



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has four pages of the latest news plus a full page from Emirates and an update from Far East Hospitality.

Viking voyage rejig

VIKING Cruises has revised the itinerary of its 2022 World Cruise on the eve of departure, with *Viking Star* to operate on an eastbound itinerary from LA, rather than westward towards Australasia as originally planned.

CEO Torstein Hagen urged pax to stick with the "180° change of course", which were forced by the swift closure of Indian ports.

The revised 120-day trip will visit Mexico, Central and South America, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Middle East.



TRAVELPORT

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FCTG independent platform

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) yesterday announced the launch of an "exciting new digital ecosystem" designed to support independent advisors as they run their own businesses.

Dubbed Home, the single sign-on platform offers supplier data, ticketing, support, marketing and an upgraded product booking platform, according to FCTG Independent GM Australia, Astrid Richardson.

"Our team have worked tirelessly over the last 18 months to deliver a solution that will not only serve our growing network of 300 independent agencies and mobile consultants across Australia, but all of the travel entrepreneurs that join our community in the future.

"We admire and applaud the devotion and ambition of

independent travel agents, and want to help them thrive with the backing of Australia's largest travel agency group," she said.

Richardson said the launch of the system meant travel advisors would no longer need to waste hours searching for supplier deals, navigating complex systems, comparing prices or worrying about new regulations and requirements.

"Through Home, we're delivering the tools and support they need to focus on growing their business and doing what they do best: designing and managing travel experiences for their clients," she added.

The platform is now being rolled out across the Travel Partners, Travel Associates at Home and Flight Centre Independent brands.

SafePoint upgrade

SABRE Corporation has expanded its SafePoint travel risk management product to include global restriction tracking, monitoring world events in near-real time for updates that may impact travel arrangements.

Carnival cancels

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has been forced to once again extend its pause in Australian operations, this morning advising the cancellation of *Carnival Splendor* sailings through to and including 26 Apr, and voyages on *Carnival Spirit* through to 28 Apr.

The "book by deadline" for clients who have a Future Cruise Credit valid through until 31 Mar has now been extended to a new book by date of 31 May this year.

The company said that while it continued to make progress on plans to return to service "there is still no certainty when cruise departures from Australian ports can resume" - more of the latest cruise news in today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

QR global campaign

QATAR Airways has launched a global sale in celebration of its 25th anniversary.

Return fares start from \$1,269, with additional special savings also available on seat selection, an extra baggage allowance, hotel bookings and a car rental.

The seven-day campaign period starts today and runs through to Tue, valid on all Qatar flights for travel until the end of Oct.

QR will also reward passengers joining its Privilege Club with 2,500 bonus Qmiles instantly.

Eclipse II contract

SCENIC Luxury Cruises & Tours has appointed the contractor to fit out its new *Scenic Eclipse II* which is currently under construction under the company's MMK Yacht Division in Rijeka, Croatia.

De Wave Group will oversee the finalisation of the ship's 114 guest suites, wet rooms, corridors, dining venues and crew areas.

According to an announcement from De Vere, its contract is scheduled for completion in 2023.

Welcome back EK

EMIRATES is welcoming Australia back on board.

Travellers can once again fly on an Emirates Airbus A380 to more than 50 destinations from Dubai, including London, Cairo, Istanbul, Frankfurt, Milan, and Paris.

Flights to Dubai depart daily from Sydney and Melbourne - see **page five** for more information.

Discovery Parks to Alice Springs

DISCOVERY Parks is welcoming the Red Centre to the family with its newest location in the NT.

Formerly MacDonnell Ranges Holiday Park, Discovery Parks - Alice Springs is central to many of the NT's most iconic attractions, and is just five minutes to the centre of town.

Travellers can choose from luxurious, self-contained deluxe cabins to budget-friendly rooms, safari tents, and more.

WA app for travel

AUTHORITIES in Western Australia are preparing systems to help the state open up for interstate travel, with the launch today of a new ServiceWA app.

The free app allows people to show proof of vaccination, check in and access the state's G2G Pass for interstate travel, all in one place.

Users must set up or use a Digital Identity to prove who they are online, meaning the app is secure and is a sufficient form of identification to enter certain venues and events.

Jetstar to Phuket

JETSTAR'S first flights to Thailand since the onset of the pandemic take off this week, with a Sydney-Phuket departure today and Melbourne-Phuket tomorrow.

The 787-8 services are an important milestone in the recovery of low-cost international leisure travel, according to Jetstar CEO Gareth Evans.

How has the pandemic impacted the way the travel sector operates, and what will remain in the emerging post-covid world? We investigate taking travel back to the future in the latest *travelBulletin*.

CLICK to read

travelBulletin

Thai Airways ups comm

EXCLUSIVE

AFTER eliminating travel agent base commission in the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic (**TD** 03 Jul 2020), Thai Airways International has now backflipped and will once again remunerate agencies for selling its fares to their customers.

The carrier, which is continuing to work through a "business rehabilitation" plan after filing for bankruptcy protection in May 2020, yesterday advised some of its industry partners of the welcome return of commission.

"We are pleased to advise effective for all tickets issued on/after 14 Jan until further notice, Thai Airways International will revise BSP standard base commission from zero percent (0%) to three percent (3%)."

Interestingly the move applies to all TG published fare types, including domestic travel

within Thailand, as well as for international travel.

Thai's commission move bucks the trend of other carriers such as Qantas and Emirates which are persevering with their commission reductions effective from 01 Jul this year.

Thai's restructuring process has seen it undertake significant cost-cutting efforts, including reducing its Australian workforce by almost 50% (**TD** 20 Oct 2021), with the departures including Marketing Manager Sue Marr last month after more than 19 years.

VS to fly to Austin

VIRGIN Atlantic has announced the launch of a new seasonal non-stop route between London Heathrow and Austin in Texas.

Four weekly Boeing 787-9 flights will operate between the cities from 25 May, with Austin to become VS's 11th USA port.

Cruise discrimination

THE Australian cruise sector is being unfairly treated by Australian governments when compared to most land-based industries, CLIA Australasia MD Joel Katz believes.

"It's time governments recognised that cruising has gone above and beyond most other sectors during this pandemic, and ended the different treatment that hurts travel industry professionals so deeply," Katz pleaded this morning.

"No setting is immune from COVID-19 and we are indeed seeing cases being detected on cruise ships...the difference however is that cruise ships are subject to stringent science-based measures that include testing and vaccination requirements before boarding...this isn't true in your local shops, pubs, theatres or most other land-based settings, and it's now clear the incidence of COVID-19 is far lower on cruise ships than it is on land."

Airport closures?

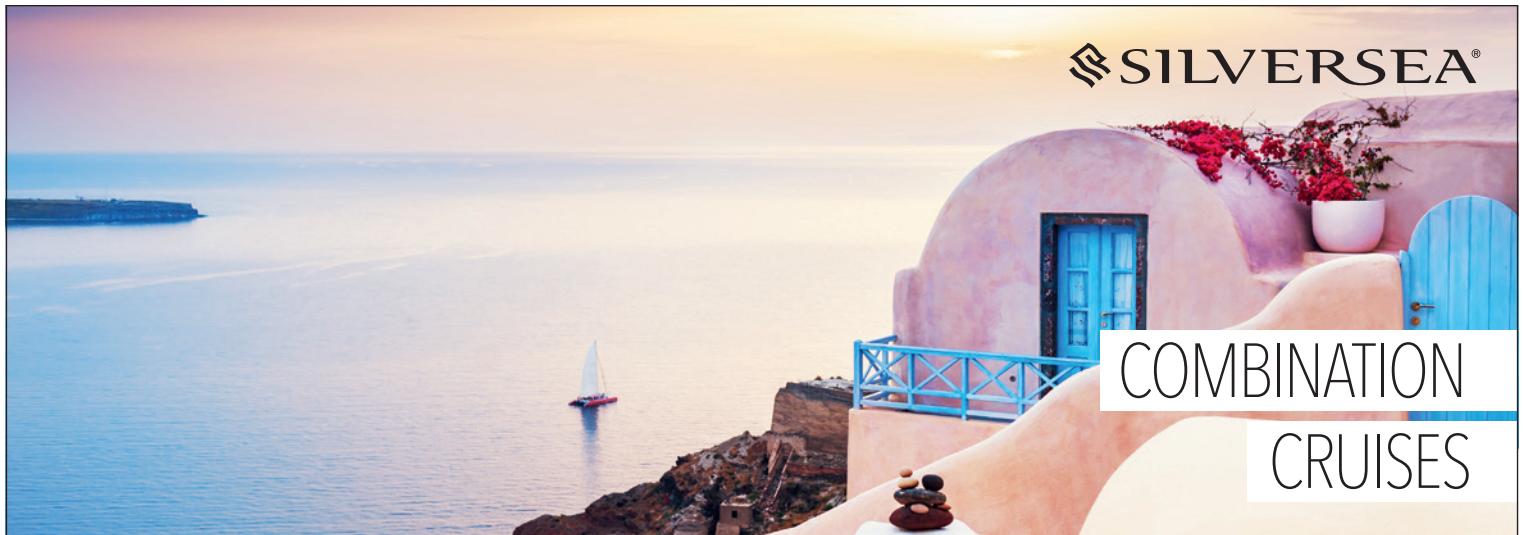
AUSTRALIAN Airports Association Chief Executive Officer James Goodwin has warned that rising staff shortages caused by the Omicron wave could lead to Australian airports closing down or entering only partial operation.

The comments follow Virgin Australia's decision to cut its capacity by 25% yesterday (**TD** 11 Jan), driven partly by many of its staff forced into isolation.

Shipyard looks sunk

A FAILURE to reach a financial arrangement between the German Government and Genting Hong Kong has seen the cruise/resort company's shipbuilder MV Werften file for bankruptcy, according to German reports.

The move casts doubt on the future of Genting's *Global Dream* vessel which is currently under construction at the shipyard - more details in today's **CW**.



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SA pleads its case

THE Tourism Industry Council South Australia (TiCSA) has compiled a list of key areas of support needed for the state's decimated tourism sector, calling for \$81 million a year for the next three years from the SA Govt to make it a reality.

Under the proposed rescue package, funds would be used for business restart opportunities, to drive tourism demand, create new infrastructure, enhance staff training options, and increase partnership and collaborations.

"Recovery is not 'business as usual' and cannot simply occur with the flick of a switch, ongoing support is necessary for the tourism and hospitality industries, which are the lifeblood of our state, to restart and reinvest," TiCSA CEO Shaun de Bruyn said.

"As the country transitions... into economic recovery and eventually, focuses our attention back to growth, our tourism industry needs govt support."

Chris Watson recruits experience



CHRIS Watson Travel has continued on its path of growth and recovery, appointing three new team members this week.

The new recruits include industry veterans Karen Magee, Melissiah Missio, and Mark Haddad, who have jumped aboard the Tamworth-based business as Sales & Operations Manager, Groups Manager and Product & Business Development

Manager respectively.

Managing Director Chris Watson, **pictured** with fellow Director Gemma Watson, said the last few months have demonstrated some positive green shoots for the company.

"We have gone about diversifying and growing our business, it was purely survival mode but over the past few months we have seen growth in sales and enquiries meaning we have taken the steps to plan for the future and expand our team," Watson said.

"We are very excited to welcome these three great new team members to our already dynamic team...we are creating an amazing team."

Magee has previously worked for JTG and most recently Tertiary Travel, while Haddad has experience at China Best Tours and Missio was formerly in the role of Groups Manager at Helloworld.



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Travel Daily

Germany labels Australia "high risk"

GERMANY has added nearly 40 countries to its COVID 'high risk' list, including Australia.

Travellers who have been in a high risk area will need to fill out a Digital Registration of Entry **HERE**, as well as provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test, recovery or a vaccination pass before arriving in Germany.

Window Seat

AUSTRALIANS are very proud of their beaches - which means we may be upset to learn there are no candidates in the top 10 of a recent study identifying the best beach vacation destinations in the world.

The study looked at 100 beaches around the globe and ranked them on factors such as weather, sea temperature, hotel prices, number of restaurants, and social media value.

Copacabana topped the list, with well over 10,000 nearby restaurants & bars, and an average sea temperature of 23.6 degrees.

Joining the Rio de Janeiro-based balneario in the top 10 is Miami Beach, Venice Beach, South Beach, Santa Monica State Beach, Naama Bay, Barbuda Pink Sand Beach, La Barceloneta, Mui Ne, and Cayo Coco, but for the record, Australia's highest-ranking beach was Bondi, which finished just outside in 12th place.

More family appeal

VAIL Resorts' Beaver Creek Resort in Colorado has opened a new family-friendly beginner and intermediate learning terrain area in the ski park called McCoy Park.

The 250-acre area features 17 trails served by two new lifts, while still maintaining its existing snowshoe & cross-country areas.

"We are thrilled to add this terrain to our mountain, McCoy Park offers families the opportunity to explore together and immerse themselves in nature," Beaver Creek COO Nadia Guerriero said.

In addition to the new family area, Beaver Creek has also invested heavily in high-speed lifts across the resort, including to Peak 7 in Breckenridge and larger six-person lifts at Okemo.



Sydney hotel high

SYDNEY'S hotel industry enjoyed its best performance since the start of the pandemic in Dec, according to data from STR.

Occupancy reached 45% for the month, while the average daily rate (ADR) was recorded at \$236.64 and the revenue per available room was \$106.38.

Despite the short-term rally, the numbers were still short of where Sydney was before the pandemic, with ADR for example previously at \$651.85 in Dec 2019.

KLM's SAF pledge

KLM has announced that it is adding a small cost to its air tickets in order to boost its broader commitment to sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

The airline is adding between €1 and €4 for Economy class tickets and between €1.50 and €12 for Business class tickets.

KLM has slated the target of using 10% SAF by 2030, however has conceded it needs to accelerate the plan from its current 1% base to meet the goal.

ACCOMMODATION

WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



Capri by Fraser, Bukit Bintang has opened in the heart of Kuala Lumpur. This connected 43-storey hotel residence invites guests to "live colourfully" in the Malaysian capital's most vibrant commercial district. Just five minutes from the Petronas Towers, this tech-savvy, lifestyle-led property combines art and technology to create seamless, 24/7 stays, surrounded by luxury retail malls, upmarket restaurants, vibrant bars, and exciting attractions.



Hotel La Compania is set to open in spring 2022 as the first Central American hotel in the Unbound Collection by Hyatt brand. Once it completes its meticulous seven-year restoration project, this one-of-a-kind landmark hotel will bring an elevated, thought-provoking experience to Panama. It will be located in Casco Antiguo, nearby to the historic district, and will offer guests a rare look into Panama's past.



Novotel has launched its new flagship in Bangkok, offering "energising hospitality" in the up-and-coming district of Rangsit, **Novotel Bangkok Future Park Rangsit**. Located in the Future Park Rangsit complex, the hotel is now open, offering intuitive design and spacious, modular rooms, nutritious 24/7 dining, and a wide range of experiences for business guests and families alike. The 226-room hotel's lobby will also serve as a central space, open to all.

Belgium word search

P	N	L	E	Q	T	C	T	W	N	T	K	M	J	H
N	T	E	O	B	N	H	L	H	A	Y	M	K	P	J
L	S	R	E	Q	E	O	S	H	S	F	O	V	Y	O
M	U	U	V	W	H	C	P	L	X	I	F	O	A	H
E	A	B	Y	D	G	O	E	R	E	K	M	L	C	Y
J	L	N	R	D	S	L	S	C	E	S	T	E	E	T
H	D	V	N	E	Z	A	B	R	J	W	S	O	L	S
W	K	Q	I	E	W	T	T	X	E	W	T	U	C	F
P	U	R	C	S	K	E	B	O	D	D	Q	N	R	Z
N	F	E	H	R	W	E	R	R	M	L	N	E	A	B
M	F	U	C	T	S	K	N	I	U	I	Q	A	H	H
H	I	L	T	O	M	W	I	P	E	G	U	F	L	W
Z	X	J	U	C	F	L	N	G	I	S	E	M	A	F
M	Q	C	D	G	R	A	V	E	N	S	T	E	E	N
N	C	E	C	A	L	P	D	N	A	R	G	P	T	F

SEE if you can find these words. They are hidden horizontally, vertically and diagonally, forwards and backwards.

ANTWERP
ATOMIUM
BREWERIES
BRUGE
BRUSSELS
CHOCOLATE
DUTCH
EURO
FLANDERS

FLEMISH
FRIES
GHENT

GRANDPLACE
GRAVENSTEEN
MANNEKENPIS
WAFFLES

PUZZLE

UK massive job void

CLOSE to a quarter of a million travel and tourism jobs will remain unfilled in the United Kingdom by the end of the year, new analysis conducted by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC) predicts.

The data shows the UK is anticipated to see a shortfall of around 12%, representing a staggering one in eight job vacancies left unfilled.

WTTTC has also warned that reinstating damaging travel restrictions, such as the recent measures aimed at curbing the spread of new variants, do not stop the spread of the virus and only damage livelihoods.

China clamps Delta

THE Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) has blocked Delta Air Lines from entering China due to concerns of importing more cases of COVID-19.

The American airline's two routes to China have been temporarily suspended.

Best Western growth

BEST Western Hotels & Resorts has signed two new projects in Vietnam's resort area of Ho Tram, with the two properties scheduled to open in Q1 2024.

The duo will add more than 1,000 rooms, suites and villas to the brand's Vietnam portfolio.

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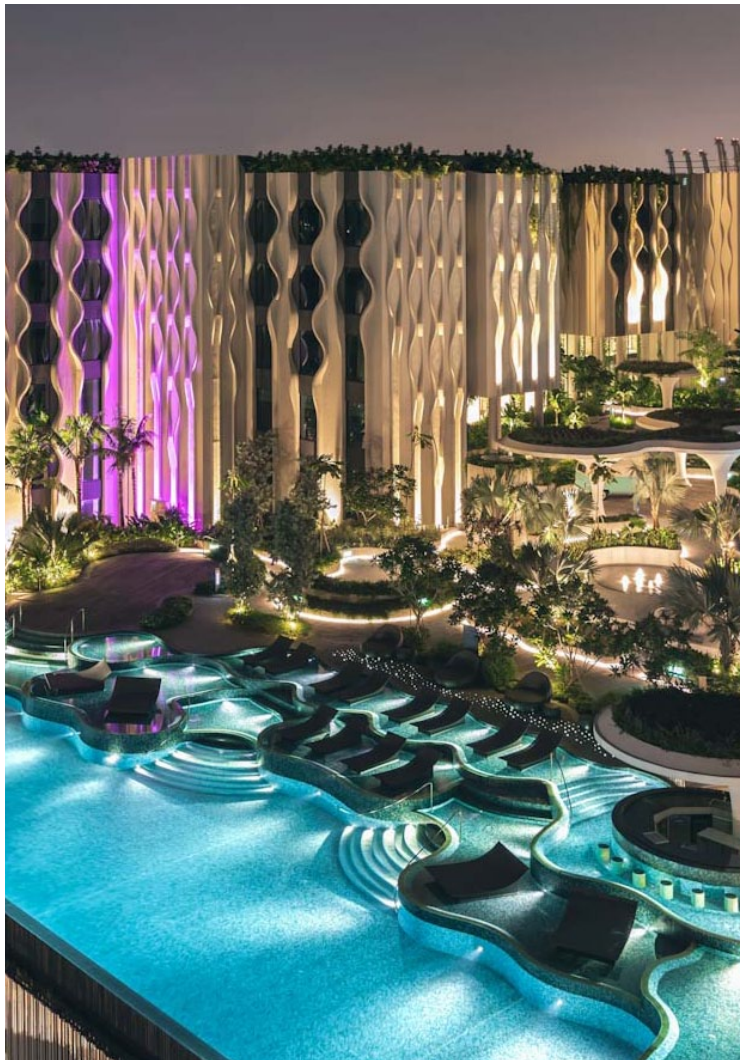
Safety is always our highest priority, even beyond the flight. We're offering overseas COVID-19 medical travel insurance with every ticket when you book your clients for travel by 31 March 2022.

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As the only hotel group owning four properties on Sentosa Island, Far East Hospitality is well positioned to deliver a holistic getaway experience to all facets of island life.

From the family-friendly Village Hotel Sentosa, to the sleek The Outpost Hotel Sentosa, colonial gem The Barracks Hotel Sentosa, and newly-opened Oasia Resort Sentosa and Oasia Spa, you will be spoilt for choices as you plan your itinerary.

Looking to immerse yourself in lush greenery and scenic views? Book a stay at Oasia Resort Sentosa, which is housed in a beautifully conserved building. With expansive and well-lit spaces, Oasia Resort Sentosa and Spa is a popular choice for many

MICE travellers as they get to host meetings within an enclave nestled in nature's beauty.

If you prefer the view of the beautiful Singapore Strait, opt for The Outpost Hotel Sentosa that is the island's first and only rooftop day-to-night lifestyle destination. Or try The Barracks Hotel Sentosa that was once a British artillery outpost, now restored to bring travellers to the golden age of travel – one that is filled with marvel and discovery.

And for those with larger groups, you will be well placed at the Village Hotel Sentosa, a more affordable option. Coupled with an infinity pool overlooking the sea, and quick access to other Far East Hospitality

properties on the island, you'll be able to enjoy a seamless integration to additional amenities!

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