

VA resumes SQ J reward bookings

VIRGIN Australia yesterday reintroduced the ability for members of its Velocity frequent flyer program to redeem points for both Economy and Business Reward seats on the Singapore Airlines network.

Currently the redemptions exclude flights to and from China and Hong Kong, and at present reward seats to India on SQ can only be booked via the Velocity Rewards contact centre.

A VA spokesperson said the carrier continued to work closely with SIA to restart Reward Seat redemptions in Premium Economy and First, and for the ability for members to transfer points between the Velocity and KrisFlyer programs - more [HERE](#).

Few surprises in Budget

THE latest \$75.5 million tranche of the COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support Program (CTSP) will be the “third and final” allocation under the scheme, says Tourism Minister Dan Tehan, with last night’s Budget Papers saying the funds for travel agents and tour arrangement service providers “will ensure these businesses can respond to the rising demand for international travel”.

Although the headline number for the travel and tourism sector amounted to \$146.5 million (**TD**

breaking news), most of this had previously been announced, including the CTSP and also a \$60 million boost for Tourism Australia (**TD** 22 Mar).

The Budget allocates \$2 million for a new “visitor economy online employment and skills platform” as well as \$4.8 million for Tourism Research Australia “to capture and analyse more tourism and visitor data to help businesses operating in the visitor economy make improved business decisions,” Tehan noted.

To help address skills shortages, the current caps on Working Holiday Makers will have a one-off 30% increase in 2022/23.

The Minister confirmed the long-term plan for the visitor economy, as laid out in the THRIVE 2030 report (**TD** 26 Nov 2021) was targeting growth to \$230 billion over the next 8 years.

Several other Budget measures may assist industry businesses, including a 120% bonus tax deduction for technology costs, but like all tax-driven initiatives these are only applicable for companies which are profitable.

Dean alive and well

IT WASN'T quite April Fool’s Day, but a macabre rumour spreading like wildfire earlier this week certainly tricked some people after erroneous claims that AFTA CEO Dean Long had suffered a heart attack and died.

It’s understood some slightly panicked phone calls ensued from right at the top of the industry, with a fit and healthy Long telling **TD** that his demise was somewhat exaggerated.

“I’m not dead yet,” he confirmed.

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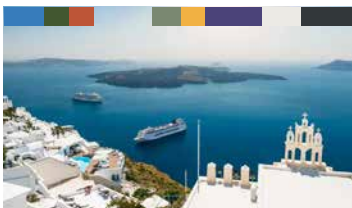
Travel Daily today features six pages of news plus a full page from **Uniworld Boutique River Cruises**.

Tauck about Helen

HELEN Eves has rejoined Tauck as its National Account Manager for Australia after a 12 month hiatus, reporting to Country Head David Clark as she continues to support Tauck’s trade partners.

Uniworld flash sale

UNIWORLD Boutique River Cruise Collection is offering limited-time fares starting at just \$2,999 along with waived solo supplements to celebrate the launch of the 2022 river cruise season - details on [page seven](#).



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Hurtigruten Galapagos deal

HURTIGRUTEN Cruises has signalled its global growth ambitions in the adventure travel market overnight, with confirmation it will take a 24.9% stake in South American tour operator Metropolitan Touring.

The companies have worked together for some time, with Ecuador-based Metropolitan a pioneer of activities in the Galapagos Islands.

Daniel Skjeldam, CEO of Hurtigruten Group, said “we are delighted to invest in Metropolitan Touring, a proud South American company that mirrors our expedition heritage and sustainability values”.

“It is a unique opportunity for us to contribute to a more meaningful partnership, where we can expand quickly, strategically and deliver on our vision for the future together.”

Hurtigruten Expeditions is offering year-round expedition

voyages in close cooperation with Metropolitan touring, using the 90 guest *Santa Cruz II*.

Guests can also undertake a range of land-based South American adventures with Metropolitan pre- or post-cruise, such as Machu Picchu, the Cotopaxi National Park and Quito.

“The strengthened partnership will broaden opportunities to further expand into more unique land-based programs and excursions,” the companies said.

Brooker to Skimax

MARK Brooker has been appointed as Product Manager for Skimax Holidays, joining the snow specialist wholesaler after more than 20 years at Helloworld Travel and its predecessors including Jetset Travelworld Group and Qantas Holidays.

He was most recently Land Contracting Manager at HLO.

IATA AGM switch

THE International Air Transport Association has announced that its 78th Annual General Meeting and World Air Transport Summit will take place 19-21 Jun this year in Doha, Qatar - rather than the previously planned Shanghai.

Qatar Airways will host the event for the second time, with the 2014 IATA AGM also taking place in Doha.

China Eastern Airlines had been set to host the 78th IATA AGM in Shanghai, but the current COVID-19 related lockdown of the Chinese city has led to the last minute venue switch.

IATA chief Willie Walsh said it was deeply disappointing to have to switch away from Shanghai, but “in the meantime we are pleased to be returning to the dynamic aviation hub of Doha”.

The Director-General said the event would see participants reflect on the “shifting political, economic and technological realities facing air travel”.

MyDeal activities

ONLINE retailer MyDeal has announced the Australian debut of a new global activities marketplace, claiming to offer a “one-stop shopping experience for activities and experiences for locals”.

Named Amazed.com, the new platform is expected to expand into New Zealand in the coming months, with plans to launch in the UK and US thereafter.

MyDeal CEO Sean Senvirtne cited the “highly fragmented” supply side of the experiences market, saying “with MyDeal’s 10-year history in building and growing supplier relationships, the reopening of the experiences market post-COVID restrictions, and consumer discretionary spend shifting to travel and experiences, now is the right time for MyDeal to enter this space”.

Sam Pinney is leading the new venture, with more than 250 suppliers already on board including Experience Co.

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Noosa chases trade

TOURISM Noosa will create a new trade microsite and video to promote the destination to travel advisors, as part of plans to refresh the Noosa brand in its key target markets and ensure local suppliers are “trade ready”.

A meeting earlier this month brought adventure operators together to reconnect for an update, with Tourism Noosa Head of Marketing and Events, Adam Townson, noting that some suppliers saw up to 90% of their business from international guests in 2019.

Operators have the opportunity to advertise in the Tourism Noosa Trade Planner which is distributed to the trade around Australia and globally, including in the UK, Europe, NZ and North America, while the new website will provide updated content and “stunning visual assets” to give consultants confidence in selling Noosa to adventure travellers.

AFTA seeks ATAS reviewer

AFTA has kicked off a triennial review of the AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS), advertising a short term contract for an Independent Reviewer to examine the ATAS Charter and Code of Conduct.

The Federation will solicit industry input from interested parties during a submission period from 11 Apr to 08 May 2022, with the appointed Reviewer required to lodge a formal report on their findings to the AFTA Board by 03 Jun.

“The aim of the review is to receive feedback and suggested improvements...into the effectiveness and operation of the ATAS scheme,” AFTA said.

“As the travel sector’s largest accreditation program, it is a central pillar in building consumer and business confidence as we recover from the impacts of COVID-19,” the Federation added.

Applicants for the role are

required to have knowledge and experience of the Australian Consumer Law, travel, legal expertise and code reviews.

Applications should be submitted to AFTA’s Head of Compliance and Operations, Naomi Menon by 08 Apr, with a fixed fee to be negotiated.

UA SAF revolution

UNITED Airlines has announced a collaboration with Houston-based biotech firm Cemvita Factory to develop sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) through a “revolutionary new process” using synthetic microbes and carbon dioxide.

The pact also includes Oxy Low Carbon Ventures, with Cemvita to work on the project converting carbon dioxide into hydrocarbons suitable for SAF which will be commercialised if it meets performance targets.



Window Seat

MEXICO’S luxury presidential jet is now available for weddings, parties or anything else, after President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said the Government had failed to find a buyer for the plane, *AFP* reports.

Lopez Obrador campaigned against the excesses of his predecessors, only flying on commercial services since his 2018 election and calling the 787 an “insult to his people”.

The “wasteful luxury” which has 80 seats, a private bath and executive bedroom, will be rented out to cover expenses, with Lopez Obrador confirming it will be available “if someone is getting married and is going to take their family and friends by air” as well as for birthdays and corporate trips.



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Travel Daily



Voyages' trade rebound

EXCLUSIVE

VOYAGES Indigenous Tourism Australia Chief Executive Officer Matt Cameron-Smith believes the company's facilities, particularly Ayers Rock Resort, will resonate strongly with locals as the country's tourism industry revamps - and the company will be looking to bring the trade along with it.

Speaking to **TD** on the weekend during a joint famil with Qantas celebrating the return of QF flights from Sydney to Uluru (**TD** 28 Mar), Cameron-Smith said agents were well-placed to capitalise on the iconic destination.

"I think the trade will continue to be a bigger part as consumers are looking to de-risk their holiday," Cameron-Smith added.

"The trade play a real role with their expertise around holiday planning, destination planning and uncomplicating things that

might be seen as complicated.

"I think it'll be the rise and rise of the travel agent; I think agents will actually see themselves recover faster," he said.

Key to Ayers Rock Resort's rebirth will be Voyages Tourism's National Indigenous Training Academy (NITA), with many from the program working throughout the company's properties.

"We've seen through COVID, the way the domestic market has really changed the lens, they look at holidays and travel through that sense of purpose, wanting to understand more, and do things that are meaningful. I think it will resonate," Cameron-Smith said.

"Being part of these young people coming through their traineeships and graduating, and having a career in tourism, or hospitality, or retail or horticulture, it just gives that real sense of purpose to your holiday."

Mat McLachlan Ypres unveiling



THE first Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours passengers on France's Western Front in two years were given the rare honour of unveiling a new Australian Memorial in the Ypres Salient earlier this month.

Doug and Julie (**pictured**) whipped the international flag

banner off "Brothers in Arms," a statue depicting two Aussie brothers farewelling one another as one dies of his wounds.

The couple were travelling on a two-day Private Western Front tour in the company of expert historian Pete Smith - more details at battlegrounds.com.au.

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LATAM says ¡hola! to Sydney



THERE were early morning celebrations aplenty at Sydney Airport today, after the first scheduled LATAM Airlines flight in two years arrived from Santiago via Auckland.

The inter-continental reconnection was commemorated with welcoming ANZAC biscuits handed out by the LATAM team to arriving passengers.

Chris Ellis, the carrier's Country Manager Oceania (pictured with colleagues Shalina Sabar and Kate Jenkins), said "we're beyond delighted to reconnect Australia and New Zealand with South America after two years".

"It's been a pleasure to welcome the first passengers from South America today to Sydney and see the rush of emotions as families

Splendor Pacific

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has confirmed its *Carnival Splendor* will return to Sydney in Sep, announcing a 23-night Transpacific Journeys cruise from Seattle via Hawaii and Fiji.

It's priced from \$1,799pp - more info in **Cruise Weekly** tomorrow.

and friends have been reunited," he said.

Currently LATAM is operating thrice weekly Boeing 787-9 aircraft on the route, with plans to move to five weekly flights effective 01 Jul.

NZ tick for THL sale

NEW Zealand's Commerce Commission has given clearance for the sale of the Mighway and SHAREaCAMPER businesses currently owned by THL Limited to Camplify Holdings.

THL announced the NZ\$7.37 million deal last year (**TD** 27 Oct 2021), with the businesses both providing private RV owners with a platform to rent their vehicles to tourists.

The companies said they would now work together to finalise the sale within the next 30 days.

Mexico warning

THE Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has warned Australians against travel to the Mexican state of Zacatecas due to high levels of crime, including kidnapping and extortion.

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EOIs sought for booking platform

THE liquidators of Cairns-based Tourstogo.com Pty Ltd have launched a campaign to sell the business, which ceased trading in Nov last year.

The operation is described as a "turnkey booking platform covering Australia and New Zealand," with assets including a supplier and agent database, payment management system, a financial reporting platform and voucher fulfilment along with a comprehensive backend interface.

There are also 46 "relevant and transferable domain names,"

social media accounts and logos trademarked in Australia and NZ.

Stacey Quaid from Colliers International Cairns said the single-package offering, hosted in a dedicated environment including a testbed server, "incorporates the contacts and intellectual property to facilitate the restart of operations".

The tourstogo.com website is currently operational, but is not taking any new bookings, with expressions of interest in the sale closing at 4pm on 28 Apr - details at commercialrealestate.com.au.

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Tour booking platform for sale





SIA lands in Cairns

SINGAPORE Airlines landed in Cairns for the first time yesterday, as the carrier's network nears 100 destinations.

The arrival of SQ203 marked the first time SIA has operated scheduled passenger services to Cairns (**TD 03 Mar**), with regional wing SilkAir previously flying daily to the FNQ city prior to COVID-19.

Singapore Airlines Regional VP South West Pacific Louis Arul said the arrival was an "exciting step" in the recovery of tourism for Far North Queensland.

Chimu star power

CHIMU Adventures has announced two Antarctica cruises featuring media personalities Adam Spencer, Andrew Denton and Jennifer Byrne.

The departures aboard the *Ocean Endeavour* will help raise funds for the Polar Citizen Science Collective and Lifeline, with Spencer featuring on the Complete Antarctica voyage in Nov this year, followed by Denton and Byrne in Jan 2023 on a cruise dubbed Antarctica Unveiled.

More at chimuadventures.com.

Diversity-focused travel marketing



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.



Osborn House has officially opened its doors to travellers in search of a bespoke and playful escape in the NSW Southern Highlands. The region's new luxe destination offers guests a lavish country home experience in a magnificently restored 19th century guesthouse nestled in the town of Bundanoon. Osborn House features a collection of 22 keys, comprised of 15 suites and seven luxury cabins.



Hilton Hotels' Canopy by Hilton brand has debuted in central New Orleans with the **Canopy by Hilton New Orleans Downtown**. Conveniently located in the heart of the city, the new 176-room hotel, with an integrated restaurant and bar, are influenced by local flavour. Opened alongside Aimbridge Hospitality, the 14-storey Canopy by Hilton New Orleans is ideally located in the city's iconic French Quarter.



Radisson Hotel Group has signed **Radisson Blu Hotel, Perth**, in central Scotland, which is set to open in the second quarter following an extensive renovation. The landmark property first opened in 1890 as one of the original British Transport Hotels.

Sitting within landscaped gardens close to the River Tay, the hotel is undergoing an extensive transformation of all guestrooms and more.

AUSTRALIAN photographer Jarrad Seng has joined a number of big-hitting lens-people, including Annie Leibovitz, in global project to tackle the lack of diversity in travel imagery.

The All-Inclusive Photo Project (AIPP), commissioned by Celebrity Cruises, aims to change the face of travel marketing, and address the under-representation of different groups, including ethnic minorities, LGBT individuals, and disabled people, with the world's first diversity-focused, open-source travel image library, free to all to use.

The new images, some captured in Australia, were unveiled today and feature the work of acclaimed photographers including Seng and Leibovitz, as well as Giles Duley, a triple-amputee English documentary photographer, and Naima Green, a black and queer photographer.

Celebrity Chief Executive Officer

Lisa Lutoff-Perlo said the cruise line wanted its marketing to represent how the world looks, and what it experiences on its ships daily.

The collection features models, musicians, athletes, artists, advocates & activists, and more.

"For far too long, 'all-inclusive' in the travel industry has meant everything on your vacation is included in one price," she said.

"We set out to challenge this conventional thinking by imagining the phrase through the lens of others.

"What Annie and all of the talented artists involved in this project have captured so beautifully, is that for vacations to really live up to the marketing moniker 'all-inclusive,' then they should start by using images that are inclusive of all, not just a few."

To access the free AIPP library, to which Celebrity will continue to add over time, **CLICK HERE**.



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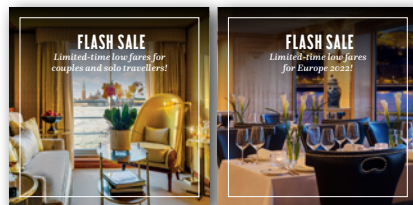
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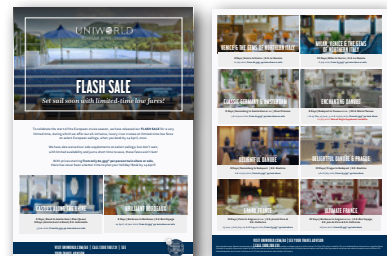
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