



## Free Southern flight

**BOOK** a spot on Chimu Adventures' Complete Antarctica itinerary before 24 Mar and receive a bonus free Southern Lights Flight.

The offer is valid for Economy only, details are available [HERE](#).

## Unpaid grants worth \$74m

**ALMOST** a third of the total funding available under rounds one and two of the COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support Program (CTSP) remains unspent, with Austrade classifying the leftover money simply as "funding that wasn't needed".

A Senate Estimates hearing last month saw officials confirm both rounds are now closed, with no outstanding applications.

A total of \$105.3 million was distributed under the first round of the CTSP, which had total funding available of \$128 million.

The second round, worth \$130 million in total, saw \$77.1 million paid out, including \$1.3 million under the additional payments which became available to travel businesses operating multiple outlets under a single ABN.

That took the total payouts to \$184 million under the combined

program - leaving \$74 million left over from the allocation.

Austrade's Samantha Palmer, GM of Visitor Economy and Client Programs, explained the shortfall by saying "there was an overestimate by Austrade as to how many businesses would be part of this program, and what the income will be as well."

"These payments are based on income, and we had imperfect data sources...we overestimated the number of businesses and their income," Palmer said.

Today peak industry bodies AFTA, CATO and ATEC are pleading with the Government to immediately release the \$74 million already approved to support the sector.

However the Senate Estimates transcript confirms that at this stage Austrade has not been asked to do any work in preparation for a third round of the CTSP, with Austrade Deputy CEO Philippa King saying "we have been clear with the industry that the program is finished and that the \$184 million is the total of the program".

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features six pages of news, plus a full page from **Leading Hotels of the World**

## Bali eyes 14 Mar

**BALI** will end its mandatory quarantine for fully-vaccinated international travellers on 14 Mar, with local news sources suggesting the date could be brought forward if new infection rates continue to decline.

**MEANWHILE** Garuda Indonesia will resume non-stop flights from Sydney to Bali from this Fri, initially flying once a week, with return services to travel via Jakarta on Thu evenings.

Jetstar is also reportedly planning to resume direct SYD/MEL Bali flights from mid-Mar.

## A class in leadership

**THE** Leading Hotels of the World will host an Understanding Leading Club webinar on 09 Mar.

The marketing organisation has also expanded its Leading Club points eligibility for bookings - register to learn more on [page 7](#).

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## Scout resumes PER

**SCOOT** has announced the resumption of Perth-Singapore flight services from tomorrow.

Coinciding with the reopening of the Western Australia border, Scout will fly to Perth, with flights from \$159 as part of an exclusive promotional offer running until 13 Mar.

The deal is available for travel before 29 Oct.

Fully vaccinated travellers may enter Singapore without quarantine if they test negative.

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## PNG carrier appoints

**PORT** Moresby-based carrier PNG Air has selected AirlinePros to be its General Sales Agent in Australia, with the company charged with providing a “robust range of sales and marketing activities” in the local market.

PNG Air currently operates flights to 22 destinations in Papua New Guinea, with the airline flagging plans to expand its reach across the Pacific region.

The appointment also represents the first time PNG Air has appointed an international GSA, with AirlinePros CEO Achma Asokan Foster stating she was looking forward to introducing the more than a thousand cultural groups that exist in PNG to Australian travellers.

For more details, [CLICK HERE](#).

## WA says “welcome back”

**THE** long wait for travellers to visit Western Australia is set to be rewarded with more than half a million dollars’ worth of tourism vouchers from the WA Govt.

The vouchers will be handed out at Perth Airport from midnight tonight to interstate and international arrivals to celebrate the easing of border restrictions and provide a much needed boost for ailing tourism businesses in the state.

The campaign will provide 3,400 “Gifts From Western Australia” two-person vouchers, ranging in value from \$150 to a luxury \$2,200 three-day tour of the Margaret River, with experiences also including skydiving at Rottnest Island, swimming with dolphins & Penguin Island tours.

Students will also be targeted with thank you gifts, with the collaboration between Tourism WA and the WA Government offering 1,000 StudyPerth vouchers to overseas arrivals.

“The McGowan Government is proud to present visitors with these ‘Gifts from Western Australia’ - the first of many

initiatives to attract international and interstate visitors back to our state,” WA Tourism Minister Roger Cook said.

Tourism WA is also gifting 200 toy quokkas to Qantas to be distributed on the carrier’s first flights from Sydney and Melbourne.

**MEANWHILE** the WA Govt has signed a deal with the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council to make the state a premier destination for Aboriginal cultural experiences.

The govt will allocate \$4.32m over four years to create an Aboriginal Tourism Academy, install new Aboriginal Art Welcomes at visitor centres, and create marketing campaigns.

## Rex flood support

**REX** Airlines is coming to the rescue of flood-affected areas of Queensland and NSW, allocating \$1 million of freight and passenger support to victims of the ongoing disaster.

The assistance is being offered through the airline’s Disaster Relief Fund, set up to help Aussies affected by the scourge of droughts, bushfires and floods.

“Rex’s tagline is ‘Our Heart is in the Country’ and we have always responded when natural disasters hit regional/rural communities on our network just as we did for flood-ravaged Port Macquarie 12 months ago,” Rex Deputy Chairman John Sharp said.

Applications for Rex support can be made via email to [sponsorships@rex.com.au](mailto:sponsorships@rex.com.au).

## Ovolo ups marketing

**OVOLO** Hotels has made three key marketing appointments headed up by the recruitment of Francis Graham as the new Marketing Communications Manager in Australia.

Graham arrives from the UK and was previously with creative agency One Green Bean.

Ovolo Group has also promoted Victoria Ko to the role of Assistant Marketing Communications Manager Hong Kong, while Jonathan Jeremy has been made Marketing Communications Manager for Mamaka By Ovolo in Bali.



## Bonvoy bonuses

**MARRIOTT** Bonvoy members can receive up to 50% in bonus points on purchases of over 2,000 points until 23 Mar, with points purchases also now integrated through [Marriott.com](http://Marriott.com).

## BayviewTravel

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Bayview Travel - for over 30 years, one of Melbourne’s leading bayside travel agencies, and a past finalist for NTIA Best Travel Agency (single location) - is looking for a travel advisor to join the team.

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## Grabbing six of the best

**VIRTUOSO** has this week welcomed six new agency members to its growing network in Australia.

Among the agencies added to the luxury and experiential travel specialist's stable is the Tasmania-based Home Travel Company owned by Robyn & Murray Sinfield, as well as Noosa Cruise & Travel, WA-based Travelling Places, and Victoria-based agencies Aurora Travel, Geelong Travel and Where2Travel.

Advantages of joining Virtuoso include access to its preferred partner portfolio, which includes more than 2,200 hotels and resorts, cruise lines, tour operators, and destination management companies.

"Virtuoso has a long history of welcoming the best of the best to the network and our six new agency members across the region are no exception," Virtuoso's General Manager

Australia and New Zealand Fiona Dalton said.

"The team and I look forward to working closely with each new member as they leverage Virtuoso offerings to elevate their advisors and support their luxury travel businesses as they soar to new heights," she added.

The Australian agencies join 30 other new members for the network globally, the bulk of which were in the United States and Asia, accounting for 12 and nine businesses respectively.

Other benefits of joining include access to Virtuoso's planning site Wanderlust, which serves as an entry point to onboard clients.

The news follows Crooked Compass' decision to join Virtuoso's Regional Preferred Partner Program across the Asia-Pacific, a move founder Lisa Pagotto described last month as a "watershed" moment for the tour operator (**TD** 09 Feb).



## The delays continue

**THE** belated debut of the Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection's *Evrima* vessel has been knocked back once again, this time to 06 Aug.

The ship's first sailing had been initially due in 2019, but numerous manufacturing issues and COVID wrinkles have thrown sand the gears of its planned debut out of Lisbon.

## Dampier cruise push

**THE** Port of Dampier in Western Australia will receive a major upgrade to its port infrastructure under a \$255 million injection from the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility.

"The development of a new multi-user wharf at the Port of Dampier will maximise the use of this important piece of infrastructure by facilitating the Perdaman Urea Project, as well as accommodating bulk carriers and cruise ships," WA Ports Minister Rita Saffioti said.



## Window Seat

**BENDIGO** Regional Tourism Can't Help Falling in Love with Elvis Presley, ahead of the King of Rock & Roll's arrival for the 'Direct from Graceland' exhibition.

Showcasing at the Bendigo Art Gallery from 19 Mar through 17 Jul, the exhibition will include more than 300 exclusive items and artefacts once owned by the Devil in Disguise himself.

From Elvis' famous jumpsuits, vintage memorabilia and treasured personal items such as his wedding suit, visitors will be sure to be All Shook Up by this exhibition.

The town has even launched a VIVA BENDIGO campaign to promote the exhibition so you Shake, Rattle, & Roll your way to the gold rush town.



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## Caption this pic and win!



**THERE** is a \$100 Visa gift card up for grabs for the agent who can summon the most creative responses to Tourism Solomons' latest caption competition.

"There is no right or wrong answer, captions can be serious, funny, heartfelt - anything you want, we just want you to make us smile even wider than this man," the tourism body said.

The competition is designed to serve as a timely reminder the destination is ready and waiting for Australian visitors, located less than three hours from Brisbane.

Agents can enter the comp as many times as they like, with entries to be submitted **HERE** using their standard log-in details.

Entries must be in by 5pm AEDT on 07 Mar.

## SA promised \$60m

**THE** South Australian Labor Party has pledged to stump up an additional \$40 million over four years to attract major events to the state if elected to government later this month.

The breakdown of the promised funding will include \$40 million over four years for event acquisitions and \$20 million toward an events marketing budget increase over two years.

The Tourism Industry Council of South Australia (TICSA) welcomed the news, stating there is a dire need for a reinvigorated events strategy in South Australia.

"We have identified that there is a need for a festival and events strategy that attracts travellers and disperses them throughout the entire state," TICSA CEO Shaun de Bruyn said.

"With int'l borders open, SA is not only competing with other states and territories, but also other countries in a fiercely competitive environment."

## GOPASS widens

**GOPASS** Global has revealed its plans for a full-risk travel solution, with the platform to add social, environmental, and geopolitical risk factors to complement its real-time COVID risk assessments.

The key to GOPASS's rapid growth has been its ability to use artificial intelligence to interrogate 35 sources of global risk data in near real-time, and share the most relevant information with travellers via simple, user-friendly reports or an interactive bio-risk map.

## Vista floats out

**OCEANIA** Cruises has floated out its newest ship *Vista*.

Taking place at the Fincantieri shipyard in Sestri Ponente, the ceremony was presided over by Shipyard Director Giuseppe Torrente and Archbishop of Genoa Monsignor Tasca.

Her maiden voyage is departing Rome on 14 Apr.

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## EY shows recovery signs

**ETIHAD** Airways has recorded a strong recovery in passenger operations and financial performance for the 12 months to 31 Dec, and a reduced loss of US\$476 million.

The number is a vast improvement on the US\$1.7 billion it lost in the previous corresponding period, with Etihad carrying around 3.5 million passengers in 2021.

Pax loads doubled in the second half of the year, reaching 70.1% in Dec as travel demand peaked during the winter holiday period, with Etihad recording a yearly average seat load factor of 39.6%.

The airline recorded a particularly strong surge in passenger volumes in the fourth quarter following the Sep relaxation of mandatory quarantine periods in Abu Dhabi, which in part precipitated its improved EBITDA of US\$408

million, a turnaround from a US\$651 million loss in 2020.

EY also posted passenger revenues of US\$1.07 billion last year, down by 14% year-on-year, a number which rebounded in the last quarter of the year, recovering to half of 2019 levels.

**MEANWHILE**, Etihad will celebrate 15 years of flying to Australia when it charts its first-ever Guest flight from Sydney to Abu Dhabi.

More than 100 Etihad Guest members and a travelling companion will have the chance to join the all expenses paid journey on 02 Apr.

The trip includes four days of accommodation and four days full of activities showcasing the best adventures and cultural experiences Abu Dhabi has to offer.

Tell Etihad why you would like to join the flight **HERE**.

## Tourism Ireland expo

**TOURISM** Ireland will host its Luxury Virtual Expo next Thu from 9am-10:30am AEDT.

Luxury travel advisors are encouraged to register their attendance **HERE** and schedule their one-on-one meetings with participating partners.

Specifically designed to equip agents with the latest news and updates on Ireland's luxury offerings, attendees of the expo can also expect to hear about a range of new products.

## Influential platform

**NEW** platform Tripwell is making building a travel bucket list a breeze, with inspiration provided through influencer marketing.

The platform enables adventure-seekers to explore and book unique destinations and experiences by simply browsing influencers profiles or searching by location - **CLICK HERE**.

## Origin christened

**SILVERSEA** Cruises has christened *Silver Origin* with an expedition-inspired ceremony in the Galapagos Islands.

Guests took to the water on *Origin's* Zodiacs to raise a glass of champagne to the new ship, which was christened by godmother Johanna Carrion.

The naming ceremony was initiated by a bagpipe performance, which is a tradition of Royal Caribbean Group.

## Perisher last chance

**TODAY** is the last chance for travellers to pay less than \$50 upfront for an Epic Australia Pass to Perisher.

Price rises take place from tomorrow, with the \$899 adult pass subject to just a \$49 down payment until the end of the day. "Epic coverage" is included with every pass, with refunds for job loss, resort closures, mandatory isolation and more - **CLICK HERE**.

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## The Mac daddy of charity



**BRIDGECLIMB** has launched its Climb for a Cause charity event in support of mental health charity the Black Dog Institute.

On 01 May, climbers can scale the iconic arches of the Harbour Bridge with family, friends, sports teams, community groups, colleagues or entire organisations while raising awareness and

important funds toward a mentally healthier Australia.

Television host Sam Mac (**pictured**) has joined BridgeClimb as an advocate for Climb for a Cause, with the *Sunrise* weather presenter noting "60% of people experiencing symptoms of a mental illness will not seek help."

[CLICK HERE](#) for more.

## ACCOMMODATION

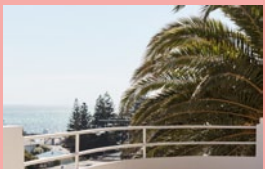
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Marriott International has debuted a new brand in Nagoya, with the opening of **Courtyard by Marriott Nagoya**. Located in Fushimi, the main financial district in central Nagoya, the 360-room new hotel is set to provide a sophisticated yet comfortable environment for business and leisure travellers. The hotel offers guests easy access to Nagoya's main commercial, shopping and entertainment districts, and is surrounded by a number of cultural landmarks.



Chiva-Som has announced the official opening of **Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som** in Qatar will take place on 29 Mar. The property will be the largest wellness destination in the country, and will offer Zulal Serenity, which will be dedicated to adult guests, and Zulal Discovery, which will invite families to connect and embark on a wellness journey together. Zulal Wellness Resort has been brought to life by Qatari developers Msheireb Properties.



**The Continental Sorrento's** food & beverage venues are set to open later this month, led by Scott Pickett and Craig Shearer. From casual & fun to refined & elegant, the offerings will deliver a mix of epicurean experiences, promising something for everyone. The staged opening will also introduce The Continental's new event spaces, with the hotel's redevelopment to offer guests a taste of life on the Mornington Peninsula.

## Travel Daily Events

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