

oneworld goes west

THE oneworld airline alliance has announced the relocation of its headquarters from New York City to Fort Worth, Texas.

The move will see it join founding carrier American Airlines from Dec this year, shifting to AA's 300-acre Robert L. Crandall Campus adjacent to Dallas Fort Worth International Airport.

Oneworld has been based in New York since 2011, following a move from Vancouver where it had been based since launching in 1999, with the new AA co-location said to "further accelerate the alliance's drive to deliver greater value for its member airlines and customers".

The oneworld central management team will continue to be led by former Qantas senior executive Rob Gurney, who was appointed CEO in 2016.

Gurney said "as our industry recovers from COVID-19, alliances and partnerships have continued to deepen...with our new home in Fort Worth we anticipate even closer collaboration with American and our member airlines as we work side by side to further grow and strengthen oneworld".

As well as being a key AA hub, DFW is serviced by seven other oneworld members including Qantas, Alaska Airlines, British Airways, Finnair, Iberia, Japan Airlines and Qatar Airways.

Dallas-Fort Worth is one of the biggest US airports, offering almost 1,800 daily flights to over 260 global destinations.

Qantas confident of profit

QANTAS has this morning projected that its 1H23 underlying profit before tax will be between \$1.2-1.3 billion (**TD** breaking news), marking the carrier's emergence from five consecutive halves of heavy losses due to the pandemic.

The forecast is based on forward bookings, fuel prices and the latest assumptions about the second quarter, with CEO Alan Joyce stating that strong demand is continuing to drive the business forward to arrest cumulative statutory losses of \$7 billion.

"Strong travel demand, both domestically and internationally, is benefiting our recovery plan and our growth in market share compared with 2019," Joyce said.

Revenue for business travel is also now back over 100% of pre-COVID levels, while leisure travel is standing at over 130% compared to 2019.

On the other side of the ledger, Qantas revealed that its net debt is expected to fall to around \$3.3 billion by 31 Dec, exceeding previous forecasts which had debt just shy of \$4 billion.

Another division of the business aiding strong recovery is Qantas Loyalty, which Joyce stated was expected to post record earnings for the first half and is on track to reach its FY23 EBIT target of \$425-\$450 million.

Meanwhile the carrier claimed its operational performance was improving sharply following a challenging period exacerbated

by extreme weather events on the east coast, staffing issues, air traffic control limitations and the busy school holiday period.

Qantas cancellations fell from 4% in Aug to 2.4% in Sep, while this month so far has seen only 1.7% of flights cancelled, an indicator Qantas said was now better than pre-COVID levels.

Mishandled bags have also improved to 6 per 1,000 passengers lost in Sep and Oct, however despite the uptick in service performance, Joyce conceded further improvements were needed to meet historical consumer expectations.

"It's clear that maintaining our pre-COVID service levels requires a lot more operational buffer than it used to, especially when you consider the sick leave spikes and supply chain delays that the whole industry is dealing with," he said, adding it will mean "having more crew and more aircraft on standby and adjusting our flying schedule to help make that possible."

More from Qantas on **P3**.

Express for Virtuoso

VIRTUOSO'S new air offering (**TD** yesterday) is a partnership with Express Tickets, which will see Virtuoso members able to shop and book flights via the Express Tickets platform from their GDS of choice as well as NDC-enabled airline content - see travelbulletin.com.au.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news including **Business Events News**.

EK A380 to Japan

SURGING demand has seen Emirates announce it will deploy its flagship A380 aircraft on the Dubai-Tokyo Narita route.

The upgrade will be effective on EK318/319 from 15 Nov, as Japan scraps its daily arrival cap and inbound testing requirements.

EK also operates daily Dubai-Osaka Boeing 777 services.

Solomons PCR cut

THE Solomon Islands Government has removed the requirement for inbound pax to undergo a COVID-19 PCR test 72 hours prior to arrival.

However incoming arrivals will still be required to provide proof of full vaccination, with the changes effective immediately.

Tourism Solomons Acting CEO Dagnal Dereveke said the move brought an end to border closures spanning over 800 days.

"Our tourism industry has survived numerous crises over the years but we are a strong and resilient people...we are very confident with effort, good marketing and profile rebuild we can get back to where we were before the pandemic in relatively short time," Dereveke said.

A key focus is to regain visitation from Australia, which in 2019 comprised about 45% of the country's 28,000 visitor arrivals.



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SIA adopts tool

TO SUPPORT its goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, Singapore Airlines has selected analytics tool SITA OptiClimb.

The tool will allow the carrier to enhance its fuel utilisation during its aircraft's climb-out phase using machine-learning models with 4D weather forecasts to recommend the best climb speeds.

Airlines can save 5% (5.6 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions) in fuel in the climb phase.

Tourism levy call

A NEW tourism levy to fund housing and community projects should be implemented by the Australian Government, accommodation platform Airbnb has put forward today.

"We believe tourism levies are a fair and sustainable way to raise revenue for local communities, especially in areas of high tourism, as they broaden the revenue base without imposing extra burdens on local ratepayers or businesses," Airbnb said.

The company is also calling for mandatory registration systems, a review of eviction protections, and a uniform code of conduct for the accommodation sector.

Back to the future

TWO-THIRDS of Australian travellers are headed to Europe, with Italy, Greece, Britain, Ireland and Spain topping the list of destinations, according to the latest booking data from Contiki.

The same report also showed a growing desire for 'retro travel', with one in three Aussies wishing they could travel how people did before 2000.

The youth operator released a side-by-side of how items in the suitcase have changed in the last 20 years, with the most essential items pre-2000 being local currency (68%), camera film (62%), a guidebook (37%), and maps (28%), while today the go-to items are smartphones (96%), power banks (33%), noise-cancelling headphones (16%) and HD cameras (15%).

Technology that today's traveller can't do without included Google Maps (80%), Facebook (34%), and Google Translate (32%).

Stuba enhances curation

EXCLUSIVE

GLOBAL accommodation travel wholesaler Stuba has announced a "new era" in trade-only accommodation booking systems, launching its new Curated Collections platform that it says will significantly cut down on the search time required for agents and suppliers.

Speaking with *Travel Daily* this week, Stuba's Head of Marketing, Sarah Clayton-Turner, said the inspiration for the refined service was born from market research which suggested too much time was being taken up searching the large accommodation banks currently on the market.

"It was clear that on too many platforms, searches were taking too long and bringing up too many irrelevant results - it's no longer a numbers game for bed banks, sifting through thousands, or in some cases a million hotels, is putting extra time pressures on travel agents," she said.

Stuba's new Curated Collection is designed to help agents make a booking quickly and intuitively, with searches based around

lifestyle categories such as luxury, couples, corporate & wellness.

The algorithm powering searches also utilises what an agency has previously booked with Stuba, as well as a cutting-edge 'trending' feature which shows results that are popular with other agents in the region.

Clayton-Turner believes these improvements will ultimately save travel agents time in having to toggle through filters to reach the correct hotel, leaving them to concentrate on building the relationship with their customer.

"It may even throw hotels and categories into the mix that they didn't know their customer wanted and create opportunities to upsell," she said.

"The more agents who use the curations, the more the Stuba algorithms will tailor suggestions based on search criteria."

Incentives to use the free service include the chance of winning prizes, with agents who make a booking on a daily basis entering a draw to win a \$150 voucher until 03 Dec, with more comps to come - more info [HERE](#).

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Demand quelling dollar

GROWING demand for international travel is helping to minimise the impact that the weakening Aussie dollar is having on Qantas' operations, the carrier's Chief Financial Officer Vanessa Hudson has revealed.

Speaking during a press conference this morning following a quarterly update (see P1), Hudson said that despite Aussies getting less bang for their buck overseas, current booking trends continue to be positive.

"We're seeing outbound demand for international travel continue to be very strong, despite the lowering Aussie dollar, and in fact, internationally that has been growing in terms of demand and intent to travel in the next 12 months," she said.

"Conversely, on the other side for foreign visitors wanting to come to Australia, we're a very good value destination."

Hudson added that the dwindling Aussie dollar was also an advantage for Qantas in that it is helping to maintain a lower level of capacity into the Aussie market because foreign currency revenue, when converted by other carriers, is a lot less than what they would otherwise have received previously.

Meanwhile group international capacity is expected to increase from 61% of pre-COVID levels in first half of FY23 to 77% in the second half, a positive trajectory that will be spurred on by Qantas returning additional A380s from

storage, as well as the delivery of three new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners and additional Airbus A321LRs for its Jetstar business.

On the domestic front, capacity will be 94% of pre-COVID levels for the 1H23, growing to match 2019 in the second half of next year, representing a six percentage point dip on previous capacity guidance.

The carrier said the reduction domestically is designed to "protect the improvement in operational performance as the broader industry recovers".

In further news, low global capacity, high fuel prices and an ongoing volatile international landscape will likely keep Qantas air fares higher than pre-pandemic levels for a while yet.

"We're seeing fuel this quarter being 76% higher than it was pre COVID...so we have to recover that," Joyce admitted.

To help take some of the sting out of ticket costs, Qantas and Jetstar have unveiled the group's largest joint sale of the year starting today, with more than 1 million fares across 67 domestic destinations on offer, starting at \$35 one-way.

In other developments, facing a wave of bad headlines regarding ongoing disputes with unions, Qantas has also moved to shore up staff satisfaction by moving from a wage freeze to implement annual wage increases upwards from 2% to 3% - representing an extra \$40 million per annum.

I can see clearly now

AIR New Zealand has unveiled a newly-transformed app that allows its customers to see all upcoming flights and key details in chronological order.

The update, which will include a fresher looker and more functional interface, provides travellers the option of viewing all flight details in one click, including seat selection, baggage upgrades, add-ons, and the ability to order food and beverages in the lounge.

Air NZ's update also lays the groundwork for the app to be more easily updated with future services on a regular basis, with the carrier planning to launch new bells and whistles based on live feedback from customers.

"This could be enabling a contactless journey through airports, allowing customers to track their baggage or customise their entertainment and meal experiences," Air NZ said.

The new app will be rolled out in early Nov.

La Vie appoints two

FOLLOWING the signing of The Sebel Melbourne Ringwood and The Motley Hotel by La Vie Hotels & Resorts this week (TD 11 Oct), the company has appointed Jeremy Nordkamp to the role of General Manager at The Motley Hotel and Melanie Watson as General Manager at The Sebel Melbourne Ringwood.

For more industry appointments, see **page six**.



Window Seat

TRAVELLERS can now tune up for their trip to Far North Queensland by playing the special Townsville-themed Monopoly board game which has hit the market this week.

Locals were part of the market research team for the game, which boasts a range of squares which are popular tourism drawcards in the region, including ritzy Castle Hill, the Reef HQ Aquarium, Magnetic Island, Queensland Country Bank Stadium and The Ville Resort - Casino and Townsville Brewery.

"Monopoly Townsville is the perfect memento for anyone visiting our region but also for our locals to play and enjoy with their friends and family," Townsville Enterprise Director of Visitor Economy & Marketing, Lisa Woolfe.

Sadly, wacky politician Bob Katter was not featured anywhere on the board.



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Accor sees double in bustling Bangkok

ACCOR has signed a new management agreement for a dual-branded hotel in Thailand's capital called the Mercure & ibis Bangkok Siam Ratchathewi.

Slated to open in 2025, the giant property will be comprised of 354 rooms in total, with amenities to include restaurants, a lobby bar and lounge, pool bar, swimming pool, gym, Kids' club, and two meeting rooms.

The accommodation concept will be Accor's third dual-branded hotel concept in Thailand, and will be located at the Ratchathewi intersection, and target a wide range of guests such as leisure and business travellers, locals, students, and expatriates.

"Our locally inspired Mercure brand encourages travellers to immerse [themselves] in the destination and local stories, while our popular lifestyle economy brand, ibis, is ideal for budget savvy travellers seeking a casual hotel concept," Accor said.

Taiwan lowers wall

DFAT has advised Aussie travellers to Taiwan no longer need to undergo a saliva PCR test on arrival or quarantine, however arrivals will need to wear a mask and take a RAT every two days as part of self-monitoring mandates.

TM roll dice on lux

TRAVELMANAGERS will send along senior delegates to Signature Travel Network's annual conference in Las Vegas.

Chief Operating Officer Grant Campbell and Operations Manager Troy Coelho will attend the gathering of 2,400 delegates at The Venetian Resort on 08 Nov, with the aim to network with and learn from Signature Travel Network partners, and strengthen existing supplier relationships in the luxury space.

"Signature is a community of leading travel agencies and supplier partners which currently generates US\$8 billion in annual sales," Campbell said.

"Their focus is on the luxury travel segment, making them a great asset to many of our personal travel managers (PTMs) given the huge surge in demand we have seen since the reopening of Australia's international borders," he added.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Campbell also noted that Signature Travel Network's rate of growth has shown no signs of slowing down.

"39 travel brands having joined the network since the last conference took place in 2019... they achieved this by doubling down on member support and growing its preferred partnerships portfolio," he said.

AMANDA Dowell from MTA Travel Newcastle has won a weekend retreat for two after her selfie (right) was selected as the winner of the first week of this year's Norwegian Cruise Line Walk for Wellness (W4W) competition.

She posted the pic under the first week's "Awaken Your Spirit" theme after walking with her husband amid the sun and surf.



Other winners from the first week included Concept Travel's Kym O'Shannassy and her furry friend (left) who took home an experience gift card, and Kelly Rogers from Flight Centre Queenstown (below) who won a pack of four Airtags.



There were some inspirational walks with BDMs including a group hosted by NCL's NZ BDM Megan Porter (below) who's now been to the mountaintop with Jen Talbot from The Travel Brokers and Infinity NZ's

Shane Robertson.

BDM hosted walks can be booked by [CLICKING HERE](#).

This week's theme is "Community Spirit" with participants invited to snap a selfie during their walk and comment how they 'took 3 for the sea' as part of NCL's participation with the Take 3 for the Sea ocean cleanup organisation (TD 14 Sep).



Collectively the walkers have now unlocked the American Samoa milestone after trekking over 47,500km in their combined journey tracing the Pacific voyage of the all-new *Norwegian Spirit* as she makes her way to Australia and NZ.

The Walk for Wellness excitement has now gone global, with Norwegian Cruise Line CEO Harry Sommer posting his own pic (right) taken as he stepped out aboard *Norwegian Prima* while she made a majestic entrance to New York City earlier this week.



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O'BRIEN NAMED AS MCEC CEO

FORMER Food and Wine Victoria CEO Natalie O'Brien was today named as the new Chief Executive Officer of the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC).

O'Brien will take over in Jan 2023, replacing incumbent Peter King who finishes with the business at the end of the year.

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Trust Chair John Brumby said O'Brien's other former roles included interim CEO for Ballarat Regional Tourism as well as CEO of Wine Victoria.

As CEO of MCEC O'Brien (pictured) will be responsible for the overall management, business plan delivery and future strategic direction of MCEC, as well as the operational planning for the new Geelong Convention



and Exhibition Centre (GCEC), the organisation said.

Brumby said she will join MCEC at a crucial time as it recovers from the impact of the pandemic and builds for the future.

"The Centre has reopened to a strong demand for business in 2022, and her experience will play a key role in continuing to

guide the business back to its pre-pandemic levels of success in the coming years," Brumby said.

Steve Dimopoulos, Vic Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events said: "recognised for her contributions to Victoria's tourism and major events sector, Natalie brings exceptional leadership and experience to Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, ensuring the organisation continues to draw the events and exhibitions that support businesses and create jobs".

Both Brumby and Dimopoulos paid tribute to King's tenure, which over the last 11 years had made a "lasting impact on not just MCEC but the wider visitor economy".

O'Brien will commence in her new role on 09 Jan 2023.

Philippines plots MICE recovery

THE business events sector in the Philippines is set to "roar back" courtesy of a boost to the Government-backed MICE Plus Program, a set of incentive packages which aim to encourage foreign organisers to host events in the Philippines.

"Our MICE industry was growing at a rapid pace pre-pandemic," according to Eleanor Palima, Officer-in-Charge of the Philippine Department of Tourism.

"Now that business travel is firmly back on the agenda, we want to attract businesses back and be the top choice for meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions in Southeast Asia," she said.

For more details and to apply for support under the program see tbp.gov.ph.

Gevme expands into Australia and NZ

SINGAPORE-BASED event technology provider Gevme has announced its expansion into the Australian and New Zealand markets, citing a "post-pandemic boom" in business events across the region.

Gevme CEO Veemal Gungadin (pictured) confirmed the establishment of an Australian-based sales, account management and onsite services team.

"Offering our successful solutions to a new market is an exciting prospect that we look forward to working on with ANZ market leaders," he said.

Key distinctives claimed by Gevme include end-to-end event management with AI-driven business matching, onsite check-in kiosks made from sustainable materials, streaming capabilities to anywhere in the world (including China), an event website builder and "content widgets that can be published anywhere for easy sharing".

"On top of having boots on



the ground we are in sync with local market trends and needs, and are excited to announce that our eco-friendly, fully brandable check-in kiosks are available in Sydney," said Gevme Partnership Director and ANZ Territory Leader, Mizuho Hara.

"Our goal is to gradually expand our onsite services to other cities around Australia and New Zealand within the next few years," Hara said.

Gevme is a member of Meetings and Events Australia and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as a business partner of PCOA.

Budgets to lift: Amex M&E

AMERICAN Express Global Business Travel believes in-person events and budgets will increase in 2023, as detailed in its 12th annual Global Meetings and Events Forecast ([CLICK HERE](#)).

Based on a survey of 580 meetings and events professionals in 23 countries as well as interviews with key industry leaders, the report said 77% of respondents rated the health of the industry as eight or above out of 10 - up a whopping six points on last year's survey.

Two-thirds of respondents said they believe the number of in-person events will return to pre-pandemic levels within 1-2 years, with internal and smaller meetings already exceeding 2019 levels in some regions.

In addition, 65% of those surveyed said overall meetings and event budgets were increasing for 2023.

Diversity failure

THERE is "widespread dissatisfaction" about diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the global events industry, according to a new report from the Events Industry Council (EIC).

The organisation's 2022 Equity Benchmarking Study is a key first stage in the development of its Equity Acceleration Plan, developed by the Equity Task Force to address systemic racism and all forms of discrimination in the business events and hospitality industry.

"While there is an ever-growing awareness and commitment toward equity, survey scores indicate DEI efforts are largely in principle but not in practice," EIC said.

The full report and key recommendations are online at eventscouncil.org.



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.

Andaz Pattaya Jomtien Beach, Hyatt's inaugural Andaz-branded luxury and lifestyle resort in Thailand, has unveiled a new executive team ahead of its opening later this year. These include **Ranjeet Rajebhosale** as General Manager, **Anna Rhee** as Executive Assistant Manager, and **Sunny Yu** as Director of Sales & Marketing.

Perth Zoo has appointed new members to its board, with **Tully Carmady** appointed as Deputy Chair. New board members also include Murdoch University Professor **Kris Warren**, Compass Group inclusion executive **Vanessa Martin**, and sport, recreation and community development expert **Ronald Hurst**.

Tara Clifford has taken the role of Senior Manager Consumer Marketing with **Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings**. She was previously the Marketing Manager Asia for the line, and before that was with Trip.com.

G Adventures has added **Nikki Woodward** to represent sales in Queensland and northern NSW, while **Ben Goschnick** is now the Global Purpose Specialist for New South Wales and ACT.

Surf's up in Perth

THE largest surf park in the Southern Hemisphere is slated to open in Cockburn in Perth by the end of 2025, with construction likely to begin next year.

A development application for the \$100 million surf park has been lodged by Aventura with the City of Cockburn, after which the Joint Development Assessment Panel will assess the project.

If it gets the approval to proceed, the park is expected to become a world-class tourist attraction, with an entertainment hub, surf academy, health and wellness centre, bars and restaurants, and accommodation.

"We are hoping the development application is approved before Christmas," Aventura Chair Andrew Ross said.

MP lashes roo push

WHILE Tourism Australia yesterday revealed its latest weapon in the fight to woo more tourists to our shores, Ruby the Roo (**TD 12 Oct**), there was at least one dissenting voice in the country voicing concern.

Animal Justice Party MP Mark Pearson criticised the campaign, stating the way kangaroos are culled in Australia should be discussed by the tourism sector if it is going to leverage our national faunal emblem to win tourists.

"If Tourism Australia's Brand Ambassador Ruby Roo was real, she would have been shot as part of a Government 'Kangaroo Management Plan' and hung up by her leg on the back of a ute," he told Ben Fordham's radio show on **2GB** this morning.

Europeans back Down Under



THE Nordic & Baltic Countries Roadshow (**TD 12 Oct**) held its first event this week at the Mercure Central hotel in Sydney.

Seven suppliers from the Nordic & Baltic region came to meet local agents, tour operators and buyers in the Harbour City to extoll the virtues of taking a holiday to the European regions, the first time representatives have been able to do so for three years thanks to the pandemic.

Pictured: Claudio Nielsen, Delta-Scandinavia; Kari Halon, Toolbox Consulting; Anne Koivisto, Norwegian Travel Company; Ilkka Lankinen, Santa Park/Arctic Tree House; Tuulia Taupila, Finnair; Katja Ikaheimo-Lankinen; Santa Park/Arctic Tree House; Lindberg Jonsdottir, GJ Travel; Arnaud Michelin, Finnair; Hanna Kouri, North Lapland Tourism; Lisa Koopman, Nordic Travel; Marit Nielsen, VOS; and Amy Ryniker, Nordic Travel.

Clean homes please

TRAVELLERS seeking stays at holiday homes desire the premises to be clean and tidy above any other detail, new data from Booking.com has revealed.

A survey conducted by the company found that 65% of holiday home seekers prioritise cleanliness above anything else, while entertainment facilities & nice decor was the next most sought after with 44%.

Modern kitchen facilities and "personal touches" from the owner were also high on the list of wants, while classic Australian beach houses topped the list in terms of type of accommodation.

The top spot was followed by country cottages and cosy cabins both at (40%), city apartments (35%), farm stays (26%), houseboats (25%), chalet/snow stays (17%), and "tiny homes" (16%).

Got a confidential tip? Contact Travel Daily via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click [HERE](#)