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MTA Advisor Susan Plos

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## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today has five pages of news, plus a full page from **Celebrity Cruises**.

## Treat yo self Celebs!

**CELEBRITY Cruises** is inviting travel advisors to learn more and earn more via the benefits of **Agents Rewards**.

Agents can learn, earn, and convert rewards points into cash rewards, with double bonuses available on select sailings.

See **page six** for more details.

## Brunch for New York

**NEW** York State Division of Tourism, I Love New York, is inviting travel agents to a special brunch in Sydney on Thu 17 Mar, where they will be briefed on destination updates and be in with a chance of winning a trip for two to the American state with United Airlines.

The event takes place at The Butler in Potts Points between 9.30am and 11.30am.

To register to attend the industry update, **CLICK HERE**.

## QF takes more Embraers

**QANTAS** and Alliance Aviation this morning announced that QF would exercise options to add a further four Embraer E190 regional jets to its fleet.

The wet lease deal initially provided for 18 optional aircraft, 10 of which have already been exercised, with today's news seeing QF now commit to start dates for a total of 14 planes.

The 11th plane will be deployed from 27 Mar, followed by additional Embraers to start flying under the QantasLink banner on 01 May, 01 Jun and 01 Jul.

The exercise of each option is for a period of at least three years, with Alliance also forecasting a "significant increase

in the utilisation" of planes already flying under the pact from this month and beyond.

Some of the Alliance E190s are based in the Northern Territory, where QF has established an Embraer base at Darwin Airport (**TD** 15 Feb) serving key QantasLink routes across Australia as well as the subsidiary's first international route, between Darwin and Dili.

The Embraer aircraft are fitted out in a two-class configuration with 94 seats, with the plane's range and economics opening up new routes which were previously not viable with the existing QF fleet.

## EK to boost Perth

**EMIRATES** is increasing its Perth-Dubai frequencies, lifting from three to four weekly flights on 01 Apr and then moving to a daily operation from 01 May.

The 777-300ER flights to the WA capital will feature eight seats in First Class, 42 in Business and 304 in Economy.

## VA loyalty moves

**VIRGIN** Australia is offering a prize of two million Velocity Points and two million Flybuys points as part of a competition for Flybuys members who transfer a minimum of 1,000 points to the Velocity loyalty program between 01 Mar and 30 Apr.

**MEANWHILE** VA has also confirmed that 12 Jun 2022 is the last day for Velocity members to earn points or make reward seat bookings on Delta Air Lines flights, with the carrier switching its US partnership to United Airlines (**TD** 14 Dec 2021).

Missing points from eligible DL flights taken on or before 12 Jun can be applied for via the Velocity site no later than 12 Dec 2022.

## Grab the popcorn!

**QATAR** Airways, Qatar Tourism and Discover Qatar are inviting travel agents and a friend to join them for an exclusive screening of the Oscar nominated Kenneth Branagh movie *Belfast*.

At the screening, advisors will also learn more about Qatar as a stopover destination and what the latest info is on Qatar Airlines.

Screenings will take place in Melbourne on 15 and 16 Mar, Adelaide on 17 Mar, Sydney on 22 and 23 Mar, and Brisbane on 29 Mar - register to attend **HERE**.

## AlUla trades up

**ALULA** has introduced a new trade-specific website **HERE** for Australian agents, covering off on key attractions, FAQs, virtual tours, and destination sessions.

A webinar about the ancient Saudi Arabian city will take place on 22 Mar, with gift card prizes on offer to be won - register **HERE**.

## Kyushu education

**KYUSHU** Tourism Promotion Organisation is giving agents the chance of scoring themselves a \$100 gift card and three \$50 vouchers when they watch its latest Advanced Kyushu webinar.

To be eligible to win, advisors need to first watch the webinar **HERE** and then follow the links to complete a short questionnaire.

The session focuses on the cultural and outdoor adventures offered on the Japanese island.

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## CTM is recruiting!

Corporate Travel Management (CTM) is undergoing a recruitment drive, with a number of travel consultant roles available across Australia and New Zealand.

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## Bali breaks another wall

IN ANOTHER key sign that Bali is on the precipice of returning to normality as an outbound market, the Indonesian Government has confirmed that visas on arrival have returned.

Following news that mandatory quarantine for fully vaccinated travellers will end this month (TD 02 Mar), the latest decision will see travellers dispense with the need to find a sponsor for a visitor visa, which previously set visitors back around \$330, while a visa on arrival is set to cost Australians about \$47.

The Perth-based President of the Indonesia Institute Ross Taylor told the AFR this morning the visa change would create a major incentive for Aussie travellers to contemplate booking

a Bali holiday.

"As the Australian winter approaches, new flights are introduced and Bali enters its dry season, the attraction of balmy nights sitting on the beach with a Bintang will prove too much for many Aussies and by Jul, we are expecting a strong rebound," Taylor said.

Australia is on a shortlist of countries who have made the visa on arrival cut, joining nations like New Zealand and the US.

COVID-19 travel insurance remains mandatory for tourists.

More than 1.2 million Aussies visited the Indonesian island a year before the pandemic struck.

## WA woos students

WESTERN Australia has launched a new travel portal designed to support the return of int'l students to the state.

The new site offers prospective student travellers information regarding COVID protocols, help with finding and booking flights, as well as assistance with how to apply for financial support.

"We want to see thousands of international students return to our magnificent state and will continue to offer as much support as we can to make their experience as seamless as possible," WA Education Minister David Templeman said.

Students over the age of 16 must obtain a G2G pass and sign a declaration form to enter.

## Competitor match

ADVENTURE tour operator Explore will now allow travellers to access discounts on its tours for those who have taken multiple trips with its competitors.

A customer that has taken two or three trips with a competitor can book an Explore trip with a 5% discount, while those who have booked four to eight trips with a competitor can access a 7% discount, and travellers with more than nine trips with a rival can get 10% off trips.

Importantly, loyalty discounts are funded by Explore and will not impact agents' commission.

## AFTA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



AFTER another week of storms many of our members across QLD and NSW are still cleaning up to reopen their agencies with

some still to face the impact of flooding.

These natural disasters are another blow for our sector where we continue to see suppressed trading conditions.

AFTA has created a disaster relief page where members can access the grant programs to support recovery and will be updated as new programs are announced from the Federal and State Governments.

As members engage with these programs please make sure you provide AFTA feedback on process and structure of the grants so we can advocate for changes.

We have also had a number of members reaching out and asking how they can provide support for those people impacted by this natural disaster.

AFTA has partnered with Australian Lions Foundation to ensure all donations go to those that are impacted, with donations over \$2 tax deductible - see <https://www.givenow.com.au/australianlionsfoundation>.

This week we will continue to push the government for support

and increase our awareness of AFTA Travel Sector Skills Retention and Impaired Recovery Package. This is a critical time and we have confirmed another six meetings, with our first meeting today with Angie Bell, Member for Moncrief on the Gold Coast.

Angie has been a fantastic supporter for the travel and tourism sector and her knowledge was on display.

Angie heard directly from Andi from Zeppelin Travel, Jason Brereton from H.I.S, Michael Snee of Meridian World Travel & Cruise and Michael Chase-Smith and Lisa Story of Orbit World Travel Southport, who all detailed why support was needed for our sector.

Remember if you have met or communicated with your MP, make sure you drop us a note at [meetyourmp@afta.com.au](mailto:meetyourmp@afta.com.au).

The continued pressure and awareness raised by our sector is ensuring we are being heard at this critical time as the Federal Budget is being finalised and we enter the election campaign.

I know how exhausting, challenging and frustrating it is for everyone after two years of consistent advocacy, but we have to remain focused at this critical juncture.

On Fri, I will loop back to everyone on how these meetings went in a video update and if you want an update on any other issue please let me know.

ENTIRE TRAVEL GROUP

# BRITISH COLUMBIA - CANADA AWE INSPIRING

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## Collette cuts Russia

**COLLETTE** has made the decision to cease operating all tours in Russia through to 2023 and withdraw from all other business interests in the country.

The company added that it did not anticipate the military conflict in Ukraine to impact the rest of its European tours, stating it has pledged \$200,000 to support humanitarian organisations operating on the ground during the military conflict.

## A Nice day for EY

**ETIHAD** Airways has announced it will introduce new flights to Nice from 15 Jun, operating twice weekly flights between Abu Dhabi and the French resort city's Cote d'Azur Airport.

Nice becomes the fifth summer route to be announced by the UAE-based airline this year, following services to Crete, Malaga, Santorini and Zanzibar, which will all launch in mid-Jun.

## Trafalgar female-only tours

**TO MARK** International Women's Day, Trafalgar has launched a range of female-only tour options.

Some of the experiences on offer for women include learning about Umbrian weaving from a fourth-generation weaver in Italy, baking bread with women in Turkey's village of Demircidere, as well as sharing a meal with the artisans of Iraq al-Amir Women's Association - an organisation in Jordan which aims to financially empower local women.

"We have always been a champion of women in travel, with the majority of our leadership team female, supporting locally-female run businesses around the world and some of our first female travel directors still with us 42 years on," CEO Gavin Tollman said.

"It was the obvious next step for us to offer women's only departures - with 13 tours

currently available to book, we're excited to grow this series of trips to meet the increasing demand for women only travel options alongside female solo travel growth," he added.

According to SoloTravelerWorld.com, close to 30% of women aged 55 years and above choose guided touring as their preferred travel option, with the latest set of Trafalgar adventures designed to capitalise on this demand by offering expert experiences led by female travel directors.

The operator also noted the increasing importance of women to the travel ecosystem, accounting for at least 80% of all purchasing decisions and contributing hundreds of billions to the travel and tourism industry.

To celebrate the launch of the female-focused trips, Trafalgar is offering 15% discounts on all women's only trips for the month of Mar.

## Mississippi floating

**VIKING** has this week floated out its 386-guest, all outside stateroom *Viking Mississippi* vessel, with the ship set to debut in Jun of this year.

*Mississippi* will sail voyages on the Lower and Upper Mississippi River between New Orleans and St. Paul, making port calls in seven US states.

## Entire flood appeal

**ENTIRE** Travel Group has launched a floods appeal that will see the company direct \$20 from every website booking made in Mar to the Australian Red Cross.

"Even though our industry is still emerging from its own crisis, I believe it is vital that travel companies do whatever they can to help stricken communities recover from this disaster," MD Brad McDonnell said.

Entire has donated around \$250k to various charitable causes over the last decade.



## An unforgettable stopover in Qatar

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## Window Seat

**TRAVELLING** abroad is all about exploring new places and eating new delicacies, but what if your delicious dish was far more precious than you had bargained for?

That was the case for a couple eating out at a restaurant in New Jersey last week, with a man chomping down on a dozen clams discovering mid-way through that he had a pearl in his mouth.

“I was down to the sixth one and when I picked it up on the fork and it looked kinda heavy, but I didn’t think nothing of it,” Michael Spressler remembered.

“Then when I started to eat it I noticed something was in my mouth, I actually thought one of my teeth broke but it was actually a pearl.”

The pearl is a hefty weight and is valued in the thousands of dollars, but for Spressler, the monetary value holds little appeal, revealing more personal plans for the gem.

“I would like to have it set into a nice piece of jewellery, maybe a mermaid or something nautical,” he said.

Now that’s a romantic pearl of wisdom we should all embrace.



## “Two thumbs up” for NZ ski movie



**NEW** Zealand’s ski areas have teamed up for an industry-first snow film and marketing campaign targeting Aussies.

Ski Areas Association of New Zealand’s ‘*See You At The Bottom – The New Zealand Snow Movie*’ offers an in-depth look at each of the country’s three major ski areas of Queenstown, Canterbury and Mt Ruapehu.

Filmed and produced by Diaries Downunder, *See You At The Bottom* features dozens of professional New Zealand skiers and snowboarders, including Olympians Finn Bilous, Tiarn Collins, and Janina Kuzma.

The campaign will be promoted in New Zealand, but largely targeted to Australian skiers and snowboarders, with the aim of inspiring them to book a ski holiday once borders open to experience the facilities, terrain and snow conditions the country has on offer.

Kicking off with Queenstown (**pictured**) and Wanaka, the movie promotes a range of options for skiers and snowboarders, highlighting the destination’s lively bustle contrasted with the tranquillity of Wanaka, an area travellers can find first-timers and Olympians enjoying the same mountain on any given day.

The film then moves to Canterbury, where some of New Zealand’s most breathtaking skiable terrain is found, including the iconic Canterbury Club Fields and Mt Hutt.

The movie culminates in the film’s final section – skiing and snowboarding on a volcano, Mt. Ruapehu.

Often described as “The Meeting Place”, Mt. Ruapehu is home to Whakapapa and Turoa ski areas in the centre of the North Island.

Watch the film **HERE**.

## Members Month

**WYNDHAM** Rewards is offering a 40% bonus on purchased points before 03 Apr as part of its Member’s Month promotion taking place in Mar.

The promotion will also see five deals and discounts provided exclusively to members.



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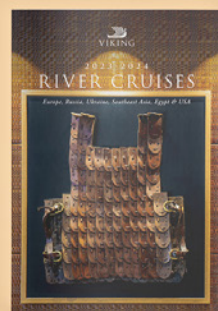
**DISCOVER MORE**



## NEW RIVER BROCHURE

Viking’s new 2023-2024 River Cruises brochure is now available to order from TIFS.

[VIEW ONLINE](#)





## Terrific agents tour Hamilton



**LAST** week Hamilton Island hosted its first travel agent incentive fam in more than two years, with top-selling advisors spending time visiting the Whitehaven Beach Hill Inlet and enjoying a Sunset Sail with Explore Group.

**Pictured** enjoying the rare Australian sunshine is: Lauren Jenkins, MTA Travel; Kyah Dawson, Helloworld Travel Green Hills; Brianna Lenton, Hamilton Island; Vicky Vellis, Travel Associates Cronulla; Rebecca Alcock, Travel Associates Rouse Hill; Jason Brighton, Travel Partners; Jenene Hartnett, Travel Managers; and Riley Carter, Hamilton Island.

## Timeless Royal Bali

**A TIMELESS** Royalty Experience is now available at Raffles Bali, offering guests a gourmet breakfast, a wellness experience, a Royal Afternoon Tea, and a private day tour at the Puri Agung Karangasem Royal Palace.

## Travel, to be sure

**COVID-19** travel restrictions have been removed for travellers entering Ireland, with visitors no longer needing to complete a passenger locator form, provide proof of vaccination or recovery, or a COVID-19 test.

Some restrictions still remain in place for Northern Ireland however, see the full list of forms needed by **CLICKING HERE**.

## Maldives cans PCR

**TRAVELLERS** entering The Maldives are no longer required to present a negative PCR test upon arrival, so long as they are fully vaccinated.

The popular tourist destination defines full vaccination as two doses, not requiring a booster shot to qualify for entry.

Tourists who spend their holiday in facilities on inhabited islands are also no longer mandated to do a PCR test when departing each island.

## SIA expands VTL

**SINGAPORE** Airlines has announced it will now operate Vaccinated Travel Lane services to/from 66 cities in 27 countries, after a recent expansion of the arrangement.

SQ will progressively add Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Da Nang, Denpasar, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hyderabad, Kochi, Kolkata, and Penang to its VTL network from 16 Mar, while Scoot will carry to 11 more destinations.

## Cancun tragedy

**TWO** American tourists holidaying in Mexico have been killed in a snorkelling accident.

The yet-to-be-identified couple reportedly were on board a Squalo Adventures tourism boat in Cancun when witnesses suggest they swam too close to the vessel's propeller, sustaining fatal injuries as a result.

It's not known at this stage what caused the accident to occur.

## MONEY

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

**AU\$1 = US\$0.729**

**THE** Australian dollar has reversed, giving up its early gains, and joining commodity markets, which also fell from highs.

Crude oil jumped above USD130 per barrel in early Mon morning trade, but the "black gold" fell from those highs to back below USD120 in New York markets.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.729
UK	£0.556
NZ	\$1.064
Euro	€0.671
Japan	¥84.23
Thailand	฿23.99
China	¥4.571
South Africa	11.15
Canada	\$0.930
Crude oil	US\$118.1

The Seven Network and Sunrise is broadcasting to Australian viewers live from Qatar this week, thanks to Qatar Tourism.

Sunrises' Sam Mac's weather segments will be live from various key locations around Qatar.

**Want to experience Qatar firsthand?**

Travel Daily will be giving a lucky reader the opportunity to win a spot on Qatar Tourism's VIP mega faml departing May 2022.

## Win

Tune into Sunrise 7-11 March and answer these questions to enter.

Every day you watch and enter gives you an additional entry:

1. Which location in Qatar was Sam Mac broadcasting from?
2. Name one activity they did that day.
3. Which day of the week were you watching?

Email answers to [competitions@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:competitions@traveldaily.com.au)

to be in the running to win yourself a trip to Qatar.



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