

## Hilton preps growth

**HILTON** has appointed a new local leader to help the hotelier take full advantage of the predicted surge in visitation.

Newly arrived Area Vice President & Head of Australasia Paul Hutton returns to Hilton to drive recovery, growth, innovation and the company's sustainability agenda.

Hutton previously led the region from 2015-2017 before relocating to Singapore to take on the role of Head of Southeast Asia, which he held for four years.

He brings broad regional, brand and hotel operations experience, and is responsible for the overall stewardship of Hilton's business in the region as well as a key member of the company's Asia Pacific senior leadership team.

More appointments on **P5**.

## Entire Travel makes it easy

**EXCLUSIVE**

**ENTIRE** Travel Group has unveiled a new booking platform that allows travel agents to customise, quote and book its full range of independent holiday packages more seamlessly.

Advantages of the new platform include 24/7 real-time pricing, no time-consuming logins, and the ability to tailor hundreds of independent packages across 28 separate destinations.

Agents are now able to choose a package and room type, add essential details and select from a range of "Freedom of Choice" options, which are all included in the price, with the exclusive packages departing daily, rather than group tours with set departures.

The booking platform project was overseen by Entire Travel Group Managing Director Brad McDonnell, who drew on his time spent with IT consulting firm Accenture when working out the best design and functionality.

"Our new booking platform is an exciting industry first, quotes are created with ease and agents can book with confidence, due to our industry-leading peace of mind booking plan," he said.

"Our success will be measured by the ability for agents to make more commission in less time to assist in their recovery."

Quotes from the platform are issued in easy-to-use PDF formats and include gross pricing and itinerary details, with agents to also receive a "Book Now" link that automatically loads the quote for booking on the website.

## Crystal on the brink?

**REPORTS** are swirling that the embattled Crystal Cruises brand is preparing to shut down its United States office by the end of the week, according to a report from sailor-run website *Crew Center*, with staff receiving termination letters earlier this week.

All employees will wind up their roles by Fri, according to audio leaked from *Crystal Serenity*.

More in today's *Cruise Weekly*.

## Master Japan today

**JAPAN** National Tourism Organization is inviting travel advisors to learn more about the country, and win a year of Japanese sweets in the process.

The swag of tasty treats on offer are thanks to Sakuraco, with more details on **page six**.

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## Oceania offers more

**OCEANIA** Cruises is offering up to \$150 gift cards for new-to-brand bookings, in addition to reduced deposits and a range of amazing upgrade opportunities on 2023 sailings - see **page seven** for more details.

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today has five pages of news including **Business Events News**, plus full pages from **JNTO** and **Oceania Cruises**.



## Malaysia eyes Mar

**MALAYSIA'S** National Recovery Council has this week agreed to fully open the country's borders to travellers by 01 Mar, scrapping the need for quarantine.

The Council qualified the announcement by stipulating that COVID testing before departure and upon arrival will still need to be carried out, with further details about its full reopening plan to be released soon.

## Shangri-La vouchers

**SHANGRI-LA** Sydney is inviting travellers to take advantage of the Dine & Discover NSW vouchers on its latest package deals.

Promotions include an upgrade to a Sydney Harbour Room, free sparkling wine on arrival, and welcome chocolates for the kids.

## BA returns after two years

**CERTAINTY** provided by the Federal Government's decision to open its borders to tourists (**TD 08 Feb**) has already seen one major European carrier plan its comeback to the Aussie market.

British Airways has announced its first passenger flight between Sydney and London since Apr 2020 will take off on 29 Mar and touch down in the Harbour City at 6.10am local time.

"We can't wait to welcome our customers back on board our Sydney to London flights and we will be honoured to play our part in reuniting families and friends with their loved ones after such a long time apart," BA's Head of Sales, APAC Noella Ferns said.

"We know some customers won't have flown for a long time, and we can assure them we have a range of COVID-19 measures in place to provide stress and hassle-free travel," she added.

The carrier has also moved to assure Aussie travellers that should circumstances change, clients will be able to exchange their ticket for a voucher or move the dates without any charges.

**MEANWHILE** Qantas

has confirmed at least six international services will recommence in the coming weeks, including Sydney to Dallas (16 Feb), Brisbane to Singapore (27 Mar), Sydney to Manila (27 Mar), Sydney to LA (01 Apr), Sydney to Jakarta (27 Mar), and Sydney to Denpasar (28 Mar).

"Bookings are strongest out of the US and UK and we've also seen spikes from South Africa, India and Canada, with Mar, Apr and May the most popular months," Domestic and Int'l CEO Andrew David said.

## Chimu heads south

**CHIMU** Adventures has launched an Antarctica luxury range for this year, featuring fine dining in a private camp, indulging in state-of-the-art polar accommodation, and visiting an emperor penguin colony in the South Pole.

"We've always prided ourselves in having Australia's most comprehensive range of Antarctica product, but there have been a few gaps in our range, mainly in the luxury space," Chimu co-founder Chad Carey said.

## AAT goes off track

**AAT Kings** has unveiled its latest off-the-beaten-track experience, the South Australian Outback Adventure.

Launching to the trade yesterday, the eight-day tour, which offers 10 unique experiences for travellers seeking to absorb the beauty of the South Australian countryside, will travel roundtrip from Adelaide, with the first trip scheduled for 24 Sep.

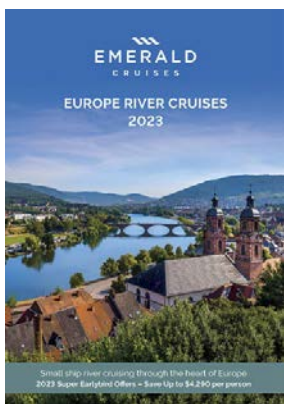
The tour also contributes toward a sustainable future for the Adnyamathanha people, with guests staying at the Indigenous-owned Wilpena Pound Resort after a day of enjoying the expansive views over this natural amphitheatre.

Prices start at \$4,789 adult twin share - for more info, [CLICK HERE](#).



## Europe River Cruising 2023

Full Program  
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New River Cruises  
that link up with  
Mediterranean  
Yacht Cruising

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## Solar eclipse sailing

**CORAL** Expeditions has released its new Solar Eclipse Expedition in partnership with Australian Geographic.

The voyage will witness the Solar eclipse on 20 Apr 2023 from the remote Ashmore Reef, a highlight that is part of the one-of-a-kind itinerary that will operate between Darwin and Broome on a 13-night voyage on *Coral Adventurer*.

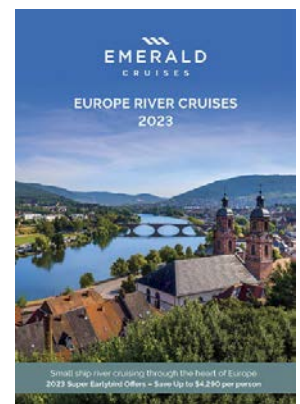
Following the eclipse, guests will continue through the Kimberley to experience the mighty waterfalls & wildlife of the region.

Voyage highlights include sailing through Whirlpool Passage, exploring the Edeline Islands, walking along the white sands of Silica Beach and snorkelling at Rowley Shoals and Scott Reef.



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## Qld makes play for tourists

QUEENSLAND has launched a number of new multi-million-dollar campaigns designed to rebuild the state's battered tourism sector.

Once-in-a-lifetime prizes, outstanding holiday deals and cut-price airfares will all be on offer as Queensland introduces the marketing assault, both here and overseas.

The 'Great Queensland Getaway' campaign will offer great holiday deals through [Queensland.com](http://Queensland.com), a range of holiday packages on sale through retail travel partners, Virgin

Australia sale airfares, and a competition offering incredible money-can't-buy experiences.

Launching around Australia, it follows the debut of Queensland's aspirational 'Days Like This' campaign into NSW and Victoria last weekend - the state's first national tourism campaign in more than 18 months.

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk said supporting Queensland's tourism industry was an important part of the government's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan, as the state also takes its first steps toward re-starting tourism marketing internationally.

The Great Queensland Getaway goes live on Sun, and tourism businesses can get involved by [CLICKING HERE](#).

## From top to bottom

HURTIGRUTEN Expeditions has launched a new range of pole-to-pole voyages in 2023, comprised of three departures ranging from 66 to 94 days in length.

All three cruises are scheduled to depart in Aug next year, with the first voyage aboard *MS Roald Amundsen* leaving Vancouver to explore the Alaskan coast, the Arctic Circle, Central America and the Chilean fjords among a total 11 countries before disembarking in Ushuaia, Argentina.

Prices for the sailing lead in at \$62,985ppts.

Hurtigruten is also offering a 93-day journey aboard *MS Fridtjof Nansen* from Iceland to Antarctica and a 66-day *MS Fram* journey venturing from Canada to Antarctica - call 1300 299 506 for more details.

## The gem is ours!

EMERALD Cruises has taken delivery of its highly anticipated *Emerald Azzurra* superyacht from Ha Long Shipyard in Vietnam, with the vessel now gearing up to make its debut in the Red Sea.

The 100-passenger ship will depart Aqaba in Jordan on 11 Mar before sailing on to undertake a full season of Mediterranean and Adriatic coast cruises between Apr and Nov.

Scenic Group's founder Glen Moroney said demand for spots on Emerald's new yacht debut season was "unprecedented" and is almost sold out.

## Experience added

ADVENTURE tourism company Experience Co has added three new execs to its ranks to help manage its expanding portfolio.

Scenic World Blue Mountains former Chief Experience Officer Amanda Byrne has joined the business as GM of Commercial Operations, while Nicola Billens has taken up the role of Business Development Manager for the Wild Bush Luxury brand.

Billens is the founder of Elixir Journeys, promoting Australia to high-net-worth international guests for luxury inbound tour operator Alquemie.

Meanwhile Lisa Chambers has also been appointed the Head of Sales - Far North Queensland where she will be based in the company's Cairns office.

"These appointments demonstrate our confidence in tourism and with Australia welcoming back int'l travellers, we're in a great position," CEO John O'Sullivan said.



## Window Seat

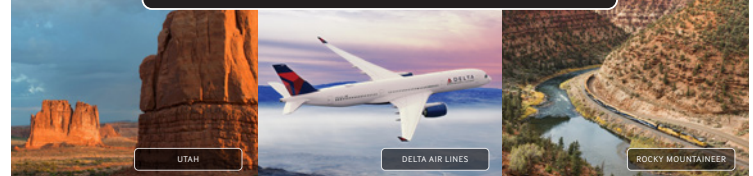
WHILE tourists are often urged to be patient with tour staff, it's also imperative staff remain patient with tourists.

In a recent social media post, Yellowstone National Park aired some of the darndest questions its staff members have been asked, including "how much chlorine does it take to keep the lake clean", and "what time do you let the animals out of their cages".

The post saw other national park workers from around the US chime in with their own bemusement at the strange assortment of queries they've been asked, such as where is the "schedule" for when the bears appear, and "at what elevation do the deer turn into elk?"

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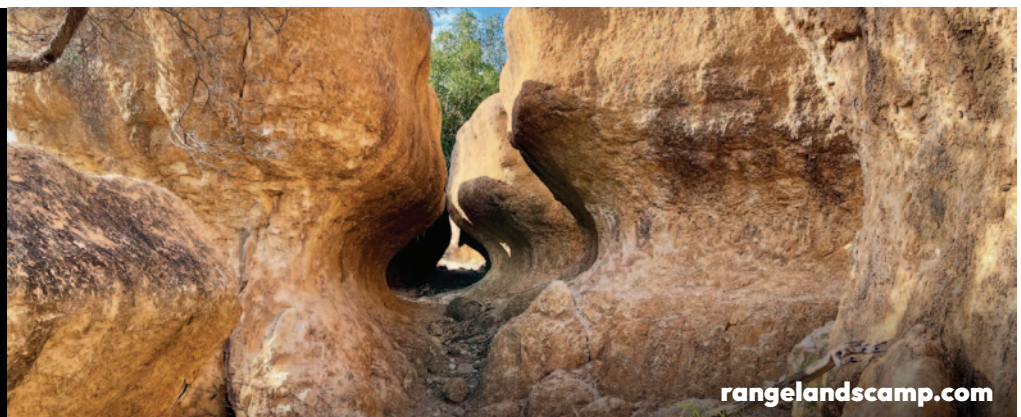
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## ICC SYDNEY FAST-TRACKS TALENT

**IN A** bid to accelerate the recovery of the events sector and prepare for an increase in activity, International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney) has developed an abbreviated recruitment process that will offer job seekers with feedback within a day of their application.

The large-scale Australian venue stated it had now refined its recruitment process for applicants across a multitude of culinary, audio-visual, building presentation and event management service roles, and is designed to run in tandem with its recently unveiled employee benefits scheme (**TD 03 Feb**).

ICC Sydney CEO Geoff Donaghy said its enhanced 2022 recruitment program formed part of the venue's ongoing commitment to prioritising the people that make the venue a success with large events.

"Since the venue's inception, we've fostered a culture of



innovation and improved efficiencies," he said.

"A positive candidate experience is central to our hiring process and aligns with our objective to uphold our employee value proposition to do the extraordinary – together.

"With the steep increase of in person events, we are adding new team members across a spectrum of skills to meet

the needs of our clients and our approach to recruitment, combined with our enhanced employee benefits program, will help us to continue to be more than a venue for the customers and community we serve."

ICC Sydney has over 200 events in its calendar until the end of the financial year and will need to increase its workforce to cater for uptick in activity this year.

## IBTM in Singapore

**THE** inaugural IBTM Asia-Pacific event will be held in Singapore, signalling the resurgence of the region's MICE industry.

Marina Bay Sands will play host on 06 and 07 Sep, with the marquee B2B event to be themed "Make Every Connection Count".

IBTM Asia-Pacific will aim to create the perfect backdrop for international event professionals to come together and reconnect with key suppliers, destinations, venues and high-quality hosted buyers.

The gathering is expected to welcome exhibitors from more than 40 countries, as well as pre-qualified hosted buyers and visitors.

The first edition of Singapore MICE Forum X IBTM APAC will also be hosted - more info **HERE**.

## Delegate Connects to new talent

**DELEGATE** Connect has appointed two key executives to help fuel its global growth.

Effective from this month, Delegate Connect has appointed James Law as Chief People Officer and Chris Davies as Chief Operating Officer.

In the past year, the number of Delegate Connect employees has risen to nearly 100, with about 20% based overseas.

"To ensure we continue with the rapid product development and global expansion, we needed to bring in exceptional talent to fill key roles and we couldn't be more excited to have James and Chris join us," said CEO Jordan Walsh.

## W Syd unveils

**W SYDNEY** has unveiled its exciting new meetings and events spaces, ahead of its opening in the fourth quarter.

Set on the fifth floor, W Sydney's dedicated event floor will raise the bar with design details that capture the vividness of Darling Harbour and downtown Sydney.

## Cooking for a cause

**MELBOURNE** Convention & Exhibition Centre (MCEC) is Cooking for a Cause, proudly supporting the OzHarvest corporate cooking class program.

MCEC will host sessions of Cooking for a Cause in its commercial kitchens three days a week, helping to transform rescued food into hundreds of delicious meals.

## Events industry farewells Tony

**IT IS** with great sadness the Australian business events community is mourning the loss of industry veteran Tony Farrington (**pictured**).

An Exhibition & Event Association of Australia life member, Farrington passed away on Fri, leaving behind his wife Sharyn and daughter Indy.

One of the most well-known members of the industry, he started in the profession in Australia by joining Industrial Public Relations.

Among a glittering career, Farrington was a founding member of the original Sales Promotion Executives Association, a founder of the Association of Conference Executives, a board member of Exhibition Organisers Council of Australia, and founder, board member & former Vice



President of the Exhibition & Events Association of Australasia.

He retired from full time work in the industry in 1996, but maintained his own consultancy, STF Management, & continued to work tirelessly.

Tony's funeral will be held on Mon at 10am at Macquarie Park Cemetery & Crematorium in Sydney.



## Royal pulls HK plug

**ROYAL** Caribbean has been forced to cancel remaining sailings in Hong Kong aboard its *Spectrum of the Seas* vessel through to the end of Mar, with the line citing Hong Kong's extension of COVID restrictions as the reason.

The cruise-to-nowhere voyages affected include departures on Feb 18, 21, 24, 26, 28, as well as Mar 04, 07, 10, 12, 14, and 17.

Royal issued a statement this week suggesting the uncertainty in Hong Kong had impacted its commitment to ensure it could deliver the standards its passenger expected of the brand, adding that guests affected by the cancellations can opt for a full refund of their cruise fare and any pre-cruise purchases.

## US rebound forecast

**THE** US travel & tourism sector is predicted to rebound firmly by the end of 2022, reaching US\$2 trillion in GDP contribution and exceeding pre-pandemic levels by 6.2%, according to new modelling presented by The World Travel & Tourism Council.

Figures suggest that declining COVID case rates, increased vaccine protection among travellers, an easing of restrictions and stronger consumer-led confidence will conspire to create a strong rebound in American travel.

Meanwhile international traveller spend in the US could grow by US\$113 billion by the end of 2022, reaching US\$155 billion, 14% shy of 2019 levels.

## 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.

**Peter Dias** has been appointed as the new Hotel Manager for **Wyndham Hotel Melbourne**. Dias has more than 14 years of experience in the hospitality sector across major event venues and premium hotels. His journey to date has led him through all aspects of hotel operations.

**Craig Bond** has been named Managing Director of **La Vie Hotels & Resorts**. The industry veteran will be based out of the group's head office in Sydney, and will lead the company as it heads into a period of exponential growth, building its reputation as an independent hotel operator of choice in the region.

**Explora Journeys** has announced a new Head of Culinary, **Franck Garanger**. He will bring his extensive skillset to lead the nine gastronomy experiences on board the cruise line's inaugural ship *Explora I*, which is set to launch on her maiden journey in May 2023.

**Dominic Rose** has been appointed the General Manager of **QT Hotels & Resorts' QT Gold Coast**, and **Cian McClafferty** is **QT Canberra's** newly appointed General Manager. First joining **EVENT Hospitality & Entertainment** in 2008, Rose has moved from General Manager of **Rydges South Bank** to his present position, while **McClafferty**, who joined **EVENT** in 2013, has seen him previously lead operations at the flagship **QT Sydney**.



## NSW bridges the divide



**DESTINATION NSW's** Feel New brand proposition has this week reached new heights with the release of musician **Azure Ryder's** music video filmed atop **The Sydney Harbour Bridge**.

The clip forms part of the second phase of **Destination NSW's** latest tourism marketing campaign which proposes it is now time to "Feel New" following the worst of the pandemic, with **Ryder's** *Feel Good* tune aligned to help encourage more visitation to **Australia's** most populous state.

"We are incredibly blessed in **NSW** to have some of the most spectacular filming backdrops in the world and to have one of our brightest talents in **Azure Ryder** pay tribute to her home city and state this way highlights what incredible places **Sydney** and **NSW** are to live and visit," **NSW** Minister for Tourism and Sport **Stuart Ayres** said.

**Ryder's** clip also showcases the **Blue Mountains**, the **Megalong Valley**, and the **Rocks** in **Sydney**. Watch the full video clip **HERE**.

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29 Jun 2023 – NAUTICA



EXCLUSIVE UPGRADE SALE	WAS	WITH FREE UPGRADE
Veranda Stateroom	AU\$6,490	AU\$4,990

### LEGENDS OF IRELAND & SCOTLAND

BELFAST TO LONDON | 10 days  
29 Jun 2023 – RIVIERA



EXCLUSIVE UPGRADE SALE	WAS	WITH FREE UPGRADE
Penthouse Suite	AU\$9,750	AU\$7,980

### PANAMA CANAL PATHWAY

SAN FRANCISCO TO NEW YORK | 20 days  
13 Jul 2023 – INSIGNIA



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Concierge Level Veranda	AU\$11,130	AU\$10,580



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