



Rocky upgrades

BOOK a ticket on the famous Canadian Rocky Mountaineer rail service by 31 Jan with Entire Travel Group and receive a free upgrade from Silverleaf to Goldleaf service.

The deal is valid on First Passage to the West or Journey Through the Clouds routes for the 2022 season, excluding Sep.

The virtues of travelling in the luxury Goldleaf carriages include gourmet a la carte meals, panoramic views through glass dome windows, and an amazing outdoor viewing platform perfect for catching a glimpse of the passing wildlife - see [page six](#).

AFTA comes out fighting

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents has laid out its key priorities for 2022, including battling the “apparent uniform decision by carriers to reduce commission to agents”.

AFTA CEO Dean Long said the organisation was “exploring avenues for action” after the cuts by Qantas, Emirates and Cathay Pacific ([TD 14 Jan](#)) which are expected to be followed by at least one other major Southeast Asian carrier in the coming days.

Long also confirmed the ongoing push for additional support for the industry, as well

as consistency on borders and travel requirements.

“AFTA’s pre-Budget submission is almost ready to go and we are continuing our briefings of Ministerial, Shadow Ministerial and departmental decision-makers and influencers,” he said.

“So many of our members have already met up with their local MPs as part of our ongoing effort, and we know many more are ramping up,” the AFTA CEO added.

“AFTA also continues to work with CATO, CLIA as well as ACCI, BCA and TTF to deliver a united and coordinated approach.”

MEANWHILE AFTA has also today kicked off its promised consultation on a review of its Constitution, with the entire travel sector invited to be part of the project.

An initial survey on priorities is open to everyone and can be accessed by [CLICKING HERE](#).

More from AFTA on [page four](#).

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of all the latest news plus a full page from **Entire Travel**.

FC sustainability

FLIGHT Centre has appointed Michelle Degenhardt as its Global Sustainability Officer, a newly created position designed to cultivate best practice across environmentally and socially sustainable initiatives.

In her new role, the Brisbane-based Degenhardt will work closely with senior executives, staff and corporate customers to achieve better outcomes.

Degenhardt has worked for Flight Centre for 17 years and was formerly the company’s Culture and Employee Engagement Leader, a role that included oversight of the Flight Centre Foundation in Australia, which recently announced \$30,000 in charitable grants.

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Marriott parties with Barty



MARRIOTT Bonvoy is celebrating its status as official hotel partner of the Australian Open, with an associated showcase of “carefully curated experiences at Melbourne Park,” according to Marriott International Area VP of Australia, NZ and Pacific, Sean Hunt. Hunt, who’s pictured with Marriott Ambassador and world number one player Ash Barty, said the Marriott Bonvoy

Hospitality Suite at the tennis would “celebrate a contemporary Australia that acknowledges the important heritage of our first nations and multicultural influences, inviting guests to explore the unique locations and experiences that reflect the rich fabric of Australian culture - along with a taste of Marriott’s first-class service”.

Whitsundays work!

TOURISM Whitsundays, in collaboration with Flight Centre Travel Academy, is offering the opportunity Work, Study + Play in the Whitsundays, in a program which combines a Travel & Tourism Diploma with a once-in-a-lifetime experience of the region’s resorts and experiences.

The program launched in Nov last year, and has already received more than 1,700 enquiries with over 80 students enrolled and another 75 pending.

Tourism Whitsundays CEO Rick Hamilton said the program would significantly benefit the tourism-reliant region, while Flight Centre Travel Academy GM Cameron Boyd said the huge response had been very encouraging.

Participants are connected with a range of employer partners including Hamilton Island and Coral Sea Marina Resort.

The project received grant funding from the Federal Government, under the Recovery for Regional Tourism program.

It’s TIME for Feb

PEOPLE interested in joining the Feb intake of the Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) program should complete their expression of interest **HERE** as soon as possible.

The course costs \$1,500 and offers attendees the chance to develop skills and increase knowledge in preparation for the travel industry soaring again.

Costs can also be divided across a six-month payment plan.

The Cross Collection

FLIGHT Centre’s Cross Hotels & Resorts has launched its new Cross Collection of properties, a blend of stylish resorts in first-tier tourist and business destinations.

Newly-added hotels include the Haven’t Met Bangkok By Cross Collection offering guests 72 rooms and a rooftop swimming pool, as well as the Itz Time Hua Hin Pool Villa By Cross Collection in Thailand boasting 16 pool villas.

TravelEx is poised to take advantage of a wave of travel confidence and has its eyes firmly set on the Australian market. Read more in the December/January issue of *travelBulletin*.

travelBulletin

CLICK to read



Travel Junction comm boost

FLIGHT Centre’s trade-only wholesaler The Travel Junction has launched a “commission earning accelerator” which allows advisors to earn up to 15% on all sales made from today through until 04 Mar.

The trade promotion covers The Travel Junction’s full portfolio of more than 250,000 hotels, many of which are directly contracted and can be instantly confirmed via the HELiO booking platform, or dynamically packaged with air, transfers and experiences.

GM James Whiting said there

were no blackout dates, with the offer combinable with The Travel Junction’s full portfolio which also includes car rental and cruise to “help agents optimise their share of wallet”.

“We think the timing’s right to help our partners secure a well-deserved and generous commission on our accommodation range,” he said.

“We know that in already very challenging circumstances, they’re working harder than ever before to navigate daily changing travel requirements for their clients...and this incentive is naturally backed up by our commitment to never impose cancellation or amendment fees.”

Agents wanting to access the offer can register for a HELiO login at thetraveljunction.com.au.

Oceania appoints

OCEANIA Cruises has named Ryan McPherson as its new BDM for NSW, Vic, ACT and Tas.

McPherson is a former travel agent, store manager and avid foodie, the cruise line reveals, who brings close to ten years of experience in the travel industry to the role.

Ponant on Prime

PONANT will have its new documentary film *Beyond the Polar Circle* aired across a range of regional Prime Seven channels at 1pm (AEDT) this Sat.

Featuring Aussie TV host Andrew Daddo, the program will showcase the best of the cruise line’s Antarctica adventures.

Cloud over flights

MULTIPLE airlines have been forced to cancel flights across the Pacific region as a giant ash cloud from a recent underwater volcanic eruption near Tonga spreads across the region.

Fiji Airways has found itself to be the most impacted carrier, which was forced to cut all of its flights from yesterday’s schedule “due to hazardous operating conditions”, while Virgin Australia and Jetstar were also forced to cancel all flights into Nadi’s airport.

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Window Seat

MOST of us have reminisced about a holiday where everything aspect of the trip just seemed to go right, but we rarely ask ourselves 'was Lady Luck involved'?

Enter a new study by the good people at Psychic World, who have fortuitously compiled a list of travel destinations they claim are the luckiest in the world.

For the record, The Trevi Fountain in Rome was determined to be the luckiest place to visit on your next trip, followed by the Hagia Sophia Mosque in Turkey and the Hoover Dam in Nevada.

While the metric for determining the most charmed places on Earth is slightly ambiguous, a combination of Insta hashtags and TripAdvisor reviews, we suspect we know why the highest ranking Aussie destination was chosen ... don't we, the people of Lucky Bay in Esperance.

See NZ through a new lens



ARCADIA Expeditions has launched a new 13-day expedition in New Zealand which focuses on the country's indigenous culture and natural environment.

The tour is led by archaeologist Dr James Robinson and Maori guide Ceillhe Sperath, taking travellers through some of New Zealand's most precious sights in luxurious style.

Highlights include a helicopter-accessed walking experience, a full-day private cruise to the Bay of Islands to learn about Polynesian and European explorers, take in traditional Waitangi dance performers

(pictured), as well as food and wine experiences such as a seafood dinner cooked in a geothermal pool.

The 16 person max tour is priced from \$28,450 per person and departs either 06 Oct 2022 or 26 Mar 2023 - call 1300 907 819 for more details.

Oceania incentive

OCEANIA Cruises has introduced a new commission incentive for travel agents for bookings made before 28 Feb.

For any new-to-brand guest booking, advisors can receive a \$150 Visa gift card, with deposits needing to be received by 07 Mar to be eligible - **CLICK HERE** to register for the incentive.

Guests will also enjoy US\$100 of ship credit on 25 select 2022 sailings as part of the cruise line's Australia Day promotion.

US to strike back?

THE US Transportation Department said it might enact counter measures in retaliation to China forcing the temporary suspension of a number of routes operated by US carriers.

EK installations

TO CELEBRATE its 25th year of flying to Australia, Emirates has launched a "Moments Cam" on the Australian Open arena screens to allow guests to create their own moments and claim their slice of celebrity fame.

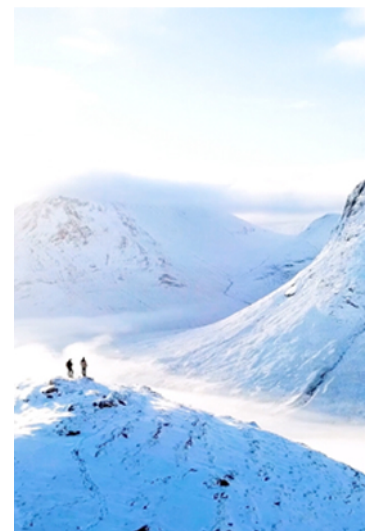
As part of the airline's sponsorship of the major tennis tournament, EK is also presenting the AO Ballpark for another year, offering kids fun activities to keep them entertained throughout the tournament, including a zipline.

EU clamps down on the unvaccinated

THE European Union is making it tougher for unvaccinated Australian travellers to enter the continent in the wake of continued COVID-19 outbreaks.

Aussies who don't get the jab will now face more restrictions, however fully vaccinated travellers will be able to continue to travel freely.

The 27 EU states decided to remove Australia, Canada and Argentina from a list of free travel regardless of vaccination status.



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Ad taken to new heights



WHEN the travel community first learned that Emirates was stationing one of its flight attendants (thankfully a stuntwoman) at the top of the Burj Khalifa for an audacious marketing campaign, many shared a sense of excitement and anxiety while watching.

But now the airline is upping the stakes again, this time by adding an A380 aircraft into the mix, emblazoned with bold Expo 2020 Dubai livery.

To film the latest viral marketing campaign, the plane had to

undertake an expert low flight by the Burj Khalifa no less than 11 times, at an altitude of only 2,700 feet and at slow speeds of just 145 knots.

The campaign push is part of Emirates' \$20 million commitment to generate interest in Expo 2020 Dubai taking place until the end of Mar.

Watch the full video [HERE](#).

Urgent support needed

THE dire circumstances the Australian tourism industry finds itself in requires urgent support from the Federal Government, The Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) believes.

The industry body is calling on the government to reinstate the \$35.5 billion Cash Flow Boost program, as Australia's once fruitful summer travel period is decimated by the spread of the Omicron variant.

"The summer period is our peak season, providing revenue that takes businesses through the winter and they're not seeing it come in - too many businesses are staring at disaster," said ATIC Deputy Chair Daniel Gschwind.

"Tourism businesses were hopeful that this current peak

season would be a revival of their financial outlook and those hopes have now been dashed."

Labelling the previous phase of the Cash Flow Boost program as a "great success", Gschwind pointed to recent data from the National Tourism Business Activity and COVID-19 Survey which he believes justifies the initiative recommending.

The report showed that tourism operators experienced a 52% downturn in business in the final quarter of 2021 compared to the same quarter in 2019.

"The data shows what we already know, that after a devastating two years and no hope of an upturn, tourism operators desperately need support in order to survive."

AFTA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



AS WE enter 2022, there are many aspects which look similar to the last two years. However there are some clear differences:

a Federal election will occur, vaccines are working and airlines are cutting commissions.

These issues will dominate the efforts of AFTA as we continue to ensure agents and the greater travel industry are provided every opportunity to prosper.

AFTA's ongoing push for support endures, and our member engagement with local MPs continues to grow in importance as we rapidly move towards the formal election cycle.

AFTA is lobbying Government at all levels and across the political spectrum as we continue to focus on two core principles, to allow free and open travel and provide financial support for our sector.

Our pre-Budget submission is almost done and I will be in Canberra in for the first week of sittings. AFTA continues to work alongside, inform and support the work of other key industry

influencers including ACCI, BCA and TTF.

We continue to collaborate with CATO and CLIA to ensure a united and effective approach, anchored within each of the political party's policy frameworks.

With our fight for survival continuing, AFTA is seeking advice on our options to fight what appears to be a uniform decision by carriers to reduce commission to agents.

The cutting of these commissions ignores the critical role agents play, both in lowering overheads and enhancing the customer experience, especially in these times. We're exploring a range of avenues to drive this point home.

Finally AFTA starts delivery on its promise to review the AFTA Constitution. Today marks the commencement of widespread member consultation around re-shaping this organisation to suit the evolving needs of our members and future members.

Everyone in the sector is invited to join our consultation process as we shape the organisation to meet the changing needs of our members and the emerging challenges of the market in which we operate.

Airlines up capacity

THE International Air Services Commission has voted in favour of allocating new capacity for Qantas to operate three services a week between Australia and Italy for the next five years.

Qantas plans to operate the extra flights during the northern summer for the Sydney-Perth-Rome route and vice versa, and will fly in addition to existing codeshare services to Italy.

MEANWHILE Virgin Australia has applied to renew capacity on a range of international routes, including 300 codeshare seats on the Italy route.

MSC deal goes all in

MSC Cruises has introduced its All in at Sea promotion, offering guests a drinks package, wi-fi and up to \$200 of onboard credit per person for northern hemisphere sailings departing between 26 Mar and 18 Nov.

The promo is valid until 31 Mar.

Aussie appoints

AUSTRALIAN Geographic Travel has undertaken moves to capture more of the European and North American markets, appointing London-based Unique Boutique Collection owner Bryan Arnicar to represent the brand overseas.

"Australian Geographic Travel is delighted to be working with Bryan and his team to help strengthen our international presence as we offer small group, sustainable, Australian experiences to nature and culture lovers around the globe," Australian Geographic Travel MD Birgit Bourne said.

The operator's sweet spots are environmentally-focused small group tours in iconic Australian destinations such as Arnhem Land and Fraser Island.

The Australian Geographic Travel brand was born last year (**TD** 29 Oct 2021) when it made the decision to acquire a 50% stake in small group operator Insight Australia Travel.



Tourism hangs tough

WHILE most sectors in Australia saw a drop off in new job listings in Dec, the tourism and hospitality industries remained steady when compared to the previous month, new data from Seek shows.

Prior to Dec, new job opportunities were rising across most industry verticals, and despite the lack of growth in Dec, tourism jobs are still up by close to 60% on the previous year.

Kimpton Koh Samui

IHG Hotels & Resorts' Kimpton Kitalay Samui resort has officially opened its doors to the public this week, a property located on Choengmon Beach in Koh Samui and close by to Koh Samui International Airport.

Features of the resort includes 138 rooms and pool villas, an ocean lounge and pool bar, a split-level kids' club, a 24-hour gym and wellness area.

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.721

THE Australian dollar was broadly unchanged in a quiet session overnight, countering perception that a move by the People's Bank of China to cut its key medium-term lending facility rate would impact our local currency.

Minor gains were made against the Euro and the Yen.

Contributing to a recent period of flatness was the closure of the US markets for the Martin Luther King Jr holiday.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.721
UK	£0.528
NZ	\$1.061
Euro	€0.631
Japan	¥82.63
Thailand	฿23.85
China	¥4.577
South Africa	11.091
Canada	\$0.902
Crude oil	US\$84.26

Solomons resumes

INCOMING passenger flights have resumed for approved travellers to the Solomon Islands amid ongoing political unrest in the Pacific Island nation.

Travellers are advised to keep up-to-date with the Australian High Commission's social media accounts for further updates.

Unrest broke out in the country following the government forming closer ties with China.

Vietjet bounces back

VIETJET has announced it will reboot services between Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City and Thailand's capital Bangkok from 21 Jan, operating twice weekly flights between Tan Son Nhat International Airport and Suvarnabhumi Int'l Airport.

The airline's pandemic recovery strategy will also see it pursue new routes, including possible new routes to India and Russia.

Earlier this month, Vietjet relaunched international routes connecting Hanoi/Ho Chi Minh City with Tokyo, Taipei, Seoul and Singapore.

THIS landmark is iconic and easily recognisable when you see the whole picture, but can you identify it from this small portion of the image?

This is just one of a series of limestone stacks located just

off the coast and their nearness to each other has made them famous with visitors.

Their collective name is misleading, with it containing an inaccurate number compared to how many stacks are there.

Answer: Twelve Apostles, Victoria, Australia

APAC leads the way

THE Asia Pacific was the only region to buck a downward trend in hotel construction in Dec 2021, figures from STR show.

While Europe dropped 3.5% and the Americas dipped 1% when compared with Dec 2020, the Asia Pacific was up 6.5%, largely driven by a continued property boom in China.

The STR report indicated that 473,983 rooms were under construction in APAC during the month, with 170,210 rooms in the final planning phase and 297,687 rooms in the initial planning stage.

Vietnam was the next most active market after China, while in Europe, Germany and the United Kingdom led the way with new projects, recording 45,121 and 31,464 new rooms respectively.

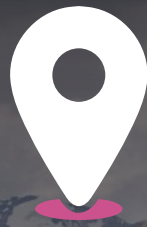
Trans-Atlantic tick

SCANDINAVIAN startup Norse Atlantic Airways has received approval from The US Transportation Department to commence transatlantic flights.

The decision means the carrier is now able to launch services between any point in the European Union and the United States, however the initial application expressed a desire to operate routes between Fort Lauderdale, New York Stewart and Ontario from Norway's capital Oslo.

"People will want to explore new destinations, visit friends and family and travel for business. Norse will be there to offer... affordable flights on our more environmentally friendly Boeing 787 Dreamliners," Norse CEO Bjorn Tore Larsen said.

Got a confidential tip? Contact Travel Daily via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click [HERE](#)



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