

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has four pages of news plus a full page from **Qatar Tourism**.

Qantas goes home

KYLIE Minogue, Hugh Jackman, Ash Barty and Adam Goodes are just some of the stars who will be trotted out for Qantas as part of its latest advertising campaign, which will resurrect the highly successful "I Still Call Australia Home" choir concept.

The fresh take on the campaign will see a new generation of singers belt out the classic Peter Allen hit from various Australian locations, such as Cape Raoul in Tasmania, South Australia's salt lakes, as well as the overseas cities of LA, Tokyo and London.

MEANWHILE Qantas is discounting a million seats across 70 routes, and allowing Frequent Flyers to choose double points or double status credits on any eligible Qantas flight booking made before 01 Apr.

New Tourism leader

SOUTH Australia's newly installed Premier Peter Malinauskas has announced his first front bench, with Zoe Bettison appointed to be the state's Minister of Tourism.

Bettison assumed office in 2012 and will be charged with resurrecting the state's visitor economy, which will include an election promise of \$60 million in extra funding (**TD** 02 Mar).

Pre-flight testing to go

FEDERAL Health Minister Greg Hunt this morning confirmed that as well as lifting the ban on foreign cruise lines (**TD** 17 Mar), the overall biosecurity emergency declaration which has given him special pandemic powers will not be renewed when it expires on 17 Apr.

Hunt said the decision was being made on "unanimous medical advice," and would lead to other consequences including the removal of any requirement for pre-flight testing for COVID-19 on inbound flights.

TN to resume AKL

AIR Tahiti Nui today confirmed it would recommence its Auckland-Papeete flights from 05 May, initially with a single weekly frequency, lifting to thrice weekly over the high season between 03 Jul and 09 Aug.

HLO seeks new CFO

HELLOWORLD Travel Limited today announced the departure of Chief Financial Officer, David Hall, who "has decided to retire from full-time corporate roles to pursue other interests" on 31 Mar.

HLO Group GM Finance, Stephen Coote, will become Acting CFO on 04 Apr, while an executive search will now be undertaken considering both internal and external candidates.

Sylvie Moser has also been appointed as HLO Company Secretary effective 31 Mar.

Non-emergency provisions will remain in place, including requiring double vaccination for entry or exit from the country, and the use of masks on domestic and international flights.

"So that gives you a sense of Australia progressively returning to normal," he said, noting that the best protection against COVID-19 was still vaccination.

Hunt also announced new recommendations for a fourth dose or "winter booster" jab for certain parts of the population including those aged over 65, during a window of 4-6 months after the first booster.

More new TTC roles

THE Travel Corporation (TTC) has announced more details of its new structure in Australia and New Zealand, rounding out the leadership team alongside the global reorganisation involving the new TTC Tour Brands division.

TTC Australia/NZ CEO Dave Hosking will oversee the operations, with long-time TTC executive Scott Cleaver taking an expanded role as Director of Trade Engagement to work across all TTC brands and partners in Australia and New Zealand.

Cleaver will also continue to oversee TTC's global DMC assets, while Louise Levesque will be elevated to the position of GM TTC Brands - New Zealand, reporting to Mark Turner who will continue as MD of TTC in NZ.

Fiji scraps three-night resort rule

THE Fijian Government will remove the mandatory three-night hotel stay requirement for entry into the country from 07 Apr - marking the end of the travel partner system.

The decision was made late yesterday, boosting an already thriving visitor economy which has seen Aussies flock to the Pacific nation in numbers ahead of traditional markets such as the United Kingdom and the United States (**TD** 18 Feb).

"The timing for the decision to relax Fiji's entry requirements could not be better as we head into the best time of year to visit Fiji," FJ MD Andre Viljoen said.

Singapore eases

SINGAPORE has fully reopened with a new vaccinated travel framework for all travellers.

The destination will classify all countries/regions either under the General Travel or the Restricted Category, and accord border measures by individual travellers' vaccination status.

All countries/regions will come under the General Travel Category to begin, with nowhere in the Restricted Category.

MEANWHILE, Singapore Airlines and Scoot will open up their entire network to fully vaccinated travellers from next month.

There will be no on-arrival test or quarantine requirements.

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Stuart is back on track

EXCLUSIVE

SOME may argue that having a one-track mind is a detrimental trait for creativity, but that's certainly not true for everyone.

Just ask Stuart Coffield (pictured), the Managing Director of Geelong Travel, whose unabashed interest in trains has seen him turn around the fortunes of his travel agency during the grimmest part of the pandemic.

Speaking with **Travel Daily** this week, Coffield said that like so many travel agents during the travel shut down, his agency was "simply dying", but instead of selling up he decided to take on a major gamble and charter one of Australia's most iconic rail services, The Ghan.

Coffield's dream was to private charter the train out of Geelong for the first time in its history, and fill it with Aussie travellers desperate to take a much needed holiday, on route to Darwin.

"In Feb last year I started Aussie Trains and then approached Journey Beyond to try and secure a charter and they ended up agreeing to the idea and so then I put down half a million dollars as a non-refundable deposit - and thankfully we sold it out within a week," he said.

"My parents have always taught me to have a go and so we just had a go and the first trip leaves in less than two weeks and we are all just really excited."

Coffield has a busy schedule



coming up with the new venture as well, hosting his first travel show on 03 Apr, the first his business had held in two years.

The Ghan will leave Geelong early next month with 250 guests on board and there is already another sold out trip returning from Darwin to Geelong on 26 Aug, with the bulk of interest coming from the most locked up state of Victoria, followed by NSW and then WA.

For the inaugural trip, journalist Ray Martin will host a special breakfast at Adelaide Oval before the train continues on to Alice Springs and Darwin, a celebrity friend Coffield said had been a tower of support during his darkest days.

"He called me at least once a month during COVID to check I was okay," Coffield confided.

Negotiations are now underway with Journey Beyond to extend the program to 2023 pending a smooth pilot journey.

QR adopts Avios

QATAR Airways' loyalty arm has adopted British Airways' Avios points as its official currency, as the airlines deepen their alliance which already includes codesharing partnerships.

To mark the move, Privilege Club members can earn 10,000 bonus Avios pts in Business or First class, or 5,000 in Economy when they book flights using cash + Avios by 31 Mar 2022 using the promo code "QRAVIOS".

The offer is only available on qatarairways.com or through the carrier's mobile app.

British Airways Executive Club members flexibility can also combine their Avios accounts and make unlimited transfers of their Avios balances between accounts, without incurring transfer fees.

Stop fight'n Mr Biden

THE US Travel Association has composed a second letter to the White House demanding the removal of pre-departure testing for all fully vaccinated inbound international arrivals.

The call follows recent moves made by the United Kingdom and Canada, with the American travel sector keen to ensure their country follows suit by 01 Jun at the latest.

Further calls include repealing the federal mask mandate for public transportation by 18 Apr, the cessation of travel bans and "avoid travel" advisories, and to launch a national campaign to foster more outbound travel.



Window Seat

A VIETNAMESE student was recently refused entry into Australia for attempting to bring in 1.54 kg of cooked beef and more than 8kg of other undeclared goods.

The illegal goods were mislabelled in deliberately misleading packaging, and also contained 2kg of undeclared dried prawns, 500g of dried squid, 1.54kg dried persimmon and 4kg of dried fish.

The secretive student was issued an infringement notice for violating Australia's stringent biosecurity laws, and had his visa cancelled for a minimum of three years.

Undeclared beef is a big no, no at Aussie borders, due to fears of importing foot and mouth disease.

WA to reform Crown

THE Western Australia Government has committed to a reform package to address a range of recommendations made by the Perth Casino Royal Commission this week into the conduct of the Crown property.

The Commission declared Crown unsuitable to hold a gambling licence but stopped short of recommending it be cancelled entirely, instead giving the resort two years to make key improvements to its operations.

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CORPORATE UPDATE

FCTG corporate growth

FLIGHT Centre's corporate travel business is continuing to see a strong recovery in sales, with the division's CEO Chris Galanty telling an investor conference this week that large customers were reinstating their travel programs as concerns over COVID-19 abated.

Galanty claimed FCTG's market share in the corporate sector was growing organically, with 12 of FCM Travel's biggest 20 accounts having been won during the pandemic and clients with annual spends of about \$4.5 billion secured in the last two years.

He highlighted Flight Centre's global diversification, with corporate business in the Americas and EMEA likely to overtake Australia and NZ in the coming months due to recent

major account wins.

He also said the situation in Russia/Ukraine was on the radar, but at this stage had not had any noticeable impact on Flight Centre's leisure or corporate sector recovery.

Galanty said over the next 18 months FCTG planned to roll out more new tech into its corporate businesses from its recent TP Connects investment, boost productivity through automation, and "leverage new market dynamics" with new airline and hotel retailing opportunities.

MEANWHILE the company's SME corporate division, Corporate Traveller is, like much of the rest of the industry, ramping up recruitment efforts to service rising demand.

The business says it is offering a new wage model along with a significant investment in technology, seeking to fill travel manager and sales roles with people who "consider themselves as go-getters, are well versed in travel and ready to solidify their career in the industry".

Corporate Traveller said it had signed 421 new clients over the last 12 months - [FCTGcareers.com](https://www.fctgcareers.com).

CWT appointment

CWT has announced the appointment of Richard Saunders as its new Vice President, Global Partners Network.

Saunders has been with CWT since 2007, and in his new role will report to Vince Chirico, Senior VP Global Supply Chain partners.

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NY loves Aussie agents



I LOVE New York recently engaged Australian travel advisors over brunch (**pictured**), updating attendees on the destination's offering ahead of the United States' summer booking and travel season.

Held in conjunction with United Airlines, more than 30 front line agents gathered at The Butler in Sydney to hear from Chris Tudehope, one of I Love New York's Australian representatives, on the state's regions, and new accommodations & experiences.

United Airlines' Australian National Account Manager Deidre Parkes-Finch also provided an overview of the airline's updated offering and technology in the works.

The grand prize of two United return tickets to New York City was won by TravelManagers Australia's Michelle Michael-Pecora.

The brunch was one of several events and activities I Love New York has undertaken this past month to connect with the Australian trade as international travel recommences.

I Love New York's Aussie representatives have met with agents in Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide, have presented at the Visit USA hybrid expo, and are

currently appearing at the Travel Partners Independent Conference on the Gold Coast this week.

The destination management organisation's engagement with the Australian trade comes as part of a global push to reignite demand for travel to the destination post-COVID.

Last year, New York's Governor Kathy Hochul announced a first-of-its-kind US\$450 million 'Bring Back Tourism, Bring Back Jobs' recovery package, designed to revitalise the state's tourism industry, and jump-start domestic and international visitation to the destination, with international borders now reopening.

Malaysia exchange

EDUCATION Malaysia Global Services is eyeing student exchanges with Australia, as international borders open.

Malaysia is looking to lure back Australian students as its borders open, with Aussies having formerly made up more than 20% of its exchange student intake pre-COVID.

The country's top education representatives and universities are in Australia to launch new ambassadorship programs and meet with Aussie universities.



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Meliá Chiang Mai

MELIA Chiang Mai, a 260-room hotel located in Thailand's mountainous Chiang Mai, is scheduled to open on 10 Apr.

The Asset World Corp-owned property is operated by Meliá Hotels International and will offer guests two restaurants, two bars, and two lounges to choose from, as well as its signature YHI Spa with seven treatment rooms, a fully equipped fitness centre, a swimming pool, a ballroom with four adjoining meeting spaces, and a kids and teens club.

Melia Chiang Mai is located only 6km from the Chiang Mai International Airport, and is close by to tourist attractions such as the Old Town with its ancient moat and red-brick walls.

Wild Lights Taronga

TICKETS have gone on sale for the Wild Lights experience at Taronga Zoo Sydney which roars into life in May as part of the Vivid Sydney festival.

Guests can explore the zoo after dark on a special illuminated night walk, whilst learning from a tour guide about important conservation activities.

Animal lanterns along the trek include a lion pride and gorilla troop, as well as a number of new lanterns under the theme "Where Nature Shines", inspired by all creatures great and small.

Tickets to Wild Lights are priced at \$26.95 for adults, \$19.95 for children and \$24.25 for concessions - for further information, [CLICK HERE](#).

It's time to move on SAF

AUSTRALIA and New Zealand need to establish a Jet Council as soon as possible in order to accelerate the development of a local domestic Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) Industry, a report compiled by the Sustainable Aviation Fuels Alliance of Australia and New Zealand contends.

The *Bridging the price gap for Sustainable Aviation Fuel* report outlines several steps the countries must take to hasten the lowering of aviation emissions and maximise commercial opportunities in the SAF space, borrowing its model largely from similar moves undertaken in the United Kingdom.

"Following the lead of the UK and its Jet Zero Council, Australia and New Zealand should immediately establish

a 'Jet Council' to connect the various levels of government with aviation industry stakeholders to guide the ongoing development of sustainable aviation policies," Bioenergy Australia CEO Shahana McKenzie said.

"As a priority, the Jet Council would work with the various levels of government along with key industry participants to guide and support pathways for SAF R&D in Australia and New Zealand, as well as guide the design and implementation of policies to overcome existing barriers to SAF development," McKenzie added.

The report echoes the sentiments of Qantas CEO Alan Joyce, who only this month said he was very disappointed at not being able to purchase SAF locally due to a lack of development, instead inking a deal with California-based Aemetis to supply the carrier with 20 million litres of blended SAF a year from 2025 (**TD** 15 Mar).

TRAVEL SPECIALS

WELCOME to Travel Specials, *Travel Daily's* Friday feature. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of, send the details to specials@traveldaily.com.au

Book any **Azamara** sailing departing before 30 Mar 2023 between now and 31 Mar and receive bonus ship credit of up to US\$500 for clients. The promotion is valid to book in Espresso or by calling Azamara's reservation team on 1800 570 552 (AU) & 0800 445 733 (NZ).

Uniworld has launched a Flash Sale that has discounted cruise fares leading in from \$2,999ppts across 30 select departures in Europe. Applicable itineraries include the eight-day Enchanting Danube, Venice and the Gems of Northern Italy, and Brilliant Bordeaux voyages, as well as a selection of 15-day sailings such as the Grand France trip which has been discounted to \$5,999pp. Offer ends 31 Mar. [CLICK HERE](#) for info.

Travellers can save 20% on **Intrepid Travel's** five-day Qld Daintree Explorer departing 11 Apr as part of the operator's latest collection of "last-minute deals". Savings are also on offer for the eight-day Ningaloo Reef & Karijini Adventure departing 02 Apr. Call 1300 458 437 for details.

A bonus US\$400 of onboard spending money is on offer for **Cruise Traveller's** exclusive 11-night Luxury Japan Joy sailing the waters of Japan in 2023 when they book by 31 May. The inclusive package includes a flight from Australia and is priced from \$11,700pp. Call 1800 507 777.

Cebu unveils resort

CEBU in the Philippines will welcome its first integrated resort in Dec, the NUSTAR Resort and Casino, featuring a high-tech performing arts theatre and a water theme park.

The site on Kawit Island, which is the biggest entertainment complex outside of the capital Manila, boasts three hotels, a 2,000-person convention centre, and its own wharf to ferry guests from Mactan Island.

Hotel brands include 379-room Fili Urban Resort, Grand Summit Hotel, which will all be managed by Robinsons Hotels and Resorts and is one of the Philippines' top hotel chains.

Test pilot acquitted

A FORMER Boeing test pilot was this week acquitted on charges of misleading the US federal regulator about a flight system that played a role in two deadly crashes involving 737 Max jets.

Mark Forkner was found not guilty on four counts of wire fraud, successfully fighting charges that he was deceptive in his testimony to the FAA with regard to how much training pilots needed to be able to fly the 737 Max safely.

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