

## Win Aussie Open tix

**QATAR** Airways has teamed up with **Travel Daily** to give away 25 tickets to the Australian Golf Open in Melbourne.

The ISPS HANDA Australian Open golf tournament is played from 01-04 Dec at Victoria and Kingston Heath Golf Clubs in the Melbourne sandbelt, and will for the first time be a dual-gender Open featuring both sexes playing on the same venue at the same time, for separate trophies.

The first 25 people to email **HERE** and who are also signed up to the Qatar Airways Trade Portal will receive a one day pass to the major sporting event for any day.

## "We are back baby"

**BUOYED** by a resurgent half year 2022/23 financial result, Webjet Managing Director John Guscic boldly declared this morning "we are back baby".

The top line numbers for the six months to 30 Sep 2022 showed that overall group bookings for the company had returned to pre-pandemic levels, Total Transaction Value (TTV) had been restored to 90% of 2019 volumes, and group underlying EBITDA had improved substantially to \$72.5 million (**TD** breaking news).

The encouraging figures were driven largely by the continued

success of the company's WebBeds division, which was shown to be on track to exceed pre-pandemic profitability by the end of the current financial year.

Since May, WebBeds' monthly TTV has exceeded the comparative period in 2019, and on a currency basis, 1H23 TTV also returned to pre-COVID levels.

This upswing was attributed to "significant organic growth" in Europe, North America and the APAC markets, with Webjet noting several key destinations are still yet to open and will likely accelerate future growth over the next 12 months.

Transforming the technology side of the WebBeds business has also played a role in its swift recovery, with the report declaring the division 35% more efficient on a booking-per-FTE basis since the pandemic began.

Meanwhile, the OTA business also showed major improvement, increasing bookings from 296,000 in the previous corresponding period to 641,000 in the most recent half.

TTV also increased by 234% to \$614 million, EBITDA jumped close to 500% from \$3.6 million to \$21.4 million, and revenue grew from \$18.2 million to \$51.8 million - see the full report **HERE**.

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### Today's issue of **TD**

**Travel Daily** today features seven pages of news plus a full page from **CLIA**.

## Aurora solo supp

**AURORA** Expeditions is offering single supplement savings for select sailings next year.

The offer is available when booked and deposited before the end of the year.

For more information, visit [auroraexpeditions.com.au](http://auroraexpeditions.com.au).

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# CANADA & ALASKA 2023

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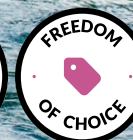
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## Travel Daily on location in Antarctica

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Viking Cruises, which is hosting key industry partners on a voyage aboard its *Viking Polaris* in Antarctica.

TODAY the Aussie contingent aboard *Viking Polaris* have enjoyed an exhilarating Antarctic experience, making the most of the opportunity to explore our first stop, Half Moon Bay in the South Shetland Islands.

The wide array of "toys" on the ship were quickly deployed on arrival, with guests heading off for Zodiac shore excursions and wildlife encounters, as well as speeding around the bay on Special Operations Boats and heading below the surface on the ship's two submarines.

All of these activities are offered at no extra cost.

## New Inbound partnership

**INBOUND** tour operators Goway Travel and ACROSS have announced a new strategic partnership this morning.

The move will also see the two companies combine their respective market knowledge to improve their offering for free independent travellers and groups, particularly within the French-speaking market.

It is the second such partnership Goway has formed in the past two years, after partnering with Pacific Destinations in late 2020.

Goway has been showcasing Australia to a global travel audience for more than half a century, while ACROSS specialises in the French-speaking market.

"The announcement...further serves to strengthen the position of both brands as inbound market leaders in Australia," both companies said in a statement.

Goway is also continuing to invest in technology, in addition

to its comprehensive travel advisor portal, which offers access to thousands of suppliers and dynamic rates.

Bruce Hodge, Goway founder, was recently honoured by Tourism Australia MD Phillipa Harrison for his services to the inbound sector (*TD* 16 May).

## St. Regis local debut

**MARRIOTT** International has signed an agreement with property development company Gurner to debut the St. Regis brand in Australia.

The landmark signing of The St. Regis Gold Coast Resort will offer luxuries like butler services when it opens its doors in 2027.

The hotel will feature 185 rooms and be part of the \$1.7 billion La Pelago project within the Budds Beach precinct, promising travellers "a level of luxury that is not available on the Gold Coast".

## Disney dreams big!

**DISNEY** Cruise Line has announced the acquisition of the cruise ship previously known as *Global Dream*, with plans for the vessel to visit "new markets" when she sets sail in 2025.

The line will work with the Meyer Werft shipbuilding company on the partially completed ship - more details in today's *Cruise Weekly*.

## Rail Online adds

**RAIL** Online has added live VIA Rail Canada journeys to its website, with all prices displayed in Australian dollars and bookings able to be self-managed and edited by travellers.

VIA Rail operates services along Canada's major travel corridors, including routes such as Toronto-Montreal-Quebec.

The introduction of VIA Rail follows Amtrak inventory being added to the Rail Online website in Aug (*TD* 18 Aug).

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## Hiding out on *Viking Polaris*



**THE** Aussie agents aboard *Viking Polaris* on her current Antarctic itinerary were hosted at a special onboard welcome reception in The Hide, a cosy venue nestled in the bow of the ship, where they met some of the vessel's senior officers.

**Pictured** during the gathering

are, from left: Louise Dann, Hunter Travel Group; Phil Smethurst, Bicton Travel; *Viking Polaris*' Captain Magrith Ettlin; Viking Cruises Australia/ NZ MD Michelle Black; Viking Communications Manager Nicole Henry; and Brett Dann, Hunter Travel Group.



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## Helm bags two more

**TRAVEL** marketing agency Helm has landed two more clients this week, including the official tourism board for Peru, Promperu, and Eurail.

The brief for the clients include re-engaging the Australian market about the benefits of Eurail's Global Pass, as well as promoting lesser-known experiences in Peru.

Both brands have worked on a project basis with Helm previously in Australia and the United Kingdom.

Existing Helm clients include InterContinental Sydney.

## Supporting Echuca

**TRAVELLERS** are being encouraged to support the flood-stricken town of Echuca by visiting the Murray with Murray River Paddlesteamers in 2023/24.

Savings of 15% and bonuses are currently on offer, while the solo surcharge has also been halved - book by 15 Dec **HERE**.

## Skal Xmas lunch

**SKAL** International Perth will host its upcoming Dec Christmas lunch at Empire Bar.

The event is open to all in the travel and tourism industry from around Australia and is being held from 12pm on 08 Dec, costing \$89 for non-members, \$75 for members, and only \$49 for Young Skal members.

Interested parties are able to register and make payment **HERE**.

## 70s boutique hotel

**A SEVENTIES-STYLE** boutique hotel is set to open its doors in the NSW town of Crescent Head in May next year.

The 25-room Sea Sea hotel will focus on bringing guests quality food, music, art and surfing options, and is the brainchild of Aussie fashion label Ksubi founder George Gorrow and creator of The Slow hotel in Bali, Cisco Tschurtschenthaler.

Bookings will open from 01 Dec.

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## Window Seat

IT'S not even Christmas yet, but the *Viking Polaris* expedition team are making the most of one of their new toys in Antarctica this week.

It's a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) called "Ellie" which allows the scientists aboard to check out the sea floor and the local aquatic wildlife without getting wet.

Basically an underwater wire-operated drone, the gadget (**pictured**) was demonstrated to guests this week, with features including a depth sounder, internal camera, lighting and GPS transponder.

The US\$65,000 device's images can be viewed via wi-fi on a mobile phone - while it uses a real Sony Playstation controller - so there may be a scientific future for those kids who spend their life playing video games!



## Selling their way to the USA



**THE** winning Australian and New Zealand agents of American Airlines' first two 'Sell Your Way to the USA' incentive trips got to experience the best of Utah and Washington, DC, over the last couple of weeks.

The Utah trip saw winners from Sydney fly to Salt Lake City's new international airport and onward to Heber Valley, with highlights including soaking in a geothermal crater and shooting across one of the longest ziplines in the USA at Sundance Resort.

Agents from Auckland flew to Washington on American Airlines' inaugural service, allowing them to check out monuments, memorials and museums that DC is known for, as well as enjoy a DC City Brew Tour and a Washington Wizards NBA game.

**Pictured** in Utah: Ivan Freire, American Airlines; Bruce Haywood, Flight Centre; Pippa Van, Travel Partners; and Meg Blakey, Jetsetter Travel.

## Collette US webinar

**AGENTS** are being invited to attend a special Thanksgiving week update featuring Collette's Head of Sales, David Farrar, plus special guests US-based tour guides Wesley & Merrin.

The webinar, which will spotlight Collette's USA tours, takes place on 22 Nov at 8.30am and 12pm AEDT, with a \$100 gift card up for grabs - **CLICK HERE** to register.

## Feel more in Qatar

**QATAR** Tourism is preparing to launch a new global brand campaign next month across a range of international markets, with the 'Feel More in Qatar' campaign focusing on its family-friendly activities and experiences.

**MEANWHILE**, Qatar Tourism has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Trip.com Group to promote Qatar as an ideal family-friendly destination to global markets, particularly focusing on China and India.

## Yosemite scraps res

**THE** Yosemite National Park will scrap its reservation system for the 2023 summer period, making it easier for international and interstate visitors to plan their trip to Yosemite Mariposa County.

The Temporary Peak Hours vehicle reservation system has been in place for three years, originally introduced to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

## Travel Daily On Board: Viking Polaris



### Nordic Junior Suite

Guests staying in this level of accommodation receive a host of benefits including complimentary laundry, dry cleaning, pressing and shoe-shine services. It has a king size bed, is available in wheelchair accessible configurations and comes with guaranteed priority reservations at specialty restaurants and priority spa treatment bookings.

## Coastal Early Bird Sale EXTENDED

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## TA links with Eco Australia

**TOURISM** Australia has forged a new partnership with Ecotourism Australia to launch the Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard program, an initiative designed to incentivise tourism businesses to accelerate sustainable changes.

Open to all businesses operating within the tourism supply chain, including travel agencies, the program provides businesses with a scorecard of their current eco performance against a set of industry-accepted sustainability criteria, recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.

Tourism Australia Managing Director, Phillipa Harrison, said the new joint-initiative is “a great place to start”, and would provide improved clarity to companies operating in tourism and travel as to how they can improve their sustainability standards.

“This scorecard program helps answer two of the key questions many of our tourism industry businesses have, especially SMEs who are asking ‘where do I start?’ and ‘where am I starting from?’,” Harrison observed.

## Bodies wash ashore

**THREE** bodies washed up on popular Mexican tourist beaches this week, with two bodies found at Acapulco’s Playa Condesa, and another at nearby Icacos Beach.

Despite the grim discoveries, which were likely victims of cartel violence, the beaches remained open and tourists continued to swim in the water.

## 30 hotels by 2023

**MARRIOTT** International revealed it will add 30 select service hotels to its portfolio in Greater China by the end of 2023, bringing its total number of properties in the region up to nearly 500.

Next in the pipeline is the brand debut of AC Hotels by Marriott in Suzhou, slated to open in Dec.

Multiple studies have suggested that ensuring eco-credentials are up to code have become a key selling point with modern travellers, who now more than ever have designs on wanting their holidays to minimise the impact on the environment.

According to a Booking.com study this year, 81% of travellers stated sustainable travel is important to them when booking a trip, while recent Expedia research also found that seven in 10 consumers have avoided a destination due to scepticism around sustainable practices.

Ecotourism Australia CEO, Elissa Keenan, said the program would assist the growing travel shift towards sustainability globally.

Businesses can get involved in the program by **CLICKING HERE**.

## NT makes push into Indigenous tourism

**THE** Northern Territory Govt affirmed its commitment to the Indigenous tourism sector at the inaugural Aboriginal Tourism Forum yesterday.

The forum highlighted how authentic Aboriginal cultural experiences can set the Northern Territory apart, as well as present a key opportunity for the region to cement its status as the “undeniable leader” in Australia’s Aboriginal tourism sector.

“The Northern Territory is uniquely placed to offer a diverse range of authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences and capitalise on people seeking out those experiences,” NT Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, Nicole Manison explained.

The Territory Government said it will continue to invest in projects and initiatives that support Aboriginal-focused tourism offerings, such as the National Aboriginal Art Gallery in Alice Springs, and dedicated marketing campaigns like the recent ‘Culture is closer than you think’.

## A timely prize for A&K winner



**TRACY** Solomon from U Can Go Travel based in Maroochydore, Queensland discovered she had won a \$500 pre-paid Visa card from Abercrombie & Kent’s recent agent survey just as she was about to board a flight for Hawaii - a prize that will no doubt come in handy during her travels.

## Finnair outsources

**FINNAIR** is aiming to have local flight attendant bases in both the US and Thailand by the end of 2023, reducing the number of its cabin crew based in Finland from 1,750 down to 450.

The airline, which already has outsourced flight attendant bases in Hong Kong, India, Singapore and Sweden, is currently in talks with its Finland-based flight attendants regarding plans to subcontract in-flight service on more routes.

## Bellagio grandstands

**MGM** Resorts International has unveiled one of the world’s most exclusive live sports-viewing experiences for the Formula 1 Heineken Silver Las Vegas Grand Prix 2023.

The experience will give guests the opportunity to watch the race from the grandstands built on the Bellagio lake, with access to the seats currently only available as part of MGM Resorts’ race-and-stay packages.

The packages, on sale now, include a three-day race ticket at either the Bellagio Grandstands or Paddock Grandstands, and a three-night stay at participating MGM Resorts properties.

“The survey worked because it prompted me to go through A&K’s website and look at all their offerings...I had forgotten what an amazing product it is,” Solomon said.

Abercrombie & Kent’s survey sought to find out how travel agents viewed their brand and products, and how to better support the trade as the A&K business continues to grow.

All agents who completed the short survey were entered into the draw to win a \$500 pre-paid Visa card.

## Hazelwood rebrand

**HAZELWOOD** Luxury Estate is rebranding as the Beechmont Estate and joining the Northern Escape Collection, a portfolio of boutique lodges and experiences owned by Morris Group.

The high-end country retreat is located in Queensland’s Scenic Rim, which was recently declared a top ten destination to visit globally in 2022 by *Lonely Planet*.

The name change pays homage to the estate’s location near the town of Beechmont in the Gold Coast hinterland, according to Morris Group Executive Chairman, Chris Morris.

“We’re really excited to add an authentic hinterland experience to our reef, rainforest and outback offerings and give guests even more opportunities to enjoy Queensland’s diverse natural beauty,” Morris said.

Northern Escape Collection CEO Ross Penegar added that Beechmont Estate’s ethos complements the collection’s focus on sustainability.



## Sofitel Melb offer

**MEETING** planners can earn double Accor Live Limitless points when they book a meeting or event to take place between 02 Jan - 31 Mar 2023 at Sofitel Melbourne on Collins.

Points can be redeemed for future accommodation, dining, and experiences.

Quote 'Meeting Planner Offer 2023' when making your booking before 31 Dec.

## EEAA reminder

**WITH** three weeks to go, the Exhibition & Event Association of Australia (EEAA) has revealed two new speakers for its upcoming conference on 07 Dec.

ICC Sydney's Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Jess Zickar, and Freeman Company's Int'l Industry Ambassador Jo-Anne Kelleway will speak on the night - **CLICK HERE** to register for the event.

## MCEC expert series

**MELBOURNE** Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) has released two more episodes in its Event Expert docuseries (**TD** 23 Jun).

The new episodes, which can be viewed **HERE**, go behind the scenes with the venue's Event Planner Maxine McIntyre and Operations Manager Amir Asady.

**MEANWHILE**, MCEC has also announced a new community partnership with the Yarra Riverkeeper Association (YRA).

The two organisations will work together to create stronger community connections and build a sustainable future for the Yarra/Birrarung.

The partnership will also provide opportunities for MCEC employees to participate in learning with the Association.

## GCCEC RELAUNCH GRANTS PROGRAM

**THE** Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCCEC) has announced it is bringing back its grant program following a two-year pause.

The Linkage Grant Program, which provides funding of up to \$8,000 to support attendance at international conferences, has led to a number of high-profile conferences coming to the Gold Coast since its launch in 2011.

Recipients of the program have the opportunity to advance their professional development and profile of their research centre/institute, while helping promote the venue as well as the city as a business events destination on the global stage.

GCCEC General Manager and Chair of Destination Gold Coast, Adrienne Readings, said business events is a pivotal sector for Australia, contributing billions of dollars into the visitor economy.

"The Linkage Grant program promotes collaboration with local academics and professionals to secure valuable international events and raise the profile of the



Gold Coast on a global platform," she explained.

"The events we attract through our partners help build capacities of our city and provide opportunities for lasting legacies.

"These conferences have provided considerable opportunity for knowledge exchange, connection and economic advancement."

Recipients have attended conferences around the world, including the International Association for Impact Assessment in Florence, Italy; the Genetic & Evolutionary Computation Conference

in Kyoto, Japan; and the International Weed Science Conference in Prague, Czech Republic.

With a reputation for innovation, technology, health sciences and creativity, the Gold Coast continues to be a popular choice for business events.

In the 2018/19 Financial Year, the Gold Coast hosted over half of the conferences held in Queensland, resulting in over \$570 million in economic impact for the Sunshine State.

**Pictured:** The Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre.

## Women's events

**APPLICATIONS** are now open for the 2023 Women's Week Grant Program, with \$100,000 of funding available for women-focused events held between 06-12 Mar.

Events funded by the program must support at least one of the key priorities of the NSW Women's Strategy 2023-26 - economic opportunity and advancement, health and wellbeing, and participation and empowerment.

Examples of past events include financial independence workshops, street dance lessons, and women in STEM seminars.

Applications close 04 Dec - **CLICK HERE** to learn more information.

## BESydney opens book on achievements

**BUSINESS** Events Sydney (BESydney) marked its past year of achievements, as well as the return of business events at its annual general meeting yesterday.

The event was attended by the BESydney Board (**pictured**), including Chair Bruce Baird and CEO Lyn Lewis-Smith.

Over the reporting year, the organisation successfully helmed Sydney Business Event Fund programs, Kickstart and Accelerate, alongside Destination NSW, as part of the NSW Government's COVID-19 response and Economic Recovery Strategy.

BESydney also released its financial report for the 2021-2022 financial year, showing



it secured 31 meetings and attracted 47,000 delegates that injected an estimated \$132 million in direct expenditure to the NSW economy.

Lewis-Smith revealed 85 global and national events are in the pipeline until 2029, which will generate a predicted \$483 million in direct expenditure and attract 111,000 delegates to Sydney.

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## 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.

UK-based **Hans Airways** has announced that Chief Operating Officer **Nathan Burkitt** will take over the role of Chief Executive Officer from Satnam Saini, who will continue with the airline as a Director. The shifting of positions is part of a wider management restructure.

**John Boris** will assume the role of Chief Marketing Officer at **Tripadvisor**, where he will directly report to CEO Matt Goldberg and oversee the platform's B2C and B2B marketing strategy and execution. Boris' previous roles include Chief Marketing Officer of Shutterfly, and prior to that, Senior Vice President of Marketing at Zagat.

**Outrigger Resorts & Hotels** has appointed **Michael Gaarde-Nielsen** as General Manager and **Rory Campbell** as Director of Sales and Marketing for the Outrigger Mauritius Beach Resort. Gaarde-Nielsen has several years of resort leadership experience, while Campbell has held various roles at Outrigger since 2013.

**Lorenza Pigozzi** has joined shipbuilding company **Fincantieri** as the group's Communications Director. Pigozzi will be responsible for coordinating brand communication and media relations activities to support the goals of the company's sustainability plan. Pigozzi has long-standing experience in communication and institutional relations.

## Air NZ preps surge

**AIR** New Zealand is preparing to fly 2.8 million passengers between 15 Dec 2022 and 31 Jan 2023, with huge travel demand expected for the summer season.

To cope with the upsurge, the Kiwi flag carrier has hired 1,950 operational employees over the last 10 months, and will welcome two new domestic A321neos into the fleet.

## ADL scores gongs

**ADELAIDE** Airport has walked away with the Capital City Airport of the Year award last night at the Australian Airports Association National Airport Industry Awards, as well as scoring the Infrastructure Award for its terminal expansion project.

## BA links HRW/CVG

**BRITISH** Airways is launching a new direct service from London Heathrow to Cincinnati in the US, starting from 05 Jun 2023.

Operated by a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, the service will run five times per week in the northern hemisphere summer season, and four in the winter.

It will be the only direct flight between the UK and Ohio, with easy connection to neighbouring states like Kentucky and Indiana.

"The economic impact of this transatlantic flight is exponential for business travel, economic development, and tourism between the UK and our area of the United States," CEO of Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport Candace McGraw said.

## Airbnb sweetens the pot

**AIRBNB** has launched Airbnb Setup, which aims to simplify the process and provide additional support to people who are looking to host accommodation using the platform.

The new offering includes one-to-one guidance from a Superhost, the ability to choose a guest with a good track record for the first booking, and specialised support from a team of Community Support agents.

According to Airbnb Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, Brian Chesky, people are becoming increasingly interested in hosting as a means to supplement their income amid the rising cost of living.

New homes on Airbnb are getting booked almost straight away, Chesky observed, with half

of the listings that were activated and booked in the third quarter of 2022 receiving their first reservation within three days.

Recent data also revealed that hosts are earning more than ever before, with earnings increasing by 30% globally in Q3 compared to the same period last year.

The accommodation rental platform also announced extra AirCover for hosts, including guest identity verification, reservation screening, and heightened coverages via US\$3 million damage protection.

Six new Airbnb categories have also been made available, including 'Adapted', which features homes adapted for wheelchair access, and 'Top of the world', which displays homes around 10,000ft above sea level.

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