

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.

VIKING Polaris is spending today in the curiously named Aitcho Islands - apparently a phonetic abbreviation of the UK's Hydrographic Office which operates here as part of the British Antarctic Territory.

While here the ship's toys have once again been deployed - in spite of a small hydraulic hitch with the inbuilt ramp for the Special Operations Boats, which the onboard engineering team is in the process of rectifying.

In between activities, guests are able to enjoy wildlife watching from the huge panoramic windows throughout the ship, including their own Nordic Balconies which can even be opened to allow some of the freezing fresh air in.

Zodiac cruises to the nearby rocky coastline have revealed a variety of pinnipeds including Weddel seals, crab-eating seals and even a lucky sighting of an elephant seal, which are rare in this part of the northern Antarctic Peninsula.

Tomorrow *Polaris* heads south for another opportunity to dive, cruise and kayak the icy waters.

QF to appeal in High Court

QANTAS has welcomed a High Court decision today to grant the carrier leave to appeal a ruling earlier this year, which found the airline was in breach of the Fair Work Act when it outsourced around 2,000 ground crew workers in 2020 (*TD* 05 May).

"This case is about Qantas' ability to legally outsource a function to save more than \$100 million a year when it was struggling to remain solvent," the carrier said in a statement.

"We've always expressed our deep regret that our ground handlers...had to lose their jobs as the pandemic hit us.

"We ultimately lost more than \$25 billion in revenue, so it was inevitable that we had to take significant action," Qantas said.

Although the Federal Court agreed with Qantas' commercial reasons for the outsourcing, it could not exclude that avoiding

future industrial action was also a deciding factor.

"We have always rejected this, which is why we are taking our appeal to the High Court," the airline emphasised.

Meanwhile The Transport Workers Union said the development was "deeply disappointing" for the sacked workers affected by the QF move.

Pumping purchase

THE NRMA has marked the next phase of its expansion into experiential tourism with the acquisition of Tasmania's Pumphouse Point, a wilderness retreat that features two heritage industrial buildings set against the backdrop of the iconic Lake St Clair.

"We are honoured to be the new custodians of the jewel in Tasmania's tourism crown, and we are thrilled to welcome the Pumphouse Point team to the NRMA Expeditions family," NRMA Executive General Manager, Customer - Expeditions Jennifer Vandekreeke enthused.

Other properties in the NRMA Expeditions portfolio include Freycinet Lodge, Cradle Mountain Hotel, Strahan Village and Gordon River Cruises.

Nib Travel lifts

NIB Travel has experienced a strong recovery in the final quarter of the last financial year, posting an operating income of \$46.6 million, an increase of 232.9% on the previous corresponding period.

Parent company nib noted the recovery in its travel businesses and the return of international students are key drivers of rising underlying operating profits.

Gross Written Premiums for travel policies was also up by 669% to \$70.8 million for the 12 months to 31 Oct when compared the same period in 2021, representing 257,320 sales.

Merger court tick

THE proposed merger between Apollo Tourism & Leisure and New Zealand-based Tourism Holdings Limited has been approved by the Supreme Court of Queensland today.

The merger, which Apollo shareholders voted in favour of earlier this week (*TD* 14 Nov), was approved by way of scheme of arrangement, which will be implemented on 30 Nov once a divestment to Jucy is completed.



Travel Daily On Board: *Viking Polaris* Drying Closet

Each stateroom and suite aboard *Viking Polaris* features a floor-to-ceiling drying closet, ensuring that even after a day ashore in the most inclement of conditions, gear can be dried so it's ready for more action. The drying closet is equipped with racks for the expedition jackets provided to each passenger as well as special protective footwear and anything else that gets wet ashore.

Today's issue of *TD*

Travel Daily today features five pages of news.

Golf tickets still left

THERE are still a few tickets left to win through Qatar Airways *Travel Daily's* comp, to give away spots to the Australian Golf Open.

For a chance to win, email [HERE](#) and sign up to the Qatar Airways trade portal to land a spot.

Seascope delivered

MSC Cruises has taken delivery of its new flagship *MSC Seascope*, just a week after the naming of *MSC World Europa*.

Seascope is the second new cruise ship to join MSC this year, bringing the fleet's total to 21 - more information in today's *CW*.



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CATO pushes for air treaty

THE Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) has called for an Open Skies Agreement at a meeting held this week in Adelaide with Federal Minister of Tourism Don Farrell.



CATO Managing Director Brett Jardine, Chair Dennis Bunnik and Vice-Chair Lisa Pagotto (pictured with Farrell) were in town to propose the opening up of Australian air capacity via a 12-24 month agreement, with discussions centred on accelerating the recovery of air capacity & reducing ticket prices.

curtailed by the severe lack of airline capacity and the resulting high prices being demanded by airlines," Jardine explained.

An Open Skies Agreement would mean any airline could fly into Australia with unlimited capacity, as opposed to the current situation, where international airlines' access to landing slots is governed through bilateral agreements between countries.

According to CATO, opening up air capacity would provide the "single largest boost" to the industry's post-pandemic recovery, as well as create flow on to other key areas of the economy, such as job creation throughout Australia, supporting the growth of exports and helping tackle skill shortages.

"Our tour operator and wholesaler members are seeing their post-COVID recovery

"The positive impacts...will be felt throughout the economy," Jardine added.

Viking's historic meeting



HUNTER Travel Group's Brett and Louise Dann were among Viking Cruises' industry partners aboard *Viking Polaris*, which for the first time ever met up with sister ship *Viking Octantis* in Antarctica this morning.

The event saw coordinated operations as the Zodiacs and

Special Operations Boats (SOB) were deployed to capture imagery of the rare synchronicity.

The pair are pictured wearing the expedition jackets given to every passenger for their cruise, on the bow of *Polaris* with *Octantis* in the background during the momentous occasion.





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Tassie explores Antarctica tourism

THE Tasmanian Government has released its Antarctic gateway strategy for 2022 to 2027, outlining how the state can leverage tourism opportunities relating to the White Continent.

Part of the plan will be to position Hobart as a gateway for activities to Antarctica, with action points to support the development of Antarctic heritage and tourism opportunities, and further collaborate with Brand Tasmania to promote the Antarctic brand as part of "being Tasmanian".

Under the Hobart City Deal, the Tasmanian Govt has partnered with other levels of government to develop an Antarctic and Science Precinct (ASP) at Hobart's Macquarie Point, with world-class facilities that will attract international visitors for research collaboration and tourism.

Specialist tourism experiences have also been flagged, such as Antarctic cruises, festivals, museums and displays.

Dest NSW new Chair

SALLY Loane has been appointed the new Chairperson of Destination NSW, replacing the outgoing Christine McLoughlin in the position.

Loane arrives with a host of executive experience, and currently sits on the board of Chubb Insurance Australia, Venues NSW and Pankind, and the Australian Pancreatic Cancer Research Foundation.

"Sally's leadership of the Destination NSW Board will play a vital role in NSW achieving its vision to be the premier visitor economy of the Asia Pacific," NSW Tourism Minister Ben Franklin said.

MEANWHILE TripAdvisor has partnered with Destination NSW and Sydney WorldPride on a new campaign to promote the popular LGBTQIA+ event, offering a range of accommodation packages.

A linking of travel minds



LINK Travel Group hosted its first event this week since launching as a joint venture between Flight Centre Travel Group (FLT), The Goldman Group and Spencer Group of Companies (TD 05 May).

The celebratory gathering saw leaders from 100 key suppliers, including airlines, luxury hotels, insurance, cruise and tour companies, convene at the

West Hotel in Sydney to learn more about the invitation-only members group.

Link General Manager, Scott Darlow, hosted a conversational panel with the Link Travel Group founders to share their experience building the joint venture, its growth so far, and the trajectory for the coming years.

Pictured: Scott Darlow, Link General Manager; Danielle Galloway, Link Chair; Penny Spencer, Link Director; and Anthony Goldman, Link Director.

TEQ switches agency

DENTSU has secured the media account for Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ), snatching the major tourism client from incumbent, EssenceMediacom.

"[Dentsu] is committed to growing Qld's visitor economy and showed real innovation in meeting our strategic goals for the brand, and also for our state's wider tourism industry," TEQ said.

MH17 guilty verdict

A COURT in the Netherlands has sentenced three pro-Russian separatists to life imprisonment for the murders of 298 people and their roles in the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 over Ukraine eight years ago.

The ruling brings some level of closure to the air disaster, which followed the tragedy of MH370 in the same year, a missing flight which still to this day, has never been located.

Window Seat

TALK about wearing a joke thin, a man who spent £25,000 on a fake airport sign in Wales is finally bringing the joke to an end after 20 years.

The road sign (pictured), which looks fairly legitimate, was actually directing motorists to an airport that doesn't actually exist.

Since 2002, travellers driving eastward along the A44 between Rhayader and Kington would see the erroneous sign that asserted directions to Terminals 1 and 3 of the fake Llandegley International airport, however the two-and-a-half-hour drive actually had people end up arriving at an empty field in the remote village of Llandegley, Powys.



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CORPORATE UPDATE

Corp leads FC recovery

FLIGHT Centre's corporate business has outperformed global trends in the latest financial year, with Sep and Oct claiming the mantle as the two strongest months for Total Transaction Value (TTV) in the company's 30-year history.

The result was delivered this week as a part of a wider financial update from the company (**TD** 14 Nov), with Flight Centre's global corporate business delivering an underlying \$58 million EBITDA profit for the four months to 31 Oct, a result made even more impressive by the fact the period included the seasonally soft Northern Hemisphere summer.

The numbers represented a big turnaround on the \$28.8 million underlying EBITDA loss reported during the previous corresponding period.

TTV almost topped \$1 billion in both months, in addition to

overall transaction volumes returning to pre-COVID levels and revenue also tracking at around 95% of pre-pandemic levels.

Accounts with a projected annual spend of \$665 million were secured during the first quarter alone, enabling the company to drive further growth across the Asia-Pacific, Americas and EMEA regions, in doing so taking gross annualised wins during the pandemic to approximately \$6.5 billion.

"More than half of the accounts that Corporate Traveller has won in its key Australia, UK and USA markets were previously unmanaged - reflecting the ongoing shift towards managed travel programs in uncertain times," Flight Centre Managing Director Graham Turner said.

B2B leading the way

WEBJET'S latest financial results (**TD** 17 Nov) showed that its B2B WebBeds business was leading its recovery efforts, with the APAC region alone recording \$280 million in Total Transaction Value (TTV) for the six months to 30 Sep 2022.

The APAC TTV result represented a roughly 150% increase on the previous corresponding period, and accounted for around a fifth of the total TTV earned by Webjet across all markets.

Europe is still the strongest performing market, raking in \$615 million in TTV, followed by the Americas with \$317 million.

Total bookings for Webjet's B2B business was up by close to 150% to 2.65 million globally for the half-yearly period, while the average booking value also managed to increase at the same time from \$401 to \$536.

As the division began to scale up, so too did associated operating expenses, which rose from \$43 million to \$50.7 million, but managing to come in lower than forecasted levels.

Normal within sight

ALMOST three-quarters (70%) of industry professionals expect business travel to return to normal levels within two years, according to Expedia Group's *Traveller Value Index* (TVI) 2023.

The research shows that the appetite for business travel has rapidly reignited in the last six months, with employees continuing to combine leisure and business travel.

More than three-quarters (76%) of business travellers plan to extend a work trip for leisure purposes in the next 12 months, and almost a third (28%) plan to take a "flexcation" in the next 12 months to make the most of remote work combined with leisure travel.

The TVI also looked at business travel preferences, and found that 70% of people are more likely to choose travel options that are more inclusive, while sustainability, flexibility & loyalty programs were also important.



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Thousand miles ahead in Qld



1000 Mile Travel Group recently reconnected with some of its Queensland-based Travel Experts at the Keith Nours Stakes Day, Doomben Races.

The occasion was marked with drinks, fine food, and naturally, plenty of laughter.

Pictured: Ben Ross, 1000 Mile Travel Group Global CEO with the Queensland team of 1000 Mile Travel Experts.

60% more bookings

GERMAN low-cost carrier Eurowings has seen a revival in booking figures within the business travel segment, with a 60% increase in bookings for the month of Nov, compared to the same period last year.

The most popular Eurowings routes among business travellers include the European connections from Dusseldorf to Milan and Vienna, from Hamburg to London and from Stuttgart to Budapest.

Among the German domestic routes, connections from Berlin to Cologne, from Dusseldorf to Berlin, from Stuttgart to Berlin and from Hamburg to Stuttgart have also seen a surge in demand among business travellers.

The airline identified trade shows as a major travel driver, with the upswing centred around key German trade fair locations in Cologne, Hamburg, and more.

GBTA eco Summit

THE Global Business Travel Association's (GBTA) first Sustainability Summit has harnessed the collective efforts for driving action to net zero business travel.

The event, which took place at SQUARE Brussels Meeting Centre, brought together almost 300 global experts, and travel industry & policy leaders, to outline solutions to decarbonise business travel, in line with the Paris Agreement's climate goals.

An acknowledgment of urgency, value of collaboration, and the need for concrete action were just some of the key themes raised at the Summit.

DL number 1, again

FOR the 12th year in a row, Delta Air Lines has been named number one in the *Business Travel News Airline Survey*.

The survey asked corporate travellers to rank airlines on features such as customer service, sales relationships, distribution, networking, as well as products and services.

The US-based airline took the lead in almost every category and earned an overall score increase compared to 2019, with recent achievements including launching Delta Business and hiring more than 15,000 people since 2021.

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TRAVEL SPECIALS

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

Royal Caribbean is offering guests up to 30% off for adults and up to 50% off for kids across its 2022-23 sailings for Black Friday, resulting in savings of up to \$900. A 10-night cruise from Brisbane to the Islands of the South Pacific on 20 Jan is among the itineraries included in the offer. Book at royalcaribbean.com before 30 Nov.

Holidaymakers can enjoy savings of up to 50% on best available rates at **Outrigger Resorts and Hotels'** beachfront destinations, including Hawaii, Fiji, Mauritius, Thailand and the Maldives. For bookings, head to www.outrigger.com and use the promo code 'CYBER22'. Offer ends 04 Dec and applies to travel dates 14 Nov 2022 to 15 Dec 2023.

For bookings made by 27 Nov, guests can take advantage of **Norwegian Cruise Line's** Black Friday Sale, which allows the second guest in each eligible booking to sail free. Guests also receive a bonus US\$200 onboard credit with up to five of NCL's 'Free at Sea' offers, including a complimentary beverage package - visit www.ncl.com for more.

Murray River Paddlesteamers is inviting Australians to support the flood-affected border town of Echuca on the Murray River by joining a 2023 or 2024 overnight cruise aboard the deluxe riverboat, *PS Emmylou*. Enjoy 15% savings for couples, a halving of the solo passenger surcharge to 30% and free wine, souvenirs and gift vouchers - call 03 5482 5244.

Adventurers can save up to 30% on select **G Adventures** trips for travel before 30 Apr 2023. Trips featured in the Cyber Sale include Inca Discovery, an eight-day trip that begins in Lima and ends in Cusco, reduced from \$2,099pp down to \$1,469pp. See gadventures.com.

European Waterways is offering a Black Friday special of 25% off on charters of two of its most popular luxury barge cruises in France, including *Enchante's* 2 Apr 2023 departure on the historic Canal du Midi. Offer is valid when booked before 02 Dec - europeanwaterways.com.

Travellers can take advantage of **Oaks Hotels, Resorts & Suites'** Black Friday sale, which offers up to 30% savings on stays of two nights or more between 01 Jan & 30 Jun 2023 across Oaks' portfolio of Australian and New Zealand properties. Visit oakshotels.com to book by 29 Nov.

Azamara is celebrating Black Friday & Cyber Monday by offering Australian and New Zealand travellers up to 15% savings, plus US\$1,000 onboard credit on select 2023 sailings for bookings made before 02 Dec. For T&Cs, go to azamaraconnect.com.

To celebrate Black Friday, **Swan Hellenic** has cut its existing pre-season saver fares by \$2,000 for Oceanview Staterooms and \$3,000 for Balcony Staterooms on 21 cultural expedition cruises worldwide, plus bonus commission for new bookings made before 04 Dec - call 1300 722 499.

Flight Centre store reopenings



FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) officially opened the doors once more to several of its stores in Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

The locations now welcoming customers again include Cottesloe and Casuarina in WA, and Alice Springs in the Top End.

"It's a pleasure to be able to serve these areas once again and our teams are beyond excited to be back," Flight Centre said.

The travel agency network is in the process of reopening the

remainder of its stores that have been in hibernation, and are currently on the hunt for Team Leaders and Travel Consultants.

View job opportunities across all FCTG brands **HERE**.

NZ rail packages

GREAT Journeys New Zealand has announced 10 short break packages and multi-day tours, which include scenic train rides, accommodation and regional tourism experiences, as well as 12 fully guided multi-day tours.

Two of the new packages will see the *Northern Explorer* stop at Taumarunui, bringing more visitors into the Ruapehu region.

The Escape to the Forgotten World package includes a half-day rail cart tour and a visit to a lavender farm on the banks of the Whanganui River, while the Forgotten World Adventure is a multi-day stay in the region.

CLICK HERE for more details.

Air Canada invests

AIR Canada has invested in Canadian technology that captures carbon directly from the air to fight climate change.

The equity investment/loan in Carbon Engineering supports the advancement of the 'Direct Air Capture' technology, and is worth CAD\$6.75m, from Canada's dedicated tech investment fund.

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