



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of news plus full pages from **Japan National Tourist Office** and **Norwegian Cruise Line**.

Sweet on Japan?

TRAVEL advisors who complete the Japan National Tourist Office (JNTO) e-learning program before 16 Mar can enter a draw for the opportunity to win a year's supply of Japanese sweets.

Three lucky winners will be chosen for the special treat, and there are also 60 individual Sakrua.co boxes to win - more details on [page six](#).

NCL \$50 gift cards

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has launched an incentive offering a \$50 gift card for travel agents who book clients on all deposited Europe and Hawaii bookings confirmed this month.

A \$25 gift card is also on offer for bookings to all other destinations between 01 Jan and 31 Mar - for more information see the [last page](#) of today's *TD*.

Helloworld targets profit

HELLOWORLD Travel Limited (HLO) is expecting to achieve a "break-even position or slightly better" in the Jun quarter of 2022, with a return to modest profitability next financial year.

The optimistic outlook came alongside this morning's release of HLO's results for the six months to 31 Dec (*TD* breaking news), with a \$19.6 million pre-tax loss coming alongside \$694 million in TTV and a 45% revenue uplift.

CEO Andrew Burnes said retail agencies in the group's various networks remained "steadfastly resilient," having a strong presence for expected growth in travel demand, with the business well placed to handle significant TTV and revenue growth.

An investor presentation noted that the company would benefit from greater economies of scale across its existing overhead base, "with many cost reductions hard-coded into [the] operating environment".

Today's opening of international borders (see [page 2](#)) had already lead to increased inbound bookings to Australia from next

month, while there had also been an "influx of international outbound leisure bookings" for travel from Apr 2022.

"HLO holds significant forward bookings for the latter part of 2022 and throughout 2023," the company noted, with agents across both Australia and NZ reporting higher volume of both enquiries and new bookings.

Helloworld now has 2,168 members across its various networks in Australia and NZ, a reduction of 106 over the previous 12 month period.

The half-year report confirms that the in-house ResWorld retail mid-office system had now been rolled out in about half of the group's branded network in Australia, with a corporate version in beta testing for planned deployment in Jul.

The ReadyRooms platform will also relaunch next month, based on the Athena system developed by the former Excite Holidays team in Greece, with Helloworld also revealing its intentions to relaunch Skiddoo with an updated platform.

Sun Island payments

MEDITERRANEAN travel specialist Sun Island Tours has named TravelPay B2B as an official payment partner, with Sun Island now live on the TravelPay portal.

GM John Polyviou said "as new bookings finally begin to roll in, this partnership is another step towards the next generation of our business, as Sun Island innovates and integrates for the post-COVID travel world".

WA plots Mar open

WESTERN Australia will drop its hard border to both domestic and international tourists on Thu 03 Mar, according to an announcement late on Fri by Premier Mark McGowan.

"The virus is already here and we cannot stop its spread," he admitted, with the state now expecting to reach about 10,000 daily cases by the end of Mar.

The travel and tourism sector has cautiously welcomed the announcement, with many operators badly burnt by McGowan's earlier last-minute backflip on the previously planned 05 Feb reopening.

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Traveldream

Online Travel Specialist

Traveldream offers market leading deals on Aussie hotels, tours and cruises to customers all across Australia.

Despite the challenges presented by Covid Traveldream has managed to grow throughout the pandemic.

About the role

The Online Travel Specialist is responsible for providing one-on-one support via phone, email and Facebook to customers.

Answering pre and post-purchase inquiries from our customers regarding domestic and international travel packages.

Working with various travel suppliers to ensure a smooth customer experience.

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This position is working from home.

Email your resume to Paul.Mercuri@traveldream.com.au to be part of the Traveldream team.



Window Seat

WE ALL know that travel brings people together and makes life so much better, so it's no surprise that the aviation sector is doing its bit for world peace.

As tensions escalate in the Ukraine, a passenger aircraft from neighbouring Moldova has taken to the skies with the aim of lowering the temperature of the trigger-happy nations involved in the conflict.

A 9U Airbus A321 was tracked near the Ukraine border during a two-hour flight over the weekend with a special track at 10,000 feet simply spelling out the word "RELAX" as it travelled to and from Chisinau International Airport.

The initiative was highlighted in a screenshot of the FlightRadar24 website (pictured) by Twitter user @KyleJGlen who was among about 30,000 people tracking the trip online.

It's unclear at this stage whether the unique form of diplomacy has had the desired impact.



Welcome back, world!

AUSTRALIA has welcomed back international tourists from the rest of the world today.

Fifty-six international flights are due to arrive in Australia, including 27 into Sydney, where special events are planned (see page 4).

The first visitors into Sydney today were greeted with gifts of Vegemite, toy koalas & kangaroos, an iconic Surf Life Saving crew, and a DJ playing Australia's favourite tunes.

The return of double vaccinated international visitors will reinvigorate Australia's tourism sector, which supports 660,000 jobs, and contributed \$60.4 billion to the economy in the 2018-19 fiscal year.

Minister for Tourism Dan Tehan said the return of international arrivals was an important step in the country's COVID-19 recovery.

"Australia's health and economic response to the pandemic has been among the best in the world, with one of the highest vaccination rates and low mortality" he said.

"Australians are travelling overseas, and we are welcoming international visitors.

"International tourists will come here to see our iconic attractions, sample our world-leading food and drink, learn about our indigenous culture, and enjoy the Australian way of life."

Since Nov, 92,000 visitors, 80,000 international students, 35,000 skilled visa holders and

5,600 working holidayers have arrived in the country.

Tourism Australia has also launched a \$40 million international marketing campaign to coincide with the reopening of international borders (**TD** 18 Feb) as the first step in a long-term strategy to restart tourism to the country.

Further investment in tourism marketing campaigns internationally will come in the second half of the year.

Visa holders who are not fully vaccinated will still require a valid travel exemption to enter Australia, and will be subject to state and territory quarantine requirements.

Ukraine DFAT alert

THE Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has issued a formal Security Alert for Ukraine and its border regions, with a Smartraveller update advising of an "increasing threat of significant military action".

Australians in Ukraine are being told to leave immediately by commercial or private means if it's safe to do so.

While flight options are currently available this may change at short notice, and cyber attacks are already happening.

"In the event of a military incursion, it is likely that commercial routes out of Ukraine will be severely disrupted and roads across Ukraine could be closed," the advisory notes.



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One role is working normal office hours and is based in our office in Robina on QLD's Gold Coast. The second role is to cover After-Hours and can be work from home and based anywhere in Australia. Ticketing knowledge of all 3 GDS' mentioned is preferred but not essential for the office based role, but is essential for the successful applicant of the After-Hours position.

If you have a minimum of 2 years' experience in a similar role, please send your resume to Kym Ryan
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Travel Daily



EVT outperforms

EVENT Hospitality & Entertainment says its hotel portfolio has outperformed the wider market, with strong average room rate growth, while new operating models within the Thredbo alpine division saw record levels of revenue prior to the resort's forced closure in Aug.

CEO Jane Hastings today unveiled the company's first half results, with a \$33.3 million after tax profit - a massive \$93.6 million improvement on the prior corresponding period.

Hastings highlighted ongoing investment in long-term strategies, such as refurbishments of Rydges Melbourne and QT Gold Coast currently in progress.

"We continue to pursue opportunities for hotel network expansion," she noted, while signs of recovery in the hotel division were seen in Dec prior to Omicron, with hopes of a corporate travel recovery in Apr.

Baillie Lodges breaks new ground

BAILLIE Lodges has conducted a formal sod turning ceremony on the site of its famous Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island, which was razed to the ground in the early 2020 bushfires.

Works on a rebuild of "SOL 2.0" have now begun, with the brand new property set to reopen in the second half of 2023 after an investment of about \$50 million.

The original lodge footprint will be largely maintained, but suites are being reoriented to offer even better views and all categories will feature baths and fireplaces.

The new design will also incorporate significant sustainability features including hybrid solar and battery infrastructure allowing the lodge to operate off grid while reducing diesel fuel consumption by more than 50%, and an expanded reverse osmosis plant to make the local bore water drinkable.

Selling Australia in focus



ABOUT 100 Victorian travel agents learnt all about a wide range of domestic product earlier this month, with the Oz Focus group hosting an event at Journey Beyond's newly launched Melbourne Skydeck attraction.

A host of prizes were also on offer including Pan Pacific Hotels accommodation and Jetstar flights, with participants **pictured** from left: Craig Burgess,

Murray River Paddlesteamers; Teresa Bricknell, Pan Pacific Hotel Group; Chris Baxter, Europcar; Amanda Fenwick, BKB Holidays; Jackie Costello, THL; Ines Inestia, Journey Beyond; Matthew Fleming, The Kimberley Collection; Melinda Easton Kuhl, Jetstar; Fraser Tong, Driveaway and Polly Gibson, Searoad Ferries. Vic/Tas agents can join the Ozfocus group by **CLICKING HERE**.



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Tourism is a real life saver



AUSTRALIA is back on the tourist map, as international visitors returned to the country today (see [page 2](#)).

Fifty-six international flights are due to arrive in Australia today, including 27 into Sydney, where the city's first visitors were greeted with gifts of Vegemite, Tim Tams, toy koalas & kangaroos, an iconic Surf Life Saving crew (**pictured**), and local DJ Sasha Moon playing Australia's favourite tunes (**inset**).

Qantas flights from eight overseas destinations are touching down in Australia today, with the Group to fly more than 14,000 passengers into the country this week.

QF12 from Los Angeles was the first international flight to land today, touching down at 6.20am in Sydney.

Qantas Group Chief Executive Officer Alan Joyce said bookings had been strong since the



Australian Government announced the country was opening to international visitors, and today's arrivals will be the first of many.

"It's fair to say we've all been waiting a long time to welcome visitors back to Australia... the thousands of international tourists arriving this week and many more over the coming months will help kickstart the tourism industry which has done it tough for the past couple of years," Joyce said.

"We can clearly see from the Australian Government's announcement that people are very keen to come back to Australia, and we continue to see strong bookings out of the US and UK, as well as South Africa and Canada," he added.

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Providing a Link

LINK Airways has added a number of direct flights from its base of Brisbane to a range of rural cities.

From 27 Feb, a number of new services will launch from Brisbane to Armidale, Coffs Harbour, Inverell, Narrabri, Shellharbour, and Tamworth.

Also taking off are flights from Sydney to Inverell and Narrabri, and services from Melbourne to Shellharbour south of Sydney.

NIB Travel losses

THE travel insurance division of NIB this morning reported a \$7.9 million underlying loss for the six months to 31 Dec, with CEO Mark Fitzgibbon saying the result was expected "with the business still heavily impacted by border closures and travel restrictions".

However the company has now implemented new underwriting agreements and "great products which include some cover for COVID-19 related events," meaning it is well positioned for the gradual return of travel, Fitzgibbon said.

Gross Written Premiums during Dec 2021 reached just over a third of pre-pandemic levels.

BA New York boost

BRITISH Airways has added a third daily flight between London and Newark Airport in New Jersey, with the new "daylight" service set to debut on 06 Jun departing LHR at 7.10pm and arrive in the US at 10pm.

Adams to Pullman

PULLMAN Bunker Bay Resort in Margaret River, WA, has appointed Mason Adams as its new Director of Operations.

Adams was formerly MD of Asia Escape Holidays which he founded in 1998, with a 60% stake acquired by Helloworld in 2018 (**TD** 10 May 2018).

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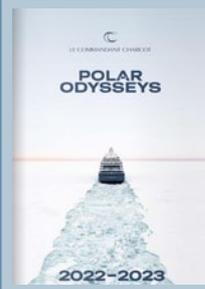
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BROCHURES

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.



Ponant - Polar Odysseys

Ponant Yacht Cruises & Expeditions has released this new "magalogue" showcasing the upcoming itineraries of its new *Le Commandant Charcot*. The comprehensive 180-page program is available in digital form, complete with QR codes allowing clients to access a host of interactive and audio-visual content online. Travel agents can also order stock of the program in print form by emailing documentation@au.ponant.com.



Shoalhaven Tourism - Art & Culture Guide

This new 32-page brochure showcases the museums, art galleries, heritage and cultural offerings of the Shoalhaven region south of Sydney in NSW. There are seven cultural trails available, with the initiative coinciding with the reopening of Arthur Boyd's Bundanon, Australia's only regional art museum which has undergone a comprehensive \$30 million redevelopment. Associated itineraries are also available at shoalhaven.com.

Rex wins contract

REGIONAL Express subsidiary Pel-Air has been awarded a 12 year contract with Ambulance Victoria, with the fixed-wing deal worth over \$300 million.

The contract involves the supply of four aircraft, pilots and engineering support to enable the aerial transport of Ambulance Victoria medical personnel and patients across the state as well as into Tasmania, South Australia and southern NSW.

Pel-Air has held the contract since 2009, with the renewal seeing four new Beechcraft King Air planes delivered later this year before undergoing aeromedical modifications to meet Ambulance Victoria requirements.

Fiji scores a big try

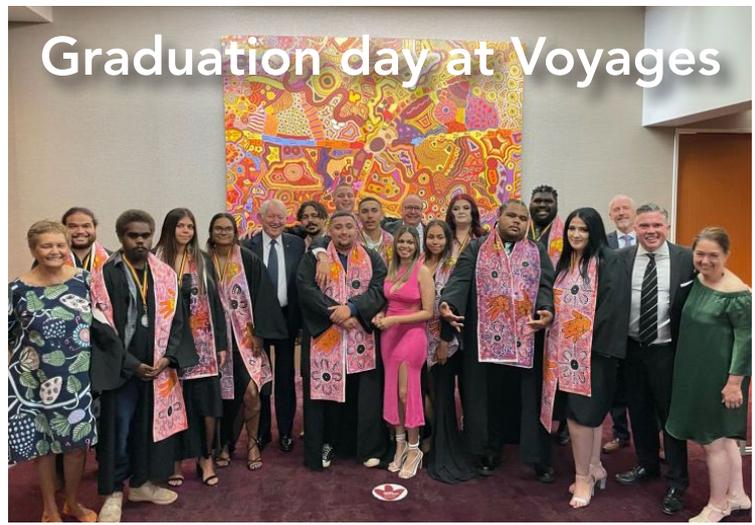
TOURISM Fiji has announced its support for Fijian Drua, the newest team in the Super Rugby Pacific competition which kicked off last Fri with a match against the NSW Waratahs.

Brent Hill, Tourism Fiji CEO, said the participation of Fiji in the competition was a huge moment for the country's proud rugby history.

"Working in partnership with the Fijian Drua allows us to put Fiji firmly in the minds of rugby fans across Australia and New Zealand - our key source markets," Hill said.

The games will also be televised globally, giving exposure to Fiji across the world.

Graduation day at Voyages



THERE were smiles all round at Uluru last weekend as the achievements of the latest crop of graduates from the Voyages National Indigenous Training Academy were showcased.

Voyages CEO Matt Cameron-Smith (pictured second from right) said the participants had "achieved amazing results in a tough year and we are incredibly proud of you all".

The unique training, working and residential program aims to change the lives of Indigenous Australians by "providing market leading training and employment

programs and empowering a growing Indigenous workforce".

The scheme, which has so far seen hundreds of young Indigenous Aussies successfully complete a qualification in hospitality, tourism, retail and horticulture operates at both Ayers Rock Resort and Rossman Gorge, with a range of roles available across hospitality and guest services.

Jetblue adds its third Mexico route

NEW York-based JetBlue has launched flights between JFK and Puerto Vallarta on Mexico's Pacific Coast.

It's the only carrier to serve the route, with the service "enabled" by JetBlue's Northeast Alliance with American Airlines.

The service will operate with a mix of A320 and A321 aircraft, initially four times per week, while offshoot JetBlue Vacations will also offer holiday packages in the new destination.

Lines join CDC plan

ALL major cruise lines operating in the USA have now signed on to the new voluntary COVID-19 compliance and management program announced by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

The scheme includes a public CDC dashboard indicating the status of vessels which opt in, detailing the vaccination status of cruise and passengers.

Norwegian Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean Group had previously indicated their participation, with Carnival Corporation brands including Holland America, Seabourn, Princess and Carnival Cruise Line all joined in on Fri.

The CDC has also downgraded its health advisory to only advise against cruise travel for those not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or at risk of severe illness.

Indigo for Nagano

IHG Hotels & Resorts has announced the opening of Hotel Indigo Karuizawa, the "first globally branded lifestyle boutique hotel" in Japan's Nagano region.

The 155-room property is 2.6km from Karuizawa railway station with an in-house spa, eateries and meeting facilities.

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