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CARNIVAL Cruise Line is today showcasing the upcoming return of its highly anticipated *Carnival Splendor* which will arrive in Australian waters on 30 Sep - exactly 100 days away.

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JOURNEY BEYOND

AFTA "refreshes" NTIA

EXCLUSIVE

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents is set to detail significant changes to the flagship National Travel Industry Awards, including simplified award categories and a more efficient nomination and judging process.

Details are expected to be ratified at an AFTA board meeting tomorrow, after extensive consultations with members and sponsors to redesign the massive event to recognise the industry's journey over the last two years.

Set to be hosted at Sydney's International Convention Centre on 15 Oct, AFTA CEO Dean Long has confirmed that the total number of awards has been reduced, to provide more

opportunities for the industry to reconnect "and for our new partners to entertain the 1,200 people we expect to attend".

Two new awards based on sustainability will be introduced, while alternate entry methods may be accepted for the majority of categories, opening up the award submission process to a new formats and potentially removing the need for time-consuming written submissions.

The 2022 industry night of nights will be "fun, entertaining and memorable," Long told **TD**, with further details including major sponsorship arrangements expected to be unveiled in the coming days.

Japan update

THE Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has lowered its Smartraveller advice level for Japan to "exercise normal safety precautions," noting the country has commenced a gradual reopening to foreign tourists.

Japan's visa-waiver program remains suspended, but from this month visitors are being accepted on guided and organised trips from countries listed as "blue" (low risk) including Australia.

Smartraveller said tour operators will sponsor visa applications, and the higher level "reconsider your need to travel" advice remains in place for areas near the Fukushima nuclear plant.

Today's issue of TD
Travel Daily today features six pages of news, a cover page from **Carnival Cruises** and a full page from **Flight Charter**.

Flight Charter offers

PRIVATE charter flights are more accessible for both leisure and business travellers through Flight Charter, which offers travel agent commission on "fast and flexible flights to almost any destination".

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Yellowstone return

YELLOWSTONE National Park is expected to reopen within the next two weeks, following damaging floods (**TD** 16 Jun).

Most of Yellowstone will reopen to tourists faster than originally expected after the record floods pounded the region last week.

Avis burns Aussie rubber

AVIS has announced the launch of its new luxury high-end car rental brand Avis Prestige in Australia, offering travellers the hire of sports cars, supercars and premium luxury cars.

As part of the debut, Australian luxury car rental company Prestige Rentals will manage the end-to-end customer experience cycle, providing clients with models such as the , Rolls-Royce Ghost, McLaren 570S, Ferrari 488, and Bentley Continental GT.

Managing Director of Avis Australia, Tom Mooney, said that while offering a wide choice of vehicles to Aussie travellers was key to the company's success, giving drivers the chance to get behind the wheel of some of the most desirable cars on the market would also provide a key point-of-difference with competitors.

"Our goal at Avis is to always be driven by better and Avis Prestige

will make the luxury car market more accessible for customers and give them the opportunity to hire a special vehicle for major milestone celebrations or for an elevated weekend away," he said.

The new range is viewed as an important building block on top of Avis' existing premium car hire offering, Avis Signature Series, which offers customers access to Mercedes and BMW vehicles.

However the hoonish reputation of younger people will see them have to wait their turn to drive the souped up cars, with services only available to customers aged 30 and above for the supercar range, while there is a 25-year-old age requirement to access the rest of the Prestige range.

Avis Prestige will be available in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast.

JetBlue ups offer

JETBLUE Airways has increased its acquisition offer for Spirit Airlines in a bid to fend off rival Frontier Airline's bid.

The carrier has upped its previously rejected offer for the US low cost carrier to US\$33.50 per share.



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Incentivise SAF: IATA

MORE incentives are needed to increase sustainable aviation fuel production, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).


Calling for governments to urgently put in place large-scale inducements, IATA believes 30 billion litres of SAF production is the tipping point possible by the end of the decade with effective incentives, and follows a major QF investment (**TD** 20 Jun).

Ovolo eyes growth


OVOLO Hotels has announced it is planning to expand further in Australia and New Zealand, as part of wider plans to double its international network.

The company is on a sharp expansion path, having tripled its room count in the last five years, also flagging ambitions to grow in major urban and leisure destinations like Tokyo, Singapore, Bangkok and Phuket.

Growth plans will likely take the form of acquisitions, joint ventures and partnerships.



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Looking towards 2032

AN EXPERT panel has delivered 75 recommendations to position Queensland as Australia's destination of choice for domestic and global visitors by 2032.

The *Towards 2032 – Action Plan for Tourism Recovery* findings handed down by the panel this week are designed to be a comprehensive 10-year strategy to reshape Queensland's visitor economy in the lead up to the 2032 Olympic Games, with eco tourism development taking centre stage of the vision.

Recommendations to accelerate the growth in eco attractions include much greater investment to establish world-class national park infrastructure, such as hiking

trails, mountain bike trails, expert guides, and more overnight accommodation options.

The creation of a funding stream specific to incentivising eco tourism projects as part of the state's Destination Development Fund was also put forward.

Qld's Tourism Minister, Stirling Hinchliffe, confirmed that \$66.4 million had been baked into its latest state budget over three years to respond to the panel's findings, concurring with its advice that funding must go beyond recovery and towards a longer-term growth strategy.

"It sets ambitious goals because Queensland needs to be bold to achieve long-term success, or risk being left behind," he said.

"Some of the recommendations are ambitious and will need further consideration and consultation with the tourism industry," Hinchliffe added.

Other tourism directives from the panel included enhancing beach and coastal offerings, increasing Qld's appeal to students and families, creating more touring opportunities, being more active in the marine and adventure space, and becoming a regenerative tourism leader.

Access was another key area for improvement, with the panel noting a need to develop more air routes, drive destinations, rail and cruise services, which will be essential to visitor dispersal.

Read the full report **HERE**.

Stolen passports

SCANNED copies of Australian passports are being sold for as little as \$16.50 by criminals on one of the dark web's largest marketplaces, according to cybersecurity company NordVPN.

The unnamed trading market has illegally sold hundreds of thousands of stolen identification credentials, worth more than \$23 million, since it was launched.

While scanned versions of real passports are the most common stolen commodity, the security company also found that passport forgeries can trade for around \$1,500, while stolen physical passports can fetch up to \$10,000 if they are issued by first world countries.

McGowan to Rome

WESTERN Australian Premier Mark McGowan is jetting off to Europe courtesy of Qantas, taking a seat on this weekend's inaugural non-stop QF service from Perth to Rome.

QF5 will take about 16.5 hours to make the trip, with the new route described as a "huge boost" for the state as it works to breathe new life into its battered tourism sector.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and WA's extended lockdowns, almost 150,000 European visitors spent over \$400 million annually in the state, including 11,000 arrivals from Italy.

More work on 5G

THE International Air Transport Association (IATA) is urging governments to ensure the safe roll-out of 5G networks, while working closely with the aviation industry to ensure safety systems can co-exist with the new technology.

Before deciding on any spectrum allocations or conducting auctions, IATA called for governments to ensure close coordination and mutual understandings with aviation safety regulators are met.

The call came as the industry met in Doha at the 78th IATA Annual General Meeting.

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Discova opens in Bali

DISCOVA has announced a new airport arrivals lounge at Bali International Airport

A five-year lease, which has the potential for extension, will see the Flight Centre DMC offshoot open the new facility on 01 Jul.

Discova will be the only destination management organisation to offer its own lounge at Ngurah Rai International, where dedicated staff will welcome guests and seamlessly connect them with their driver or guide in style.

Vanuatu welcomes

VANUATU has launched a new 'Welkam Back' campaign to lure travellers as the border reopens.

Australians are being invited to "Answer the Call of Vanuatu" as the country begins quarantine-free travel from next month.

The campaign will cover radio, outdoor, digital, and social platforms from today.

FC Independent beats target

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's (FCTG) Independent division has exceeded its own sales projections, trading at 310% of its pre-COVID record recorded in Feb 2019.

FCTG Independent General Manager, Astrid Richardson (**pictured**), hailed the Independent network's ability to smash targets so far in 2022.

"We have experienced tremendous sales growth over the last six months, having hit record sales for the last four consecutive months," she said.

"Our network of dedicated, knowledgeable independent agents are taking the initiative to connect with clients, expand their businesses and take advantage of the current demand."

FCTG Independent is comprised of Travel Partners branded and affiliate agencies, Travel Associates at Home, Travel Associates Franchise and Flight



Centre Independent, and has received heavy investment from its parent company over the last two years to hasten growth.

The focus of money spent by FCTG has been on building tools and support infrastructure for its independent agents, enabling advisors to drive operational efficiencies and improve customer service.

One key development was the launch of Home (**TD** 12 Jan), a single sign-on portal connecting agents to tools such as sales reporting features.



Window Seat

WHILE most travellers relish the opportunity to save some cash on flights, one pilot project testing out double decker seating (**pictured**) may push the budget envelope a little far.

Alejandro Nunez Vicente's Chaise Lounge idea started out as a college assignment, but has now gained interest from airlines looking to maximise space on board their planes.

Heralded as revolutionary by some, others have raised clear claustrophobia - and emergency evacuation - concerns over the idea.



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Travel Daily

Wednesday 22nd June 2022

Clock is ticking for Norwegian



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has today marked exactly six months until the inaugural arrival of its *Norwegian Spirit* which makes her debut in Australasian waters on 22 Dec.

The visit is the first time *Spirit* has cruised in Australia after an extensive bow-to-stern US\$100 million makeover - the most expensive refurbishment in NCL's 55-year history.

NCL CEO Harry Sommer said

bookings for *Norwegian Spirit* are "incredibly robust" with guests from across the globe making bookings.

"Australia-New Zealand cruising is back, and it's more popular than ever," he enthused, with a total of 10 local voyages on offer between Dec and Mar 2023.

NCL's sales chief Damian Borg and VP Ben Angell are pictured savouring the *Spirit* anticipation this morning.

AFTA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



SEVERAL months ago, we announced the save the date of 15 Oct for the return of the NTIA.

We have been working hard to redesign the event to provide an evening that recognises what we have been through, who we are today and where we are heading in the year ahead.

We have now conducted over 70 consultations with members, sponsors and media partners to design an event that will be fun, entertaining and memorable.

As the NTIAs are the marquee awards, we have been encouraged by the strong interest and commitment to make sure the NTIAs are refreshed and modernised for our Sector.

Over the coming weeks, we will be announcing the new elements for the event, with the central change being the awards themselves and the nomination process.

We have reduced the total number of awards by 30%, meaning there will be some incredible opportunities to

reconnect and for our new partners to entertain the 1,200 people we expect to attend.

We have simplified the award categories and introduced new ones, including two new awards based on sustainability.

On the nomination process, it will be simplified and video submissions will be accepted for the majority of categories.

In the last two years, we have all become used to virtual meetings.

We want to open up the award submission process to include this new creative format.

Five minute videos will be accepted, removing the need for time-consuming written submissions and will provide businesses and individuals the opportunity to showcase their inner Baz Luhrmann.

The 2022 NTIAs will top off a year of recovery and I can't wait to share more details including the opening of nominations which will happen shortly!

So now is the time for you to start thinking, who do you want to nominate? Who has been an amazing team member, supplier, agency or tour operator that is worthy of winning an NTIA in 2022?

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NT hospitality boost

A NEW online course is set to benefit int'l students and the hospitality sector in the NT.

Those looking for casual work and businesses with staffing shortages will both benefit from the new responsible serving of alcohol course, which is thanks to a collaboration between the NT Government and Hospitality NT.

The course will make it faster and cheaper for students to qualify for work in the hospitality sector - access it online [HERE](#).

Gold Coast hots up

A NUMBER of Gold Coast routes are forecast to beat pre-COVID levels by the end of the year, according to FCM Consulting's quarterly report.

The Gold Coast is expected to muscle in on the golden triangle of Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane, as travellers flock to the city for both business and leisure.

Gold Coast services to both Melbourne and Sydney are also expected to surpass 2019 volumes soon.

Princess gives agents Goose bumps



A PRINCESS Cruises sailing is as safe as can be - but the line recently took a number of Australian travel advisors to the 'danger zone' during a *Top Gun: Maverick* movie night.

Agents experienced Australia's first D-BOX immersive cinema experience, where they previewed the follow-up to the 1986 action film *Top Gun*, at events across Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, and Perth.

With the entire Princess fleet now MedallionClass enabled, the cruise line saw an opportunity to promote its line of smart ships alongside HOYTS' new D-BOX motion technology, which allows guests to synchronise the movement of their seat to the content and audio observed on the cinema screen.

The line also engaged with agents to build excitement for the return of cruise - the industry, not the actor - as *Coral Princess* sets sail for her inaugural winter season from her new homeport of Brisbane.

"For many agents, this was their

first time experiencing this level of technology in cinema, and most will have the same sense of awe once they experience MedallionClass on board, making holidays with Princess more simple, effortless, personalised and connected," said Senior Director of Marketing, Sales & Service Nick Ferguson.

Princess' trade movie series continues in Adelaide tomorrow with an opening night screening of *Elvis* at Events Centre Glenelg - to RSVP, [CLICK HERE](#).

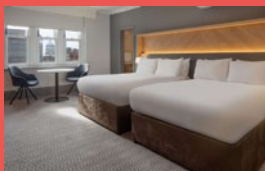
Pictured are Sales Operation Specialist Elly Eves and Key Account Manager Shaun Kavanagh serving each other's wingman.

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.



The 34-key **Radisson Blu Euphoria Resort** has opened in Mykonos. Located steps from the golden Paralia Kalo Livadi beach, with its bars, restaurants, and vibrant live music scene, the resort is little more than a 20-minute drive from everything Mykonos has to offer. The resort's stylish rooms and suites draw inspiration from the famous whitewashed architecture of the Cyclades, with white walls and furniture complimented by light wood tones.



Hilton Nottingham has announced the completion of a £6.5 million investment, which has transformed the hotel's 176 guest rooms, bathrooms, corridors, and more. The finishing touches of the project have seen the installation of noise insulation, air-conditioning throughout, and reviewed layouts in the bedrooms. The works compliment the lobby, which was renovated during the pandemic. The hotel also features bespoke Nottingham artwork.



Villa TreVill will now offer guests an elevated stay with the addition of a new spa and Botanical Bar. La Traviata Wellness & Spa, named after the opera by Giuseppe Verdi, will be housed in the property's newly renovated Art Nouveau Green-House, offering visitors a relaxation experience surrounded by lush gardens with vistas over the sparkling sea. Meanwhile, at the new Botanical Bar, specialist mixologists will create cocktails with homemade infusions.

Creepy scanners?

MULTIPLE women, including two high-profile journalists, have complained about new 3D imaging scanners installed at several Australian airports, which are designed to be more effective in detecting concealed items.

The ABC's Louise Milligan and *The Project's* Lisa Wilkinson both took to Twitter this week to slam their recent travel experiences, with Milligan labelling the security scanners as "creepy".

Complaints by women have ranged from scanners being overly sensitive in picking up things like the underwire in bras and zips on jeans, as well as full pat downs in sensitive areas by security staff after detection.

Following the complaints, Sydney Airport said it was currently following up to ensure appropriate procedures were followed by its security contracting company.



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