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INDEPENDENT HOLIDAY PACKAGE EXPERTS

## RCI unveils Icon

ROYAL Caribbean International overnight revealed details of its newest ship class, with the highly anticipated *Icon of the Seas* set to undertake her first passenger voyages in early 2024.

More info on the [cover page](#) as well as in today's *Cruise Weekly*.

## Insurance only through agents

EXCLUSIVE

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) is working on a submission to the Federal Government which will ensure travel advisors are the only third party distribution point for travel insurance, Chief Executive Officer Dean Long has told *Travel Daily*.

Speaking at the Express Travel Group Reconnect 2022 conference in Melbourne, Long broke the news to delegates to a round of rapturous applause.

He confirmed to *TD* the submission will be put forward imminently, and will likely be decided on by the new year.

"We're advocating that we need travel businesses to be that sole point, we know people are turning to agents more than ever.

"We still have a consultation process underway, but the position that we are really strongly advocating for is a continuation of sales of travel insurance via travel agents and travel businesses - it is the only way that people are going to get the protection they need.

"We are feeling really confident that as we go through that the government will understand that, because without travel agents

and without travel businesses, the liability goes to government."

Federal Minister for Financial Services Stephen Jones is dealing with the submission, Long added.

"The final report is still being written at the moment, but the discussions we have had have had really positive feedback [on the concept], there was a very clear understanding within government that travel businesses, travel agents need to be able to sell travel insurance."

"I expect hopefully by the end of next year, travel businesses could maybe be one of the only ways outside of going direct."

## CX's Jones to USA

RICHARD Jones, Cathay Pacific Acting Head for South West Pacific, has been appointed as the airline's Regional Head of Marketing & Sales for the Americas, including Canada and the USA.

Sandeep Pillay, Regional Head of Airports, is stepping up to take on the additional role of Acting Head for South West Pacific, while Tom Kennedy has been promoted to be Regional Head of Marketing & Sales, South West Pacific.

Jones has been with Cathay Pacific for more than 28 years, the last 18 in various roles within the carrier's Australian business.



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## ACCC rejects charter deal

**THE** Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) has issued a draft rejection of a proposed extension of Virgin Australia and Alliance Airlines charter alliance agreement. The competition watchdog said it was now seeking submissions on its preliminary decision, which it said was arrived at after the

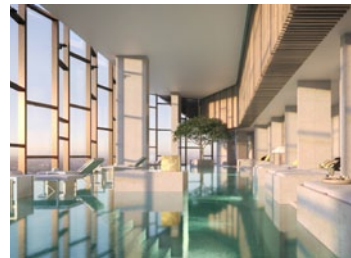
mooted arrangement failed to prove that the public benefits to result from the deal over the next five years would outweigh the public detriment that is likely to result from VA's regional arm and Alliance Airlines coordinating their fly-in fly-out (FIFO) services. The Charter Alliance Agreement enables Virgin Australia Regional Airlines (VARA) and Alliance Airlines to cooperate, coordinate and jointly bid for, and provide, FIFO and value-added services to corporate customers. "The proposed extension of the Charter Alliance Agreement would continue to eliminate competition between VARA and Alliance Airlines in providing FIFO services to corporate pax," ACCC Deputy Chair Mick Keogh said. The decision follows the ACCC also casting concerns about Qantas' desire to purchase the remaining stake in Alliance Airlines (*TD* 18 Aug).

## Melbourne is ritzier

**THE** Ritz-Carlton, Melbourne will make its debut in the city in Mar 2023, a construction the brand believes will redefine luxury in Melbourne.

To be located on Lonsdale Street, the 257-room hotel will have its lobby located 80 storeys above the ground and boast amenities including a restaurant and bar, wellness spaces, an infinity pool, and meeting and event facilities and services.

"The Ritz-Carlton, Melbourne will deliver an experience tailored to today's luxury guest and deeply connected to this vibrant city," the hotel's General Manager Antony Page said.



## VA seeks Fiji capacity

**VIRGIN** Australia is seeking to renew 371 seats per week in each direction on the Fiji route.

The application to the International Air Services Commission arrives at a time when VA is pursuing possible growth of its short-haul network.

More details on the growth strategy on **page four**.

## CT Partners appoints

**CT PARTNERS** has appointed Elizabeth Rooney to the role of Commercial Analyst, where she will help the business drive the development of new revenue streams and maximise airline agreements to enhance their business operations.

She arrives in the position with experience with TMC operations, implementation and commercial contracting, with CEO Matt Masson stating Rooney joins at an exciting time given new membership spikes in spend.

**congrats!**

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## O/S sentiment strong

THE Australian market has been included in the latest *Long-Haul Travel Barometer* for the first time, a report published by The European Travel Commission (ETC) and Eurail BV.

The research, which looked at traveller sentiment between Sep and Dec 2022 across seven overseas markets, found that nearly 60% of Australians have either taken or are planning an international trip by the end of the year, with 38% considering a European destination.

Aussies are prioritising quality and safety when picking destinations, and compared to other markets surveyed, are more cautious about the cost involved when choosing a destination to visit (32% compared to 27% in the total sample).

Brazil, Canada & the US showed the biggest increase in appetite for overseas travel, while 19% of respondents overall still cited COVID as a reason to avoid travel.

## Pax need more protection

AUSTRALIA needs greater flight delay and cancellation compensation protection to help preserve the rights of air passengers, the Australian Lawyers Alliance (ALA) believes.

Spokesperson for the ALA, Victoria Roy, labelled Australia's air passenger rights as "archaic" in comparison to other countries, such as the United Kingdom, the US or Canada.

Roy argued that Australian travellers need to "jump through legal loopholes" to get flight delay compensation in the few scenarios where it is available.

"Too many passengers seek legal advice regarding compensation for travel disruption only to find the Australian Consumer Law does not adequately protect them," she claimed.

Aussies travelling to and from Europe have compensation rights under European law

"which airlines should uphold without delay", the ALA asserted, adding these protections were affirmed by the Court of Justice of the European Union on 06 Oct, after deciding to extend its interpretation of EU law in a way that assists Aussie passengers.

In *Flightright v American Airlines* the court found that connecting domestic flights are covered by the compensation rules even when a travel agent sold the flight combination as a single ticket rather than the airline.

"There is an urgent need for Australia to step up and develop a compensation regime that is, at least, equal to the protections offered in so many other jurisdictions," Roy said, highlighting the "stark contrast" between consumer protection laws in Europe versus Australia.

The ALA has previously called for reforms in the travel sector (*TD* 12 Jul 2021).



## Window Seat

THE microscopic reign of Liz Truss as British PM has not been missed by the cheeky wit of the travel sector.

For the second time this week, Ryanair has chimed in on current events, offering the outgoing leader a priority boarding pass out the front door in seat "10D".

Meanwhile Twitter has been awash with sharp memes, like the post below claiming 10 Downing St to be the perfect Airbnb 'short-stay' in town.



# WESTERN AUSTRALIA WALKING ON A DREAM



STEP INTO A DREAM

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## CORPORATE UPDATE

### Illuminating B2B spend

**FLIGHT** Centre's premier corporate travel event, Illuminate, took place in Sydney yesterday, with many of the big movers and shakers in travel delivering updates on how B2B sales have been tracking over the past year.

One of the big names on stage was Virgin Australia's CEO Jayne Hrdlicka, who revealed the rapid return of demand in the corporate market has created a confident mood for aviation.

"The total market demand right now feels about what it should be if the music hadn't stopped... if you look at GDP growth 2019 to now, the capacity is not quite there yet but underlying demand is where you'd expect it to be,"

#### Cost a key priority

**THE** corporate travel market is strongly optimistic, a new survey by Sabre Corporation has found, revealing 82% of corporate travel agents expect a return to pre-pandemic levels within the next 12 months, while 15% expect a boom greater than pre-COVID.

With more than two-thirds of respondents reporting a rise in bookings in the three months to Aug, Sabre Travel Solutions Vice President of Agency Sales, Brett Thorstad, acknowledged "while business travel is rebounding...it is returning differently".

The survey, which gathered responses from 21 countries across the Asia Pacific region, showed that new business priorities have emerged as a result of the pandemic, with 84% saying they are now focused on optimising costs and efficiencies.

While 38% say total travel spend is increasing, cost remains a key consideration, with over two-thirds of respondents reporting a moderate or significant increase in bookings with low-cost carriers.

The data also shows that corporate travellers are prioritising information, flexibility, and hygiene, while companies are placing a focus on sustainability.

the VA chief said.

"Small- and medium-sized businesses are back well over where they were in 2019 and big businesses, the amount of money that is being spent is there, but the number of trips is lower."

She also spruiked that Virgin's business fares were up to 30% less expensive than its competitors, adding that moving forward the carrier would also be exploring new ways to expand its network reach.

"We're very focused on our 737 aircraft footprint, we've got 737-700s/800s and we've got MAX-8 and 10s coming into the fleet that gives us a bit more range, and so we will be adding to the network," Hrdlicka said.

Despite not pointing to any specific routes or markets, the VA boss noted the recovery in international travel was not a "short-term sugar hit", but rather part of a more sustainable bounce back in business.

This year Illuminate was themed 'Focus Forward - Bigger, Better, Stronger', featuring talks from Flight Centre CEO Graham "Skroo" Turner and Rex Deputy Chairman John Sharp.

#### Radius Middle East

**RADIUS** Travel, Corporate Travel Management's (CTM) global agency network, is extending its partnership with travel management company ITL World across the Gulf Cooperation Council region.

The deal will see Radius Travel enhance its customer offering throughout the Middle East, a region that is predicted to see a 32% increase in business travel during 2022, according to a recent report by the World Travel & Tourism Council.

CTM & Radius Travel's Vice President Global Agency Partners, Nicole Wilcock believes the partnership would particularly benefit customers in the energy, renewables and marine sectors.



### TA hits the red carpet in NY



**TOURISM** Australia premiered the short film *G'Day* last night in New York, which tells the back story of Ruby the kangaroo and Louie the unicorn, stars of the new global campaign (**TD** 19 Oct).

The film showcases iconic Australian locations, including Uluru, the Great Barrier Reef, the Sydney Opera House, and the NT's Nitmiluk Gorge, as the film follows the adventures of Ruby, voiced by Australian actress Rose Byrne, and Louie, voiced by Canadian actor Will Arnett.

Tourism Australia was joined by trade and media, along with a few famous faces like Australian

celebrity chef Curtis Stone - [CLICK HERE](#) to see the film.

**Pictured:** Will Arnett on stage with Rose Byrne.

#### ATEC tickled pink

**THE** Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) is encouraging the industry to 'Pink up Tourism' with its new campaign for Breast Cancer Awareness month.

ATEC is asking people to donate **HERE**, as well as take a photo of themselves in their best pink garb and upload it to LinkedIn with the hashtag #pinkuptourism.

Donations will support the McGrath Foundation to meet its goal of 250 McGrath Breast Care Nurses across the country by 2025, who help individuals and their families affected by breast cancer by providing physical, psychological, and emotional support.

"Women absolutely power our tourism industry and we all know of women...who have been through or are going through treatment so we feel compelled to show our support and to honour their experience," ATEC MD Peter Shelley said.



#### Business travel gaps

**EMPLOYEE** satisfaction is often a pain point in corporate travel programs, according to a new report released by Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) and Deem, corporate travel management software provider.

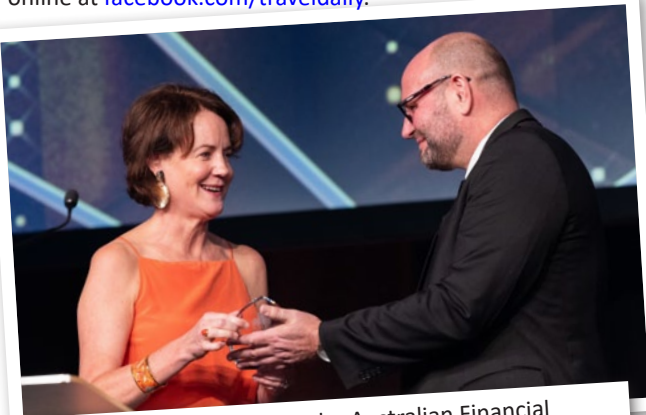
More than a quarter (28%) of US survey respondents said traveller experience/satisfaction is "the single greatest pain point" of their corporate travel program, with 41% saying their company's travel program prioritises cost savings over employee satisfaction.

When asked to identify which travel perks would increase their satisfaction, business travellers prioritised freedom to book with their favourite travel suppliers (46%) and being allowed to stay an extra night after their work meeting ends (43%).

# Glitter and glam for NTIA 2022

THE afterglow from last Sat's National Travel Industry Awards ceremony in Sydney continued all this week as winners, finalists, nominees and sponsors reflected on the most highly anticipated event of the year. Social media channels have been flooded with messages of congratulations, with everyone agreeing that the Australian travel industry itself was the biggest winner on the night of nights.

Our sister publication *travelBulletin* today wraps up its suite of winner interviews in the latest update, which is now online at [travelbulletin.com.au](http://travelbulletin.com.au), while more NTIA pics are online at [facebook.com/traveldaily](http://facebook.com/traveldaily).



**FIONA** Carruthers from the Australian Financial Review accepts her NTIA Best Travel Writer award from Steve Reynolds of Discover Qatar.



**HOW** good do these young roosters look in the NTIA ballroom! Josh Duncan from Helloworld with Scott Ellis of APT and Ignite Travel Group GM Ryan Thomas.



**JAMES** Kavanagh from Flight Centre Travel Group (centre) with travel industry analyst John O'Shea of Ord Minnett with his wife Karen, as well as NTIA judge Rowan Peiris and wife Kathy.



**NEWLY** minted Webjet Director, Katrina Barry with Virtuoso Australia/NZ GM Fiona Dalton.



**SOME** of the lush NTIA bathroom amenities courtesy of CVFR Travel Group's pamper sponsorship.





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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](mailto:specials@traveldaily.com.au)

**Silversea** is offering guests up to US\$2,000 shipboard credit on its European Summer 2023 sailings, for bookings made by 30 Nov. The credit can be spent on spa treatments, speciality restaurants, laundry service, a personal trainer, or shore excursions. The offer can be applied to sailings such as the 16-day Athens (Piraeus) to Venice, which departs 17 Jul 2023. Visit [silversea.com](http://silversea.com) for further details.

Australian and New Zealand travellers are currently able to save up to 20% when they book a three or more day car rental with **Thrifty**. The offer applies to bookings made until 31 Oct 2022 for rentals until 30 Nov 2023, unless sold out. To check out the full terms and conditions, visit [thrifty.com.au](http://thrifty.com.au).

**Ormina Tours** has announced 50% off their gift cards range for a limited time, which include \$200 and \$500 AUD gift cards that can be used on any small group journey, regional discovery, city break or private journey. Visit [orminatours.com](http://orminatours.com) for more information.

Europe self-guided walk operator, **On Foot Holidays**, is offering Australians and Kiwis savings of £100 on a gourmet dinner for two during its self-guided walking holiday in northern Provence - visit [onfootholidays.co.uk](http://onfootholidays.co.uk) for all the details.

## Cook on the pylon

**BRIDGECLIMB** has partnered with Australian restaurateur and chef Luke Mangan to launch Luke's Table at the Pylon Lookout in Nov, offering guests a "sky-high" three-course culinary experience in the Pylon Lookout & Museum, with unrivalled views of the Sydney harbour.

## Big win for littleBIG

**VICTORIA-BASED** full service marketing agency, littleBIG, has won the PR and digital accounts for the Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME), which joins the agency's suite of tourism clients, including Melbourne Airport, Visit Grampians, and Sip and Savour.

## Ovolo green push

**OVOLO** Hotels has pledged to plant one tree for every booking as part of its new sustainability initiative, 'Do Good, Feel Good'. The green initiative will also see the independent hotel brand achieve Green Certification for all Ovolo-owned new-build hotels, and work with EarthCheck to ensure all actions are science-backed, strategic and sustainable. Additionally, Ovolo has committed to the Plant'd Pledge, which promotes vegetarian and plant-based cuisine across its hotel restaurants and bars, and will work towards achieving a 50% reduction in food waste by 2030 and eliminate single-use plastics by 2023.

## TTC playing with a full deck



**THE** Travel Corporation's TTC Tours division last night hosted about 120 industry partners at a cocktail party held at Sydney's new Crown Barangaroo.

The Cirq Bar on level 26 was the spectacular venue, overlooking Circular Quay, the Opera House and Harbour Bridge, with the event marking the first post-pandemic visit for both Contiki Tours CEO Adam Armstrong and The Travel Corporation President Gavin Tollman.

Themed "Full House", the event aimed to showcase the full range of TTC product including Costsaver, Contiki, Luxury Gold, Insight and of course Trafalgar.

**Pictured** at top during the event are AFTA CEO Dean Long; TTC Tour Brands MD Toni Ambler; the eternally debonair Christian Hunter from Travellers Choice;



Contiki Global CEO Adam Armstrong; and TTC MD Australia David Hosking.

Lisa Wright from Travel Associates is pictured **above** with Virtuoso's Nikki Glading, while **below** are Phil Hoffmann Travel MD Peter Williams; Stan Scott from Helloworld Travel; & Tomas Malmberg, TTC Tour Brands.



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