting trade partners to discover *Norwegian Viva*, with the latest installation of its News & Network Series webinar to be held 17 Feb.

Kicking off at 11am (AEDT), the session will be hosted by BDM Craig McLaurin - [CLICK HERE](#).

New Disney webinar

DISNEY Destinations International will hold session three of its MoustercClass webinar series on 17 Feb at 12pm (AEDT), detailing the latest news about Disneyland Resort & Walt Disney World Resort - register [HERE](#).

Get up and CT.GO

FLIGHT Centre's Corporate Traveller brand has launched a new all-encompassing business travel platform to the market.

The upgraded CT.GO solution allows travellers and bookers to manage all aspects of travel, from passport details, rewards and frequent flyer programs, to travel alerts and travel expense reports.

Businesses with decentralised travel programs in particular will benefit from the new offering, with the fast self-registration process helping to expedite the onboarding process, however hands-on training options are also provided to customers.

Bookmundi pledge

TRAVEL booking platform Bookmundi has announced a new initiative to offset the carbon footprint generated by all of the 15,000 tours across 135 countries booked through its website.

The company claims the move to be a world-first for online package tour platforms, with Bookmundi developing a system for travellers to calculate the total carbon emissions made per trip.

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VA Broome Airport deal

BROOME International Airport and Virgin Australia have signed a 10-year agreement, underpinning BME's continuing role as the gateway to the Kimberley.

The new air services deal replaces the previous five-year accord between the two companies, with VA and BME to work closely in adding to the airline's three daily return services between BME and PER.

Last year VA grew its market share on the route from 34% to more than 40%, with the airline's Chief Strategy & Transformation Officer, Alistair Hartley, describing the renewed agreement as reflective of the airline's investment in Western Australia, and the state's importance to the carrier's network.

"Broome International Airport is the gateway to one of Australia's most popular tourism destinations, and despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, its importance as a destination continues to increase," he said.

"Virgin Australia is committed to Broome and to Western Australia and is proud to do our part in connecting passengers with the North West and supporting the local community and local economy," Hartley added.

BME Chief Executive Officer Paul McSweeney added the agreement provides the airport with the certainty required to continue to invest in efficient passenger services & amenities.

"These expenditures will add to the passenger experience and further enhance BME's role as the region's most important tourism entry point," McSweeney said.

"Agreements like the Virgin Australia ASA ensure the future of a critical service to the North West economy and community," he added.

Ponant Arctic 2023

SALES have launched for the 2023 Arctic season aboard Ponant's *Le Commandant Charcot*, with 10 scheduled departures on offer, including five new or revisited itineraries.

Equipped with state-of-the-art green technology, *Le Commandant Charcot* is the only cruise ship in the world able to reach such regions in May, which is early spring in the Arctic.

Many unique experiences await guests, such as meeting with the local Inuit communities, dog sled excursions, sea kayaking, hiking, ice fishing, polar diving, citizen science projects and more.

Fly it again Sam

EMIRATES will make a full return of passenger services to and from Casablanca from tomorrow, offering daily flights using Boeing 777-300ER aircraft.

The return of services to the Moroccan city marks a full restoration of Emirates' pre-pandemic African network.

AFTA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



IT'S a very welcome step towards open skies and seas and we're thrilled to join the chorus of voices applauding the loosening of Australia's international travel ban.

From 21 Feb, all double-vaxxed travellers will be welcomed back.

The details though, including from state and territory governments on their position regarding caps, quarantine and testing, is still to be made public.

We are optimistic but cautious, even if everything aligns, the need for support right now remains to see us through the return to normal and recovery.

That's why we won't be pulling

back on our lobbying efforts for a \$190 million Travel Sector Skills Retention and Recovery Package including the immediate distribution of the estimated \$66 million already allocated but yet to be distributed to the Australian Travel Sector.

The Prime Minister's acknowledgement that the risk presented by double vaccinated non-Australians is no more than that of double vaccinated Australians is important.

There is no longer the need for the current ban on international cruise ships to be extended beyond the current expiration of 17 Feb. We continue to meet with and brief the Minister for Tourism Dan Tehan and the offices of the Treasurer and PM, as well as supporting the many federal and state MP visits by our members.

Noosa widens reach

TOURISM Noosa's marketing and public relations activity is going national, as visitors are tempted back to the southern Queensland resort area.

Targeting interstate visitors, Tourism Noosa has partnered with Flight Centre for the "Make your mid-week magic" campaign, which kicked off mid last month.

The drive re-engages Noosa's interstate markets, predominately targeting Sydney and Melbourne, to drive traffic mid-week and to encourage longer stays.

Win with JNTO now

JAPAN National Tourism Organization's (JNTO) online learning and training platform is rewarding travel advisors who participate by offering more than \$6,500 in prizes.

JNTO has partnered with subscription snack box Sakuraco, with advisors who sign up and complete any level of the training program to enter the running for multiple annual subscriptions to the service, or one of 60 individual boxes.

Register or learn more **HERE**.



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Travel Daily



CBR warns of delays

CANBERRA Airport has warned of more delays caused by anti-vaccination mandate protesters in the "coming days".

The group, known as 'Convoy to Canberra', has been demonstrating in the city since last week, and has caused congestion all over the ACT.

Convoy to Canberra intended to cause disruption for federal members flying into CBR ahead of parliament's sitting week.

A police presence on the main arteries leading into Canberra's aviation hub diverted protesters away on Sun afternoon.

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.710

THE Australian dollar has lifted across most markets overnight as American shares were steady, and commodities rose.

Crude oil was also steady after moving above the US\$90 per barrel mark last week for the first time since 2014.

The AUDUSD gained 0.6%, while the AUDEUR climbed 0.7%, after the European Central Bank declined to tighten its monetary policy this week.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.710
UK	£0.525
NZ	\$1.066
Euro	€0.621
Japan	¥81.87
Thailand	฿23.29
China	¥4.477
South Africa	10.96
Canada	\$0.896
Crude oil	US\$93.27

A bucketload of travel options



ANZCRO has released 10 Aussie Bucket List Adventures, a number of ready-to-book holiday packages making it easier for travel advisors to book great adventures to iconic landmarks for their clients.

The collection includes the four-day Ningaloo Reef (pictured) Adventure, featuring a three-night stay at Sal Salis Ningaloo Reef, all-inclusive meals and beverages, as well as a deluxe humpback whale swim, priced from \$4,199 per person.

ANZCRO said more destinations are being added regularly, and packages are fully customisable and commissionable.

"We have created a collection of holiday packages that make it easy for Aussies to experience those iconic landmarks you just have to see at least once in your lifetime," explained Managing Director Nick Guthrey.

"Think of a safari through the Kimberley, a sailing trip around the Whitsundays, a stay at Rawsley Park Station, one of the oldest sheep stations in the Flinders Ranges, and of course a sunset over Uluru.

"If there is an iconic Australian landmark you've always wanted

to get out and see, chances are, you'll find it in a ready-to-book holiday package in our Iconic Aussie Bucket List Adventures collection."

ANZCRO Australian Product Coordinator Tara Buckler said many experiences are filling up for this year, with bookings already spilling into next year.

"There's still a window before international travellers return, so it really is a case of book now or miss out," she said.

Nature made easier

TRAVELLERS in New South Wales are being encouraged to use Park'nPay on their next nature-based escape.

Motorists exploring the state's natural wonders can now pay their vehicle entry fee to national parks via Park'nPay, as the application continues to roll out across a range of nature destinations over the coming months.

"The technology is a game-changer and gives drivers the power to easily pay and top-up for parking from their phones in a few simple clicks," NSW Customer Service & Digital Government Minister Victor Dominello said.

Vietnam eyes norm

VIETNAM is planning to open up fully to tourists by 30 Apr.

The country's government in Nov allowed five localities – Phu Quoc, Quang Nam, Da Nang, Khanh Hoa, and Quang Ninh – to join a pilot program to welcome foreign tourists, with Ho Chi Minh City and Binh Dinh the latest two cities to join the program.

When Vietnam fully reopens its borders on 30 Apr as planned, all arrivals will have to present a COVID-19 vaccination certificate, issued at least 14 days before entry, or show proof of recovery from COVID within six months prior to entry.

Travellers must also present a negative PCR test certificate issued no more than 72 hours prior to entry, and ensure their travel insurance provides at least US\$50,000 of COVID-19 coverage.

Test & Go success

MORE than 60,000 travellers signed up for a Thailand Pass in the first four days of the country's relaunched Test & Go program.

The tourism scheme was suspended in late Dec in a bid to curb Omicron's spread, and was adjusted and reopened at the start of this month following a drop in cases.

Under the new Test & Go scheme, travellers are required to book and pay for PCR tests on their first and fifth days in Thailand.

Previously, travellers arriving under Test & Go were only required to pay for one PCR test.

Foreign travellers are also required to take out insurance with a coverage of no less than US\$50,000.

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