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INDEPENDENT HOLIDAY PACKAGE EXPERTS

Travel Daily

on location in Cairns

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Collette, which is today hosting key industry partners in Cairns for a Bounce Back Forum.

TITLED "From Isolation to Inspiration", the one-day Collette Forum is providing a welcome opportunity for the industry to reconnect and focus on the many exciting opportunities ahead.

Participants are sharing their learnings through the pandemic, in a collaborative effort which celebrates what is truly special about the travel industry.

Last night guests were welcomed by Collette CEO Dan Sullivan and Head of Sales Christian Leibl-Cote, both of whom have travelled from the US to attend the event.

Today's sessions include several panel discussions with travel agency owners and suppliers, as well as views from the wider consumer market and in-depth discussion about ongoing trends across the industry.

Collette highly optimistic

COLLETTE Travel CEO Dan Sullivan today confirmed the tour operator's revenues have already recovered to 83% of 2019 levels, with the company having so far operated more than 1,500 post-pandemic departures.

Speaking in Cairns this morning at the 2022 Collette Forum, Sullivan said most of the demand was coming from the US market, with other source markets including Australia and Canada slower to respond to the reopening of destinations.

However "2023 looks very optimistic...once travel turns on people go, and they want to go, and it makes a difference".

In America about half of the retail market is "saying they want to travel somewhere," Sullivan said, but the propensity for group travel is lower, with about 35% of the US market keen to get going.

He said border reopenings were a key factor in driving demand, citing the example of Ireland which reopened on 01 Jul last year, and just four weeks later "we had three groups in there".

"It's a matter of getting the

message out that, hey, you can go, and building confidence in travellers," Sullivan said.

Collette has also seen a very strong response to its "cancel for any reason" policy which has helped reassure tentative travellers and convince them to put their money down.

Another key factor that has kept Collette in good stead is that the company refunded 100% of all bookings which were forced to be cancelled during the pandemic - an amount in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Sullivan is very positive about the recovery of the touring sector, saying he believes it's "going to come back stronger than all of the other markets".

"The only way to see the world right is to do it by land," he said.

Rex axes MEL-ABX

REGIONAL Express Airlines has announced it will withdraw from the Albury-Melbourne route later this month, an operation it has serviced for almost 40 years.

Rex Deputy Chairman John Sharp said, "this route is the casualty of Qantas' illegal predatory behaviour to drive out competition in a war of attrition, knowing that its competitors do not have the balance sheet to lose money indefinitely".

He said pre-COVID 22,000 passengers a year flew between the cities, "hardly enough for one carrier, let alone two" with the entry of QF adding another 31,000 seats of capacity.

"It is with a heavy heart that we have to exit this route...Rex has no choice but to look after itself."

Today's issue of *TD*

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including **Business Events News**, plus full pages from:

- Tourism Australia
- Travelmarvel

DL commits to paying 5% comm

DELTA Air Lines this morning confirmed it will continue to support the travel industry by maintaining its current 5% base commission level.

Nicole Bennett, DL Sales Manager Australia/NZ, made the announcement at the Collette Forum in Cairns this morning.

"The support we got from this industry while we continued to fly through the pandemic (even when we could only carry 12 passengers - thank you Australian government!) was amazing.

"It's time for payback," she said.

Referring to the current very high prices in business class to the USA, Bennett quipped "if you get 5% on a \$21,000 fare, you're welcome!"

New Cal easing

AUTHORITIES in New Caledonia today announced the removal of the pre-departure RAT test requirement for vaccinated travellers coming from "green" and "orange" countries, which includes Australia.

A RAT test within 48 hours of arrival in New Caledonia is still required, however this can be done for free at pharmacies across the country.

However international cruise ships are still not permitted to enter New Caledonian waters.



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DISNEY DAYS 2022

LIGHTYEAR

MELBOURNE 20 JUNE | SYDNEY 21 JUNE | BRISBANE 22 JUNE

SAVE THE DATE

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Points in the pouch

TOURISM Australia is inviting travel advisors to become an expert in all things Aussie.

Qualify for Tourism Australia's Aussie Specialist Program this month and be rewarded with a bonus 250 points to spend in the "store" - see **page 8** for more.

Jetstar Aeronology direct

EXCLUSIVE

JETSTAR is taking a more aggressive approach to marketing its flights through travel resellers, with a new direct connection via the Aeronology technology platform facilitating weekly payments, as a key improvement on the current instant purchase arrangements via the Jetstar industry portal.

Aeronology's new Jetstar Direct Connect for Travel Advisors platform allows agents using the Aeronology via Express Tickets system in Australia or NZ to now book and ticket off the same screen as their GDS, via Direct Connect access directly to Jetstar, and down to last seat availability.

"Therefore travel agents have accessible content to all Jetstar services in Asia, Australia, New Zealand and Japan," according to Aeronology CEO Russell Carstensen.

"Tickets can now be paid for weekly via Express Tickets normal invoice...and the travel advisor can add on their own markup and use their own logo on the Jetstar flight itinerary," he said.

Carstensen said Aeronology was committed to providing its travel agent users the best point of sale system in the world, with the addition of Jetstar as the first low-cost carrier to the company's existing suite of multi-GDS and NDC airlines further enhancing its "best in class booking engine".

"Aeronology is extremely proud of its technology and distribution relationship with Jetstar...to provide our customers, the travel advisors, the ability to sell Jetstar off our platform and be able to bundle packages together in key leisure markets will be critical as the market evolves, rebuilds, and expands," Carstensen enthused.

"Travel advisors will be able to easily charge a fee for their service, whereas in the past it was nearly impossible," he added.

Hobart hotel buy

LA VIE Hotels & Resorts has acquired the iconic Islington Hotel in Tasmania's largest city.

Celebrating its 175th anniversary this year, the beautifully curated South Hobart hotel features 11 individually appointed guestrooms, complemented by contemporary details and world-class art.

The Islington Hotel boasts breathtaking views of Mt Wellington, and each of its rooms are individually appointed with luxury furniture and antiques that aim to reflect the property's unique Tasmanian history.

Earn \$100 per cabin

TRAVELMARVEL is offering travel agents \$100 per cabin booked on eligible 2022 European river cruise bookings.

The trade offer marks the return for the brand in Europe, with cheap prices also available.

See **page 9** for more details.

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Travel Daily on location aboard Pride of America

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

HAVING *Pride of America* visit the four main Islands of Hawaii enables guests to see them all freely with the advantage of a single room unpack and stay.

Today guests will experience Kauai, with the first of two days to explore this picturesque garden island.

With another overnight berth providing day and night options for shore experiences, Kauai offers great snorkelling and beaches showcasing the best of what Hawaii has to offer.

Trade guests visited the 3,000 foot deep Waimea Canyon as well as the Fern Grotto.

Webjet 2022 turnaround

WEBJET'S financial results for the year to 31 Mar (*TD* breaking news) reflect the investments the group made in the pandemic, with the business returning to profitability in the second half.

The second half of the period also saw the WebBeds accommodation operation back in the black, but the overall result was still a loss, impacted by the \$14 million write-off of the Online Republic brand which had previously operated Webjet's now defunct cruise business.

Working capital continues to improve, with a cash surplus of \$4 million per month - versus a \$5.5 million monthly cash burn in the prior corresponding period.

CEO John Guscic acknowledged the "special cooperation of our global industry partners" as the company endeavoured to minimise disruption.

"This year has been one of incredible and unprecedented

industry challenges, consequent upon the chaotic changes in travel plans and restrictions which have put all travel industry service levels under enormous stress," he said, thanking customers for their flexibility and understanding particularly as resources are deployed to cater for markets rebounding strongly.

"FY22 was a year of recovery... we are now cash flow positive, our two largest businesses returned to profitability and we are seeing markets rebound strongly as travel restrictions continue to ease," he said.

The OTA business benefited from bookings spikes as domestic borders opened in Australia, but international bookings are still subdued, which Guscic attributed to airline capacity still being well below pre-pandemic levels.

Webjet is forecasting a return to pre-pandemic booking volumes in the Oct 22-Mar 23 period.

Biz events Fij's focus

TOURISM Fiji is hiring for a Business Events Manager to ensure the country's MICE sector has one united voice.

Speaking to *TD* last week, Tourism Fiji CEO Brent Hill said the country had all the makings of a world-class business events destination, but required top-down representation to ensure the nation is marketed as such.

Hill said the rising tide of the return of the MICE sector should work to lift all ships.

"We actually have some really good facilities, we've obviously got the Convention Centre [at the Sheraton Fiji Golf & Beach Resort] plus the ballroom, Sofitel has a large ballroom, Marriott has a fantastic facility, InterCon has a fantastic facility...Shangri-La also can hold like quite a large number of guests...so we've got some really strong facilities," he enthused.

More business events news available on **page six**.

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Hangin' loose in Hawaii



EARLIER this week this group of Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) guests explored parts of the Hawaiian island of Maui, on a *Pride of America* shore excursion to Iao Needle Valley State Monument.

The spectacular Iao Needle is a natural edifice formed during an ancient lava flow, abruptly rising 400m from the valley floor, surrounded by lush vegetation.

There's also a botanical garden showcasing some of the plants brought in by Hawaiians who settled in the region.

Pictured revelling in the great outdoors are: Todd Hamilton, Senior VP of Sales for NCL; Greg Wilson from CruiseCo; Gareth Evison of Imagine Holidays; NCL Director of Sales ANZ Damian Borg; and Josh Duncan from Flight Centre.



CLICK to read

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

WA courts Brits

TOURISM WA has formed a partnership with UK tourism operators to position Perth as a desirable destination for Brits to take their next holiday.

Trailfinders and dnata have signed the marketing agreement with the WA Government covering the next two years to help the state's battered tourism sector, and coincides with the resumption of direct Perth to London flights on 23 May.

Under the terms of the deal, which forms part of the \$195 million Reconnect WA package, the state will be promoted through Trailfinders' and dnata's websites, including their consumer and wholesaler databases, as well as through online advertising, retail networks, direct mail and ads in UK newspapers.

Centre stage of the campaign will be the city's wine experiences, as well as road trips from Perth to regions such as Kalbarri National Park and Ningaloo Reef.

UK source market initiatives will also cover working more closely with the British travel trade and re-establishing key aviation routes with airline partners.



Window Seat

SADLY this party won't actually appear on your Federal Election ballot papers this Sat.

Steve "The Points Whisperer" Hui from iFlyFlat has launched a spoof campaign urging people to vote 1 for the Legroom Party.

Bus stop artwork (**pictured**) promoting the movement highlights such policies as "raising the seat surplus" and "Business class tax cuts".

The Legroom Party platform also proposes the abolition of Points + Pay rewards seats and promises Upgrades for Everyone if its MPs are elected.

Now that's something we can all get on board with.



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Regional Sales Manager - Southern Australia

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Hurtigruten Group is not your average travel company. With big ambitions and major local, innovative initiatives taking us into 2023, 2024, 2025 and beyond, we are seeking the best in our field to join us on this journey.

Be part of the next big change in travel, working amongst a global team creating opportunities for our people and our travellers. It's fun, it's fast and it is rewarding.

We are now hiring for multiple roles in Sales and Marketing.

Visit <https://www.hurtigruten.com/group/people/>

Swinging into Qld's Cape Tribulation

TREETOPS Adventure, Australian treetop and zipline aerial experiences operator, has announced plans to open the Treetops Adventure-Cape Tribulation in Jun.

The experience will offer visitors a bird's eye view of the Daintree Rainforest through a fully guided two-hour Zipline Tour.

Tickets are priced at \$95 for under-17s and \$135 for adults, but visitors who book for the opening weekend will get 50% off - [CLICK HERE](#) for more info.

UK walking tours

EUROPE self-guided walk operator, On Foot Holidays, has revealed the addition of six new walking routes in the UK.

Four of the new adventures are hikes of up to seven nights with walkers staying at a different inn each night, while two routes are 'Short Break' holidays, offering travellers a different walk each day and a three or more night stay in one inn.

Bookings made by 30 Sep will receive current 2022 walk prices - [CLICK HERE](#) for more.

Virtuoso opens new office



VIRTUOSO recently moved into its new Sydney office to accommodate its small-but-growing team.

Earlier in the year, the opportunity arose to create a new open-plan office space aligning with Virtuoso's values.

The new workplace incorporates Sydney's rich history, is close to the city's downtown district, and offers green space and fresh air.

On hand for the ribbon-cutting was Chief Executive Officer & Chair Matthew Upchurch, **pictured** with local General Manager Fiona Dalton.

"We're delighted to open our new office: this space symbolises a fresh new chapter for our team,

an opportunity to come together in a beautiful environment that exercises not only our collaborative productivity but also our creativity for the benefit of all in our Virtuoso regional community," Dalton said.

Israel scraps tests

TRAVELLERS heading to Israel will no longer need to take a PCR test upon arrival at Ben Gurion Airport, or before boarding flights to Israel, as of 21 May.

The country's Health Ministry said the update to the rule was a result of declining COVID-19 morbidity, and will apply at all land and sea crossings.

ATG doubles impact

ATG'S OneTomorrow fund is now giving the company's guests the opportunity to donate to people affected in Ukraine due to the ongoing conflict.

Run in conjunction with UNICEF's Humanitarian Action for Children, money will help provide access to water, sanitation, nutrition, education, health and protection services for citizens affected by the conflict.

ATG has confirmed it will also match each of its guest's donations up to \$1,000, effectively doubling the impact on the ground.

For more information about the initiative, [CLICK HERE](#).

Rose smells sweeter

FIONA Rose Representation has relaunched after being closed for business over the last two years of COVID lockdowns.

Managing Director Fiona Rose said in a statement on LinkedIn that she is "delighted to be representing some beautiful properties".

Fiona Rose Representation has been a stalwart in the hospitality sector, particularly in Australia & New Zealand, for over 30 years.



Sales Director

It's time! Are you passionate about exploration and travel, as well as your professional career?

It's time to get out of your comfort zone, lead a team of sales driven, best-in-class executives and be inspired. Be empowered and become part of an innovative global business with a strong and proud Norwegian heritage based on genuine values of trust, respect, ownership and transparency. We are a global travel and expedition cruise company committed to taking care of our guests, wildlife, nature, the communities we visit, and we're setting a new standard of sustainability for the travel industry.

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Marketing Executive - Trade

Are you stepping up in your career and delivering best-in-class initiatives?

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ICC's comeback

INTERNATIONAL

Convention & Exhibition Centre (ICC) Sydney is on track to reach its pre-pandemic levels of annual delegate spend (\$900m).

The centre is expecting to draw 300,000 visitors to Sydney's CBD and the Darling Harbour Precinct this season, with 150 restriction-free events on its calendar.

This month marked the return of international business events to the ICC, including the Smart Energy Conference and Exhibition and the INDO PACIFIC International Maritime Exposition 2022.

MEANWHILE the ICC announced a new "modern and sleek" website design featuring updated organiser tools for event planners.

WA LEADS THE WAY IN EVENTS

TOURISM WA has welcomed an announcement from the State Government that it will provide an extra \$31 million in funding for WA's tourism events as part of the 2022-23 state budget.

Tourism Minister Roger Cook said, "a revived program of business events will help to create an economic legacy beyond the value of initial tourism expenditure - helping us build towards a bigger, better Western Australia."

A large portion of the funding (\$20 million) will go towards the new Major Events Fund, of which \$5 million has been allocated for hosting business events.

Business Events Perth Chair Bradley Woods welcomed the news and said the funding recognised the important role that business events played in strengthening and diversifying the state's economy.



"This funding boost is well timed as we continue our efforts to secure lucrative business events to re-energise and rebuild the many venues and small businesses who are still struggling two years into this pandemic".

Tourism WA Managing Director Carolyn Turnbull stated that the funding will assist Tourism WA in actioning its events strategy, and

highlighted the soon-to-launch WinterLive campaign, created with Optus Stadium (pictured) to promote major events taking place in Perth over Jun and Jul.

These events are set to attract interstate and international visitors, with the line-up including State of Origin - Game II, ICON, Perth's International Festival of Football, and nine AFL matches.

Multimillion dollar update for Hordern

SYDNEY'S Hordern Pavilion has undergone a multimillion dollar seating upgrade, which is "just the beginning" of changes to come ahead of the venue's 100th birthday in 2024.

The upgrade offers more seated, standing and tiered event modes including exhibitions, large corporate functions, theatre events and smaller capacity concerts.

Playbill Group Managing Director Michael Nebenzahl, who has managed the Hordern for over 20 years, said the venue is "extremely versatile and continues to expand its reach into other business, community and charity events".

Hordern has hosted a number of conferences and exhibitions, including Sydney Build, UNSW Careers, and TED Talks.

Te Pae now open

TE PAE Christchurch

Convention Centre hosted a welcome dinner last week to showcase the new centre to clients, colleagues, suppliers and friends, in a show of appreciation for their support.

The menu featured food from the Canterbury region, including Akaroa salmon and Pure South Silere lamb, and guests were entertained by performances of Maori songs and local musicians.

General Manager Ross Steele said, "While we have had a difficult start, this wonderful building is an asset for Christchurch which will provide opportunities for people to gather and exchange ideas, to come up with solutions that will better the world we live in, and all the while providing economic benefit for our city".

Bangkok to host ICCA 2023

THE International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) has revealed Bangkok as the chosen city for its 62nd annual congress next year.

The meeting, supported by Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), will take place from 12-15 Nov 2023, with more than 1,000 overseas and 200 Thai delegates expected to attend.

The event will give Bangkok the opportunity to highlight its achievements from the first half of its 20-year Strategic Development Plan (2013-2032) to transform itself into the 'Metropolitan City of Asia', and to showcase Thailand's MICE destinations.

TCEB believes the congress will be a "tremendous learning opportunity for Thailand's MICE Cities and local associations".

Brekky for champs

EXHIBITION and Events Association of Australia (EAAA) is hosting a special breakfast on Wed 01 Jun at Randwick Racecourse to celebrate Global Exhibition Day.

The two-hour event will start at 7am, and will include an announcement about the launch of a special sustainability project, plus an audience discussion about the industry - for more details and to register, [CLICK HERE](#).

IFEA workshops

THE Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) has teamed up with the International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA) to provide five free virtual workshops for festival and events professionals.

For more detail on the one-hour workshops, which are part of the 'Growing Success' series, [CLICK HERE](#).

APPOINTMENTS

WELCOME to Industry Appointments, *Travel Daily's* Thursday feature which has the latest job appointments from across the industry. If you have just appointed someone to a new position and would like to update the industry email appointments@traveldaily.com.au.

The Langham, Hong Kong has appointed **Sherona Shng** as its new Managing Director. Shng also holds the title of Regional Vice President, Operations – Asia of Langham Hospitality Group, and has been in hotel operational leadership roles for more than a decade.

QT Hotels & Resorts has announced the appointment of **Chris Greening** as General Manager of **QT Wellington**. Greening brings to the role over a decade of experience in the hospitality industry in New Zealand and Australia, having worked across a number of luxury hotel brands, including acting as General Manager of Crystalbrook Collection Albion, and his latest role as Executive Assistant Manager at QT Gold Coast.

The new board for Italian shipbuilding company **Fincantieri** has named **Pierroberto Folgiero** as CEO and **Claudio Graziano** as Executive Chairman. Folgiero, who led Maire Tecnimont Group as CEO since 2013, will take over from longtime Fincantieri CEO Giuseppe Bono.

Club Med has welcomed **Michelle Nickelson** as its new Business Development Manager for Queensland, Northern Territory & Northern NSW. Nickelson, who commences her role this week, will be based in Brisbane. She has over 30 years' experience in the airline industry, including roles with Alliance Airlines, Air New Zealand & Finnair, and was awarded the NTIA Award for Best Sales Executive in Australia in 2018.



PR Lead

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Hotel to break the shackles



THE former Berrima Correctional Centre in the Southern Highlands of NSW is set to be transformed into an entertainment precinct, which will include the construction of a new boutique hotel.

The site was purchased from the NSW Government for \$7 million by Blue Sox Group, with the development proposal to incorporate restaurants, bars, events spaces, museums and art galleries.

While the asset will seek to be turned into a major tourism spinner, the heritage of the jail,

built in 1839, will be maintained within any new construction.

Blue Sox Group also revealed it will work with local Indigenous groups and the Local Aboriginal Land Council on collaborative ideas to preserve and celebrate the wider site's heritage.

Located close to Australia's oldest licensed inn, the property already boasts two historic cottages and a tennis court.

Pictured: An aerial view of the former Berrima Gaol.

New Coral voyage

CORAL Expeditions has released 'An Extraordinary Journey to Wallis & Futuna', its inaugural exploration of the region.

On 16 Dec, *Coral Adventurer* will cast off from Cairns on the epic journey, which has no fixed itinerary.

The 21-night voyage sails from Cairns to Auckland, and will showcase layers of cultural influences marked by ancient Polynesian thatched houses, the traditional kava drink, and imposing Catholic cathedrals.

Read more about the voyage, view live availability and book online **HERE**.

Don't act on it yet

SPIRIT Airlines is advising its shareholders not to act on the new offer made by JetBlue to purchase it (**TD** 18 May).

The airline's Chief Executive Officer Robin Hayes addressed shareholders directly, writing an open letter and proposing a new merger deal.

The airline said it will "carefully review JetBlue's tender offer to determine the course of action that it believes is in the best interests of Spirit and its stockholders".

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