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## McLean leaves NZ

**PAUL** McLean, Air New Zealand's GM of Sales in Australia, has made the difficult decision to leave the carrier for personal reasons, with his departure effective immediately.

Group GM Sales Kathryn Robertson paid tribute to McLean, saying after rejoining Air NZ last year (*TD* 22 Apr 2021) he had since done a "great job steering the Australia team through the extended lockdowns and into our restart as borders opened".

"I know he will be hugely missed by the Air NZ team and our partners," Robertson said.

While a permanent replacement is sought, NZ Manager Commercial Strategy in Australia, Michael "Zorby" Zorbas will be covering the GM role.

## Oman Air to join oneworld

**THE** oneworld airline alliance is set to expand further in the Middle East, with the addition of Muscat-based Oman Air which is expected to be implemented into the network in 2024.

The oneworld Governing Board elected Oman Air as a member-designate in Doha this week on the sidelines of the IATA AGM, with the carrier's accession backed by Qatar Airways which will provide guidance and support for the carrier's integration.

Members of Oman Air's Sindbad frequent flyer program will be able to earn and burn points on all oneworld member carriers, while higher tier members will also be able to access oneworld lounges across the globe.

The deal was signed by oneworld CEO Rob Gurney, who said "with its network in Muscat and award-winning customer service, Oman Air will reinforce

our position as the premier airline alliance for global travellers".

Oman Air, which operates a fleet of over 40 Boeing 737, Boeing 787 and Airbus A330s, will be the third new member of the alliance in five years, with Royal Air Maroc joining in Apr 2020 followed by Alaska Airlines last year.

The agreement will add new destinations to the global oneworld map including Duqm and Khasab in Oman as well as Chittagong in Bangladesh, along with connections via five oneworld member hubs: Amman, Colombo, Doha, Kuala Lumpur and London Heathrow.

Oneworld members will also gain access to Oman Air lounges at Muscat, Salalah and Bangkok.

## Win a \$250 gift card

**TOURISM** Australia is this month offering travel advisors the opportunity to win one of 10 \$250 Prezzy gift cards by undertaking part of the Aussie Specialist training program.

To enter, complete the Introduction to Australia curriculum and share your feedback about the training.

That will unlock over 20 more modules and opportunities to earn reward points, while at the same time building knowledge to sell clients higher value holidays.

For more information see the last page of today's *Travel Daily*.

### Today's issue of *TD*

*Travel Daily* today features five pages of news plus a full page from **Tourism Australia**.

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## AABH adds action

**AUSTRALIA** & Beyond Holidays (AABH) has added activities to its AABH Hotels booking platform, with the addition said to make the portal a "one stop shop" for travel advisors, according to Managing Partner Simon Bernardi.

AABH Hotels already offers comprehensive content from Hotelbeds, Instant Travel, Webjet Fitrooms and Destinations of the World, with an additional major Australian wholesaler also set to be added shortly.

"Our range is extremely competitive especially against some of the airline points offers that are being heavily promoted currently," Bernardi said.

Designed specifically for travel agents, pricing is offered in nett Australian dollars with no deposits, and payments due once a booking falls within the cancellation period.

Bernardi said AABH also specialises in groups and tailor-made domestic itineraries - queries via [simon@aabh.com.au](mailto:simon@aabh.com.au).

## QF SIN First back

**QANTAS** has reintroduced its First Class product on flights to and from Singapore, with the return of its revamped Airbus A380 aircraft (*TD* 15 Mar) on the Sydney-Singapore-London route.

The premium cabin features 14 First Suites, 70 Business Suites and 60 Premium Economy seats, along with 341 Economy seats.

QF's First Lounge at Changi Airport has reopened, with Chief Customer Officer Stephanie Tully welcoming the return of the facility which had only just opened prior to the pandemic.

The lounge has capacity for 240 guests and offers a Neil Perry fine dining experience inspired by Singapore's culinary scene.

## Scoot giveaway

**SCOOT** Airlines is offering 10,000 free tickets to anywhere on its network, with 10 lucky passengers on selected Scoot outbound flights from Singapore between 01 Jun and 31 Aug selected to win either via a lucky draw or onboard scratch cards.

The 10th birthday promo will also run on social media and radio stations.

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## Anzac Day tour

**MAT** MaLachlan Battlefield Tours has announced a new seven-day 'Anzac Day at Hellfire Pass' tour, which includes visits to key WW2 sites, Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, and more.

The tour departs Bangkok on 21 Apr 2023 and costs \$2,499ppts - see [battlefields.com.au](http://battlefields.com.au).



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## NSW \$56m ecotourism push

THE NSW Government has proposed a major \$56 million investment into the state's Dorrigo National Park inland from the north coast, including a new multi-day walk and visitor centre, that promises to put NSW on the global ecotourism map.

The four-day Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk will consist of three suspension bridges and 46km of walking track that winds through Dorrigo and Bindarri National Parks, past waterfalls, giant old trees, and wild rivers.

Travellers will be able to stay at four purpose-built communal low impact walkers' huts and camping areas with tent platforms and composting toilet, owned and operated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Also part of the proposal, the Arc Rainforest Centre will feature energy-efficient, sustainable design and recycled materials, a boardwalk and lookout over the World Heritage rainforest, flexible event spaces, and spiralling

## Smyth buys resort

**COVER-MORE** Insurance founder Shayne Smyth is believed to have purchased the adults-only Elysian Retreat on Long Island in the Whitsundays.

The resort features 10 villas, a spa, helipad, bar and restaurant, with the *AFR* reporting Smyth paid "close to the \$8.75 million asking price".

walkways that connect to the existing 6km Wonga Walk and the new Dorrigo Great Walk.

The aim of the project is to connect more people to nature and Aboriginal culture, breathe life back into ageing infrastructure, generate ongoing jobs, and increase tourism revenue to help regional NSW towns recover from drought, the 2019-20 bushfires and COVID-19.

NSW Environment Minister, James Griffin, said the project was part of the biggest capital investment program in the state's national parks ever, adding that the rainforest at Dorrigo is "even more spectacular than the Daintree".

"This is about having people come to national parks as tourists, and leave as conservationists," he said.

## New Viking cruises

**VIKING** has announced the release of 2024 ocean voyages, including new destinations, new itineraries, and additional departures on popular voyages.

One of the additions is the 36-day Grand Fjords & Iconic Viking shores cruise, which combines visits to Iceland, Greenland, and the Canadian provinces of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

There are also two new itineraries combining the West Indies with the Mediterranean and the Iberian Peninsula - for details see [vikingcruises.com.au](http://vikingcruises.com.au).

## Pratt joins nib

**JULIE** Pratt has been appointed as Partnerships Manager for travel insurer nib Travel, reflecting growing demand as travel returns.

She will manage nib's key travel agency relationships in Vic and Tas, and joins the company after previous roles at Silversea Cruises and Helloworld Travel.

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## \$60m for NSW air

THE NSW Government will spend \$60 million on its Aviation Attraction Fund to secure routes and support airlines wanting to return to the state's airports.

The initiative, announced in the state budget today, is part of a total \$364 million investment in the visitor economy which also includes securing a state-wide calendar of world-class events, developing the Feel New marketing campaign and managing product and industry development programs.

Minister for Tourism, Stuart Ayres, said "we are committed to enhancing NSW's offering and developing new opportunities across all corners of the state to drive demand", with NSW targeting \$65 billion in total visitor expenditure by 2030.

## QF mask changes

QANTAS today implemented previously foreshadowed changes to its onboard mask-wearing rules, lifting requirements to wear masks on board unless they are required by the government of the destination being flown to.

The move means no masks are required on QF flights from NSW, Qld and WA to the US, UK and the new Perth-Rome services which kick off shortly.

Services departing Melbourne are not included in the change at this stage, according to an internal memo, which also confirms that masks will continue to be available to passengers and crew in lounges, onboard and at boarding gates.

New on-board announcements will introduce the changes which are effective from today.

## Tassie bookings up by 40%

DEMAND for booked nights to Tasmania for the next three months is up by close to 40% on the same period last year, according to new figures from Tourism Tasmania's COVID-19 recovery update report.

The state's capital led the way by accounting for 18,607 nights, up 55% on last year, followed by the state's north west (6,607

nights), Freycinet (6,422), Launceston (6,082), the north east coast (3,805) and Bruny Island (3,537).

While Hobart experienced strong growth compared to last year, the biggest proportional leap in booked nights was actually claimed by the state's west coast, which grew by 71%, while the eastern shore made good ground by jumping 55%, ahead of Freycinet (49%), and King Island (46%).

Meanwhile in Hobart strong bookings recorded for mid-Jun were fuelled by the popular Dark Mofo festival, with bookings peaking on the weekend during the month.

In the north of the state, Launceston also gained some traction in Jun due to the Australian Musical Theatre Festival, AFL games and Launceston Running Festival.

The report claimed that Tasmania continues to maintain its brand position, including perceptions of being a "meaningful" and "different" domestic destination.

## AC to BKK, BOM

AIR Canada has announced new seasonal non-stop services to Bangkok from Vancouver, with the four times weekly service the only direct flight from North America to Thailand.

The AC northern summer schedule also includes the resumption of daily Toronto-Mumbai flights via London.

Both services will utilise AC's Boeing 787 Dreamliner product.

The program also sees AC return to South America with seasonal routes from Montreal and Toronto to Lima, Peru, as well as YVR- AKL services and the expansion of flights from SYD and the new BNE route (TD 15 Jun).

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## Window Seat

**THERE'S** an old saying that crisis equals opportunity - and that definitely appears to be the view of a Malaysian politician who has suggested that the country's annual flood season could be used to promote "voluntourism".

Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz, former Minister for Tourism and Culture, has come under fire for the suggestion, which he made in an interview with local news channel *Sinar Daily*.

"Maybe we can have voluntary tourism where people come to the country to help us with the floods, and it is not about them coming here just to enjoy but for them to also learn," he said.

Opposition politicians were quick to slam Nazri's statement, with one saying it showed how "disconnected he was from reality" and another arguing the focus should be on resolving floods rather than showcasing them as a source of tourism.

They were particularly critical of a rebranding idea which saw Nazri suggest describing the usually catastrophic monsoons in Kuala Krai as a "flood festival".

## Star GC adds apartments



**THE** Star Gold Coast has announced the debut of the Star Residences, its first foray into apartment-style accommodation.

Located on the upper floors of the property's new \$400 million 53-storey tower, the offering comprises 422 one- and two-bedroom apartments available for short-term stays, long-term rentals and permanent residency.

Apartments (**pictured**) feature views of the Gold Coast cityscape or hinterland, with full kitchens, laundry facilities, high speed wifi and living spaces, with some also including a dedicated study.

Guests can enjoy the full range of the resort's restaurants and bars, as well as a dedicated private recreation deck.

Prices start at \$278 per night - see [star.com.au](http://star.com.au).

## QDP access grows

**QANTAS** has today expanded global access to the Qantas Distribution Platform (QDP), unlocking the system in nine additional countries across Europe, Asia and the Pacific.

The expansion makes the QDP now available to travel advisors in Belgium, France, Italy, India, Ireland, Israel, the Netherlands, Papua New Guinea and Luxembourg, alongside existing availability in Australia, NZ, South Africa, the UK and USA.

Additional countries will be added to the lineup in the coming months, the carrier confirmed.

## Egypt opening up

**AUTHORITIES** in Egypt have confirmed the relaxation of all COVID-19 restrictions on arriving international travellers.

All remaining curbs were relaxed by the country's Supreme Committee for the Management of the Epidemiology and Health Pandemic Crisis, meaning proof of vaccination is no longer required, as well as no testing or passenger tracking forms.

## KL Waldorf Astoria

**HILTON** Worldwide has confirmed the planned 2024 debut of its upmarket Waldorf Astoria brand in Kuala Lumpur.

The Malaysian property will be developed by Tradewinds Corporation, with 279 suites alongside five restaurants, spa, meeting spaces and a ballroom.

## Health on Runway

**A MIAMI-BASED** US startup is promising to "clear the runway for takeoff" by providing health and wellness guidance for travellers while on the road.

Seeking partnerships with tour operators, travel agencies and OTAs, Runway has raised US\$1.5 million in venture capital, and is seeking to take a chunk of the estimated US\$12 billion annual global market for travel health.

Runway offers pre-trip online doctor consultations followed by delivery of any required drugs for conditions such as travel diarrhoea, sleeplessness, motion sickness and malaria.

The company also offers country-by-country health and entry recommendations - see [runwayhealth.com](http://runwayhealth.com).

TRAVELPORT+



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## When you pay peanuts...

### OPINION

More reader input on Igor

Kwiatkowski's agent advice relating to the upcoming Qantas commission cuts (TD 16 Jun), this time from Doug Norton of The Junction Travel in Newcastle, NSW - send us yours on [feedback@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:feedback@traveldaily.com.au).

The upcoming commission cuts could be a chance for offline carriers to get into the ever decreasing Qantas market share - particularly if they maintain their current commission levels, and try to work with carriers that will truly give you connecting space.

Many times you can get QF on the way out, but then often

blocked on the way back.

And spare some sympathy for the Qantas hierarchy who will doubtless be reducing their bonuses by 80% to help the carrier recover from the travails of COVID-19.

Maybe it is not a good idea to expect somebody to sell your product and not be paid enough - the old one about peanuts and monkeys come to mind.

Of course no matter how many nuts you stick in a monkey, he doesn't turn into an orangutan: one only gets a fat monkey - and it would seem there are plenty of those around in the airline sector.



## Phillip heats up

**THE** Vic State Government has announced it will support the Newhaven attraction at Phillip Island with an investment of \$500,000 from the Regional Tourism Investment Fund and the Enabling Tourism Fund.

The expansion, which is due for completion in 2023, will see an additional three thermal pools overlooking Bass Strait built next to the Cape Kitchen waterfront restaurant, and is expected to draw in around 73,000 new visitors and provide a \$4.7 million economy boost to the island in the first year.

## Azamara winners are grinners



**AZAMARA** last week held a White Night Party in Brisbane at The Lushh in Woolloongabba, with almost 80 travel advisors and trade partners in attendance.

Guests heard from the Azamara team about the cruise line's return to Australian waters in Dec, and a number of lucky agents including Clean Cruising's

Casey Russell, Just Cruises' Paul Graham, Travel Partners' Sarah Webster, and Arrivia's Greg Thorn (pictured), all won a cruise on the first *Azamara Quest* sailing to Australia, from Singapore to Perth.

The cruise line's entire fleet of four recently fully returned to service, with *Azamara Journey* restarting last month following the Monaco christening event for the new addition to the fleet, *Azamara Onward* (TD 03 May).

## A321XLR takes off

**AIRBUS'** new A321XLR has successfully completed its first extended test flight, leaving the manufacturer's Airbus Hamburg-Finkenwerder airport on Wed.

During the flight lasting more than four hours, the crew tested flight controls, engines and main systems, with the operation a key milestone leading up to the planned 2024 commercial debut of the aircraft.

The A321XLR is an evolution of the A320neo single-aisle family of aircraft, with a huge 8,700km range and 30% lower fuel consumption per seat.

Airbus already has more than 500 of the aircraft on order.

## Star of the show

**EMERALD** Cruises' 'Mediterranean Enchantment' yacht cruise will star on *Getaway* this weekend, with the line offering viewers the chance to win a \$21,000 luxury sailing.

Presenter Jason Dundas recently filmed the episode on board the new luxury yacht *Emerald Azzurra*, cruising for 15 days from Athens to Venice.

The show will screen this Sat 25 Jun at 5.30pm AEST on channel 9, with a preview now online at [emeraldcruiises.com.au](http://emeraldcruiises.com.au).

## MONEY

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

**AU\$1 = US\$0.696**

**THE** Australian dollar slipped by 1.5% last week, resulting in a loss of more than 3% so far this month, and at one point dropping as low as US\$68.50.

It is predicted that the local currency will continue to feel the squeeze, thanks to fears that central banks will drastically tighten interest rates, in an effort to combat out-of-control inflation and prevent a recession.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.696
UK	£0.568
NZ	\$1.099
Euro	€0.662
Japan	¥94.09
Thailand	฿24.60
China	¥4.659
South Africa	11.171
Canada	\$0.904
Crude oil	US\$109.56



## COMING EVENTS

*TD Events* is the new way to showcase your product or service to the travel industry.

**TODAY** - Switzerland Tourism "Winter Magic Tour" at 1pm AEST featuring Livio Goetz & Lisa Maroun - [CLICK HERE](#).

**Wed 22 Jun** - Amadeus - details coming soon

**Thu 28 Jun** - Livn Group - details coming soon

## RECENT EVENTS

Missed an event? Don't worry, you can catch up at any time.

"The Tide Turns for Cruise" with CLIA MD Joel Katz and Jill Abel from the Australian Cruise Association - [CLICK HERE](#).

Norwegian Cruise Line "The Great Cruise Comeback" - [CLICK HERE](#).

Quark Expeditions showcase of *Ultramarine* - [CLICK HERE](#).

AFTA CEO Dean Long Executive Interview - [CLICK HERE](#).

Entire Travel Group with Brad McDonnell and Greg McCallum - [CLICK HERE](#).

To organise an event for your company, enquire at [traveldaily.com.au/events](http://traveldaily.com.au/events)

## Hotelbeds adds TFE

**HOTELBEDS** has announced a new strategic partnership with TFE Hotels, offering clients special rates and exclusive offers at 48 properties in all key cities across Australia and NZ under the Adina, Vibe, Quincy brands and more.

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