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## Today's issue of TD

**Travel Daily** today features six pages of news plus full pages from:

- Tourism Australia
- Norwegian Cruise Line

## FCM retains NSW

**FLIGHT** Centre's FCM Travel Solutions has been reappointed to the NSW Government travel management contract, after a successful tender process.

FCM first won the NSW Govt deal six years ago, with the new contract providing for a further three years plus two additional one-year options.

The pact includes a revised and enhanced technology offering to give users more control over their booking requirements, with nine clusters and more than 80 agencies covered by the contract.

Melissa Elf, outgoing FCM GM Australia, paid tribute to Michelle Leffley, Head of Account Management NSW and her team for "putting together an exceptional tender".

Elf has just been named as MD Corporate for Australia/NZ at Flight Centre Travel Group.

## New Virgin property

**SIR RICHARD** Branson's Virgin Limited Edition has announced the development of a new luxury 28-bedroom property on its Son Bunyola Estate in Mallorca, Spain.

The accommodation is scheduled to open in the northern summer of 2023, and will complement Son Bunyola's existing three standalone villas.

The expansion of the property is part of a major conservation project restoring iconic 15th century buildings on the site.

## TA welcomes travel's return

**TOURISM** Australia (TA) Managing Director Phillipa Harrison this morning formally opened Australian Tourism Exchange 2022 - the first time Australia has been showcased in person to buyers from around the world in over two years.

More than 1,300 delegates are attending the event at ICC Sydney this week, including around 550 international buyers - and in a welcome reflection of normality the "bump-in" for the show had to be shortened because the convention centre was so busy.

Harrison cited figures showing that with the full reopening of borders, as at 01 May Australia was already back to 42% of 2019 international traveller arrivals, but noted that the growth was currently constrained by aviation capacity which is a key focus for governments and airports across the country at present.

"The flights are full, there's lots of demand and it's great to see airlines responding to that - it's a crucial piece of the recovery puzzle," Harrison said.

After an initial rush driven by VFR traffic, bookings have slowed in line with the "natural sales dip in the winter period," but Harrison said there was really good business building for the second half of the year, when

about 60% of pre-COVID inbound capacity is expected to be flying.

Standout markets include Singapore, where flight bookings to Australia are up 59% compared to the same week in May 2019, while the UK is back to about 65% of 2019 volumes.

Harrison noted recent TA consumer research which found "the world now believes there has never been a safer time to travel to and around Australia," while also mentioning the intriguing new Digital Nomad customer segment, bookers of extended stays in Australia who work remotely while they're here.

**MEANWHILE** the Tourism Australia MD also confirmed that post-pandemic, the organisation's focus will firmly shift back to driving inbound tourism, rather than the domestic elements which featured during COVID-19.

"We have some great legacy programs in the domestic market," she said, including a public relations presence.

However while the domestic version of the Aussie Specialist Program will also remain in place, "really our job and focus now is about rebuilding inbound tourism," Harrison told **TD**.

## Indigenous specialist

**TRAVEL** advisors are being invited to an in-person event in Brisbane showcasing Tourism Australia's new Indigenous Experiences training program as part of the Aussie Specialist Program.

Events are also set to roll out across the rest of the country - for details see **page seven**.

## Kerr moves to SYD

**CASSANDRA** Kerr has been appointed as Manager Aviation Development at Sydney Airport.

Kerr was most recently with Qatar Airways as Regional Manager - Australasia, and prior to that spent more than a decade with Virgin Atlantic Airways.

## Travel Daily on location aboard *Pride of America*

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you courtesy of Norwegian Cruise Line, aboard the *Pride of America* cruising around the Islands of Hawaii.

**AFTER** experiencing Honolulu and a visit to Pearl Harbor, trade guests have been welcomed aboard *Pride of America* with a sensational sunset cocktail departure party to kick things off in grand style

Guests on board enjoyed the nighttime cruising to arrive early morning in Maui for two full days to explore the Island.

With port access available day & night it offers the ability to experience Maui in all its beauty, as well as venturing out for the night with the overnight berth.

After departure we again cruise overnight to the Island of Hawaii and Hilo for a full day in port, one of the benefits of this cruise with no daytime sailing.

## New joint for Joyce

**QANTAS** CEO Alan Joyce and his husband Shane Lloyd have paid \$19 million for a six-bedroom waterfront home on Mosman Bay in Sydney.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported the deal on Sat, with the property built in 1908 but fully revamped in 2015 into a three level home with home cinema, wine cellar, netted harbour pool and a private jetty.

The pair are expected to relocate from their current residence in the Cove Apartments at Sydney's The Rocks.

## Sky is the limit 2022

The Malaysia Airlines Sales Rewards Scheme is back. Sell Malaysia Airlines and be rewarded with free flight tickets to book the holiday you deserve.

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## Window Seat

**THIS** column on Fri brought to you the story of an untrained passenger landing a light aircraft after its pilot became incapacitated (**TD** 13 May).

After hearing the incredible story, aircraft captain Charlie Page put together a short instruction manual on what to do if you find yourself in the same position.

Writing for *The Points Guy*, Page's top tips are: learn how to use the radio with the "push to talk" button, & find the aircraft's registration number (it should be directly in your line of sight).

Stand-in-pilots are also recommended to stay clear of any clouds (and other objects) if possible, and perhaps most importantly, stay calm - that tip will surely prove quite difficult!

## EK records strong recovery

**THE** Emirates Group has recorded an 86% rise in revenue this financial year versus 2020/21, reaching AED 66.2 billion (A\$26 billion), according to figures in the airline group's Annual Report.

Emirates Airline reported revenue up by 91%, with the overall group's financial result for the 12 months to 31 Mar coming in at a AED 278m (A\$109m) loss.

The airline tripled the number of passengers it transported this year to 19.6 million passengers, up from 6.6 million last year, while its cargo division also performed strongly, accounting for 37% of EK's total revenue.

EK was operating over 1,100 weekly passenger flights to 127 airports around the world by the end of the last month, with its full Boeing 777 fleet and over half of its A380s in active service.

The airline took delivery of five new A380 aircraft over the year, and added a new destination,

Miami, United States, to its route network in Jul.

Other highlights this past year for the airline include reactivation of strategic partnerships with Qantas and flydubai, and new agreements with a number of tourism organisations.

Looking at the year ahead, EK plans to undertake a major retrofit programme starting Nov, to equip 120 of its existing 777 and A380 aircraft with its latest cabin class plus updated interiors.

Emirates Airline & Group Chairman and Chief Executive HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum said the 2021-22 FY was "largely about recovery", and expects the Group to return to profitability next year.

Maktoum believes EK is "well positioned to play [its] role in contributing to economic growth, facilitating global engagement, and making a positive impact on people and communities".

## SIA seals F1 deal

**SINGAPORE** Airlines has extended its Formula 1 Singapore Grand Prix title sponsorship for three more years.

SQ first signed as the title sponsor in 2014 for four years, and subsequently extended the deal in 2018 and 2020 for two years respectively.

The latest three-year extension was announced on the weekend by Singapore Airlines Group Executive Vice President Commercial Lee Lik Hsin and the international racing series' Managing Director of Commercial Brandon Snow.

"This year's highly anticipated Formula 1 Singapore Grand Prix will be an important milestone for Singapore, marking the return of a major international sporting event to the city after a two-year disruption due to the pandemic," Lee said.

"The race will be warmly welcomed by Singapore residents and visitors alike."

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With more major players in Australian aviation than ever before, the competition to fill seats is heating up. Plus more industry news in the May issue of *travelBulletin*.

**travelBulletin**

## AFTA presses flesh

**THE** Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) has wrapped up its Election Insight webinars, and is preparing to engage the incoming parliament.

Minister for Tourism Dan Tehan completed the series with a webinar last week (**TD** 13 May), where he shared his vision for the sector, along with an update on key areas including payment of outstanding support funds.

The Association's Chief Executive Officer Dean Long said "AFTA has successfully secured the engagement of both Minister the Hon Dan Tehan and Shadow Minister Senator the Hon Don Farrell as part of our Election Insights webinar series."

"We thank both for making time during the election campaign to speak with members and we look forward to continuing to engage with all major parties and key crossbench members when the 47th Parliament is formed."

## A brave new world

**EMIRATES** is planning to accept Bitcoin as a form of payment, as the airline plans to engage with cryptocurrencies.

Along with Emirates' launch of non-fungible tokens (**TD** 19 Apr) to be traded through its websites, the move is part of the airline's new strategy to broaden its capabilities, Chief Operating Officer Adel Ahmed Al-Redha told delegates at Arabian Travel Market 2022 last week.

Emirates will begin onboarding new employees who will be focused on blockchain-related projects such as crypto-payments, blockchain tracking, metaverse, and the trading of NFT collectibles, he confirmed.

According to Al-Redha, Emirates is also looking into using blockchain technology to track aircraft records, and is planning to use the metaverse to transform a number of its processes, such as operations, training, and more.

## Wander Out West Mega Famil



**OVER 30** travel trade partners from Australia and New Zealand participated in Tourism Western Australia's four-day/three-night 'Wander Out West Mega Famil', which began in Perth on 03 May.

Participants were divided into six teams and sent to explore five different regions in Western Australia, including the North West and South West regions, the

Golden Outback, Coral Coast, and Destination Perth.

The teams enjoyed challenges and activities throughout the trip, organised by Corporate Challenge Events, including WA-based quizzes and beach games, before coming back together on the last night for the closing event.

**Pictured**, the Kimberley Camels team sailing into the sunset.

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## 25 years of being a Star

**THE** world's largest and first-ever airline alliance, Star Alliance, formally celebrated its 25th anniversary last Sat, 14 May.

To commemorate the birthday, Star Alliance has unveiled a number of innovations, including a new credit card, which will enable passengers to redeem points across all 26 member carriers when it launches shortly.

Star Alliance has also unveiled a new model which will see it work with non-airline partners, an expansion of its Digital

Connection Service across Europe, the rollout of its biometrics platform, the ability to reserve seats and track baggage locations on codeshare flights & multi-carrier journeys, and more.

"We reflect on the successes of Star Alliance in uniting the leading global airlines, with an eye firmly focused on a future where the customer continues to be at the heart of our work and our global network," said Chief Executive Officer Jeffrey Goh.

"I am very excited for the innovations led by Star Alliance and our member carriers as we aim to be the most digitally advanced airline alliance offering seamless travel experiences with a unique loyalty proposition".

Star Alliance is also marking its 25th anniversary with a new tagline: "Together. Better. Connected".

"We have defined the way the Earth connects for years, and now more than ever, is the time to enable technology to provide seamless journeys and delight the loyal customers of our member carriers," Goh added.

A video showcasing the milestone is at [traveldaily.com.au/videos](https://traveldaily.com.au/videos).

## New NZ Movenpick

**ACCOR** has announced the first Movenpick Hotels & Resorts property in New Zealand, with the official opening of Movenpick Hotel Auckland today.

The 207-room property features such quirks as a "Chocolate Hour," 24-hour Sundae Service as part of the Movenpick brand promise of "indulgence done right".

A second NZ Movenpick property will debut in Wellington in Jul, with both hotels featuring eateries making them "dining destinations in their own right," Accor said.



### Sales Director

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## FTE 2022 comes to a close



**THE** Fijian Tourism Expo (FTE) 2022 wrapped up on Fri, with attendees engaging in a full day of meetings between local tourism operators and buyers from around the world.

More than 80 different Fijian tourism suppliers showcased their wares, with the excitement palpable, with the country's tourism industry having not enjoyed any face-to-face interactions in two years.

The Expo was capped off at night by a farewell party held across Hilton Fiji Beach Resort & Spa's KORO restaurant, and Sofitel Fiji Resort & Spa's Waitu Beach Club, both overlooking Nadi Bay from Denarau Island.

The party was played to by local Fijian act InsideOut.

**Pictured top,** Fiji Airways' General Manager Marketing Christina Templin and Business Development Manager Tourism Partnerships Nikita Devi, with Tourism Fiji's Conny Schultz,



Robert Thompson and Sarah-Louise Robinson; **pictured bottom** is the FJ team: Sales Manager Elizabeth Combrink, Templin, Manager Global Advertising Lucy Samisoni, and Account Director Thalia Mills; while **inset** is the Go Dirty Tours Fiji team: Marketing & Communications Manager Liz Scott, and Director Anand Achari, with their all-terrain vehicle - a setup which landed them on the front page of local newspaper *The Fiji Times*.





## FJ lauds Aviation Academy

### EXCLUSIVE

**FJI** Airways Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer Andre Viljoen told *Travel Daily* if it wasn't for the airline's new Aviation Academy, there is no way it would have been able to restart its international network late last year (*TD* 01 Dec 2021).

Speaking at last week's Fijian Tourism Expo, Viljoen credited the fully integrated training centre Fiji Airways developed during the pandemic as the key reason the airline is now able to operate international flights such as its four services to Australia as well as its popular Los Angeles-Nadi frequencies.

Without the Academy, Fiji would unlikely have been able to relaunch the new Nadi-Adelaide route, which was announced at FTE to much fanfare (*TD* 13 May).

"We would have now been running around the world trying to get our pilots," Viljoen explained, adding "we made sure we used the time you would never usually have during COVID to do all the upgrades, and today we see the benefit."

Offering required regulatory biannual training for airline pilots, as well as a range of model-specific aircraft training, the Academy has delivered an incredible amount of cost-efficiency to FJ, Viljoen explained.

"When we looked at justifying the business case setting up a centre, it was a no-brainer.

"We started doing the math and said wait a minute, this will pay for itself in four years - no brainer - and it made a big difference."

A local centre for Fiji Airways also makes it easier for Fijian women to pursue a career with the airline, with the training centre being one of the reasons FJ's Airbus A330 Captain Seini Cornish was able to pilot the world's first all-female, long-haul flight to Singapore (*TD* 09 Mar).

"Historically it was difficult to bring a first officer woman to a captain level, because when you do that type of upgrade, you're going to do 16 sessions, and some of them are married and have kids, so to send them away for six-eight weeks at a time just isn't practical," Viljoen said.

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## Selling Australia for 52 years!



**TOURISM** Australia Managing Director Phillipa Harrison today honoured veteran Aussie travel operator and inbound wholesaler Bruce Hodge, whose Canada-based Goway Travel has now been showcasing Australia to a global travel audience for more than half a century.

Originally planned for a 50th anniversary celebration at the cancelled 2020 Australian Tourism Exchange, Hodge's milestone achievement was commemorated with him being named an official "Friend of Australia".

**Pictured** receiving the accolade from Harrison, he quipped that "I actually started the business when I was four".

The advocacy program selects notable personalities who really sell the Australian story, and Harrison told Hodge "I can't think of anyone who deserves this more than you do".

Hodge said the key thing he highlights when promoting travel to Australia is the friendliness of the people in the industry.

"The biggest thing I always promote is the people - the friendly Aussies," he said.

"I've been very very privileged to be an Australian, selling Australia, selling the most wonderful travel destination in the world, and from that point of view I think I've been a very lucky person," Hodge added.



### Regional Sales Manager - Southern Australia

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## Auckland is Calling - loudly!



**AUCKLAND** tourism operators made the most of open borders last week, promoting their city and region to international trade partners at the *Auckland is Calling* trade event on 11 May at The Langham, Sydney.

More than a dozen Auckland hotels and tourism operators had the opportunity to showcase Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland at the event, which coincided with the landing of the *Auckland is Calling* marketing campaign in Australia.

Tourism New Zealand's GM in Australia, Andrew Waddel, was at the event and said, "To be able to tell the story of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and share exciting new updates in person, is a step towards reconnecting the industry and encouraging Australians to travel to NZ soon."

"With the borders open, we have seen strong demand within travel trade, getting those city breaks and summer holidays booked in the diary...we look forward to welcoming them again," Waddel enthused.

Australians comprised nearly 45% of international arrivals to Auckland and contributed around 20% or \$1.9 billion of Auckland's annual international visitor spend, prior to COVID-19.

The Auckland event followed two days of the Tourism NZ Regional Showcase, where almost 30 Regional Tourism Organisations presented to Aussie trade partners.

**Pictured** from back left: Susan O'Connor, Sculptureum; Katie Adamietz, Crowne Plaza Auckland; Victor Fung, Jireh Hospitality; Gavin Oliver, EcoZip Adventures; Chris Sattler, Auckland Seaplanes and Waiheke Wings; Benjamin Trotter, Ramada Newmarket; Sarwan Singh, Cordis Auckland; Richard Crouch, Ramada Newmarket; Valentina Tricomi, Merlin Entertainments; Amy Gibson, Weta Workshop; Fiona Doyle, Auckland Unlimited; Keshleen Wilde, New Zealand Maritime Museum; Caroline Ah Chong-Douglas, SkyCity Auckland; Ral Italiano, TFE Hotels.

Travel Daily

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## Avianca, Gol deal

A PROPOSED merger between Brazilian carrier Gol and Colombia-based Avianca will create a "pan-Latin American airline network," according to the investors behind a new holding company called Abra Group.

Up to US\$350 million in funding will underpin the deal which is scheduled to be finalised during the second half of 2022.

Avianca will remain a member of the Star Alliance, and each carrier will continue to operate independently, according to a statement from Abra.

## SKY appoints gsa

GREEK airline SKY express, which currently flies to 34 domestic destinations and an increasing number of European ports, has appointed AirlinePros International as its General Sales Agent in Australia.

The appointment will provide customised services to Australian SKY express' customers, and strengthen the airline's reach in the Asia-Pacific.

AirlinePros has worked with SKY in the United States to provide commercial support and ARC coordination for several years.

## BROCHURES

**WELCOME** to Brochures of the Week, *Travel Daily's* Monday feature. If your firm is releasing a new brochure you'd like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description summarising its features and itineraries, including a PDF of the front cover, and contact details to [brochures@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:brochures@traveldaily.com.au).



### Oceania Cruises - 2024 Tropics & Exotics

Oceania Cruises has unveiled its 2024 collection which offers 55 itineraries featuring more than 230 cruises with overnight stays, and the line's largest-ever set of Grand Voyages. The brochure showcases tropical expeditions to the Caribbean and South America, and a wide selection of European options, which will see guests travelling to the Greek Isles, Iceland, and the Baltic. The 53-day Glories of Alaska & Asia sailing is a standout option, with guests able to explore Alaska and the Pacific Northwest followed by some of the best Asia has to offer including Japan, China, Vietnam, and Thailand.



### MoaTours - 2022-23 Small Group Escapes

MoaTours has published its latest program catering to mature travellers, featuring 27 tours ranging from four- to eight-night stays, from Jul 2022 until May 2023. Travellers can choose from a selection of North Island and South Island itineraries, as well as Christmas tours, Garden tours, and Special event tours, such as the Hawke's Bay Art Deco Festival. The brochure highlights the new seven-day Back Country Tracks: Rakaia to Kaikoura Coast itinerary, which takes guests through the back roads of Canterbury, the Hurunui, Kaikoura and Clarence River Valley.

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