

March to November 2023
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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of news, including photo pages from the **ACA** and **TravelManagers**, plus a cover wrap from **Ponant** and a **MW Tours** product profile.

QDP "in infancy"

TRAVEL agencies will continue to hold off adopting the Qantas Distribution Platform until its functionality improves.

The NDC-based system was a key topic of discussion earlier this week at the BTTB conference in Sydney, with ATMC Executive Director Oliver Tams slamming Qantas for a "disappointing lack of consultation with the industry".

He highlighted limitations such as the inability to book multiple pax, adequately service existing bookings or accept multiple forms of payment, with agencies unwilling to take the risk of inconveniencing clients - more details on **page six**.

Going all the way with WA

WESTERN Australia led the way in terms of proportional visitor growth for Jun, emerging with the biggest increase in interstate visitors and its capital Perth making the biggest surge among the country's capital cities.

The result was published in the latest monthly snapshot from Tourism Research Australia, with WA also outpacing its own pre-pandemic visitor spend by 12%, raking in \$802 million in Jun and representing a \$101 million jump on Jun 2021.

Across the entire country, Jun saw strong results delivered for interstate travel continue, with 2.8 million interstate overnight trips taken, up 78% on the 1.5 million trips recorded in the COVID-impacted Jun 2021 period, but still down by 11% on the 3.1 million trips taken in Jun 2019.

Interstate spend was another positive marker for Australia's tourism sector, with \$4.1 billion

spent for the period, up by \$880 million on pre-COVID levels, with the biggest increases recorded for Tasmania (+58%), Qld (+54%) and South Australia (+51%).

Meanwhile Australians took 3.5 million overnight trips to capital cities in Jun, spending around \$3.7 billion, and compared to Jun 2021, capitals were boosted by a 55% increase in overnight trips and a 77% bump in spend.

Taking into account intrastate spending, Australia recorded \$7.5 billion in overnight spend for Jun (+22% on Jun 2019), saw 8.4 million trips taken, and 29 million nights spent on trips.

Learn about Ponant

DISCOVER Ponant's latest batch of itineraries for Mar to Nov 2023 in the brand's new brochure, which showcases 180 sailings, including 28 polar and 24 luxury expeditions - see **front cover**.

Travel Daily on location at the TravelManagers 2022 Conference

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from Sydney's Masonic Centre where **TravelManagers** is hosting its first national conference since 2019.

AFTER a day packed with updates from the TravelManagers leadership team, today the conference moved into tradeshow mode, with key partners hosting booths to showcase the latest products in their portfolios.

Further presentations from major sponsors continue this afternoon followed by the obligatory massive group photo - before everyone heads off to get glammed up for the disco-themed gala dinner.

More from the event on **page 5**.



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MW Tours Asia brox

MW Tours' new brochure for Japan & northeast Asia includes travel packages for every type of traveller, focusing on food, people and culture - see [page nine](#).

Grief impacts travel

FOLLOWING the passing of Queen Elizabeth II overnight, DFAT has advised Aussie travellers to prepare for substantial disruption to transport services as the United Kingdom enters a national mourning period.

It will be difficult to find accommodation, particularly in London, with Aussies advised to check UK Government advice.

TA research to bolster cruise

TOURISM Australia's (TA) tripartite agreement with the Australian Cruise Association (ACA) and CLIA will focus on making the country the premier destination for high-yield cruise, the DMO's Managing Director Phillipa Harrison revealed.

Speaking at this week's ACA Conference in Townsville, Harrison said the new partnership's goal will be achieved through a focus on four key pillars of support for the cruise sector: marketing & PR, industry partnerships, research & insights, and distribution.

The three will work to deliver "some really tangible actions for the cruise sector, particularly in the inbound space," Harrison said, such as using TA's immense marketing & PR platforms to "tell the story of some of Australia's iconic cruise itineraries."

TA will also provide research and insights, including investigation into the economic impact of the sector, such as pre- and post-visitiation.

Cruise distribution will be bolstered by specialised, sector-focused content as part of the TA's Aussie Specialist Program.

Initial visions from the DMO's research include understandings into where opportunities exist for Australia's cruise industry, based on interest and market size.

Harrison told guests of the considerable differences between the interests of those travelling on big ships and small ships.

While guests on large vessels are interested in coach travel/tours, spa treatments, and private/charter flights, those on small vessels preferred mountain/rock sports, sailing, and fishing.

"One of the things that we're really interested in unpacking is the pre- and post-value, so we've got some plans to do some research in that," Harrison said.

Hurti names NZ GM

HURTIGRUTEN has appointed Thomas Gentz to the newly created role of Regional Sales Manager - New Zealand, joining the expedition cruise line from Travel Advocates.

He has previous experience with Air NZ and Back-Roads Touring.

Azamara Euro '24

AZAMARA has unveiled 84 new Europe 2024 itineraries, including 53 country voyages and 15 worldwide golf sailings.

More than half of the port calls are a late night or overnight, in destinations including Taranto, Italy; Hamburg, Germany; and Trollfjord, Norway.

Azamara has also introduced 'Lens of a Local', a new video series that dives deeper into some of the destinations.

Airfare, ticketing & ground arrangements specialist

Australia's leading small ship specialist, Cruise Traveller, based on the Gold Coast is looking to expand its team with the addition of a permanent part time airfare & ticketing specialist.

The position is the equivalent of 2 full days per week and flexibility is available to the right candidate.

You must have extensive GDS experience (Sabre preferred) and be able to deliver a high level of customer service in support of the main cruise reservations specialist team.

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Travel Daily

Let Emirates entertain you

EMIRATES has announced a US\$350 million investment in a next-generation in-flight entertainment system on board its new A350 fleet.

The carrier's 50 long-range, wide-body jets will be equipped with the next-generation Thales' AVANT Up system featuring Optiq 4k QLED HDR display screens, and offer enhanced live television options introducing a broader range of news and programming.

The AVANT screens also boast the mantle of being the first smart displays in the industry to offer two Bluetooth connections, built-in wi-fi to pair multiple devices including phones, tablets, headphones or game controllers, while also supporting up to 60 watts USB-C to fast-charge personal devices.

"Emirates has always regarded in-flight entertainment as an essential aspect of our onboard experience, and we were in fact

the first airline to put personal screens onto every single seat on board when that was far from the norm over 30 years ago," EK's COO Adel al Redha said.

"Our investment in next-generation Thales systems for our new A350 fleet will further our lead, enabling us to deliver even better experiences to our customers - so watch this space."

The entertainment update follows news of a US\$2 billion upgrade of its aircraft fleet interiors (**TD** 11 Aug).

PDOT eyes Aussies

THE Lucid Agency has been selected by the Philippines Department of Tourism (PDOT) to lead its marketing and PR in the Australian market.

The Philippines has also launched a billboard campaign in Sydney to generate interest in the country's Chocolate Hills of Bohol.

Ultimate Odysseys

OCEANIA Cruises has announced a new series of World and Grand Voyages for 2025, including its popular 180-day Around the World voyage.

The seven Grand Voyages range from 50-111 days, and includes the new 74-day First of Its Kind 'ultimate odyssey', visiting three continents on two ships.

Bali flights delayed

THE return of direct flights between Bali and Port Hedland in Western Australia will not go ahead until foot-and-mouth disease is brought under control in Indonesia, International Airport CEO Dave Batic has stated.

"As a regional airport we have to be mindful of managing these risks and that may mean as a result the relaunch of Bali flights may be delayed," he said.

Batic added that a resumption of services will be assessed in the next six to 12 months.



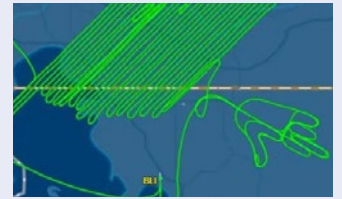
Window Seat

HOW long would you spend insulting a US state?

A strange question we grant you, but for at least one survey pilot the answer is seven hours in the air, because that's the amount of effort it required the man to flip the bird to Washington State through the medium of flight radar (**pictured**).

"Talk about detail, he even put a thumb nail on," one amused Reddit user posted.

The motive for the insult remains, 'up in the air'.



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We're looking for an enthusiastic **Mid-Weight Graphic Designer** to join our dynamic team.

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A great TIME to celebrate!



THE Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) held a networking event last night to celebrate the graduates from Programs 39, 43 and 45, and to welcome the new mentees joining for Program 48. A diverse group of industry

representatives attended the event, which was hosted by the Globus Family of Brands in their Sydney offices.

"It was another successful and happy night of networking and also an opportunity for Graduates to share their personal experiences of being mentored," TIME program founder Penny Spencer said.

"No two stories are the same - it's a wonderful consequence of the TIME journey they take over the six months."

Pictured on the night are the new group of intakes: Emily Porter, mentee; Louise Millmore, mentor; Emina Hiko, mentee; Jenna Rank, mentee; Tina Killeen, mentor.

High-speed rail formally on agenda

THE Federal Government has put forward a proposal to establish a high-speed rail authority, which will be tasked with developing a high-speed national network.

The mooted rail system would allow passengers to travel between major cities and significant regional cities at more than 250 km/h, with a Sydney to Newcastle link first on the agenda, backed by an initial \$500 million federal commitment.

The authority will also plan for fast trains connecting Brisbane & Melbourne with stops in Canberra, Sydney & regional centres.

France travel advice

TRAVELLERS to France will no longer need to show a negative COVID test for entry, or a vaccination pass (except in medical establishments).

Smartraveller continues to advise Australians to exercise a high degree of caution in France due to the threat of terrorism.

QF security breach

THE Australian Federal Police helped escort 225 passengers off a Qantas flight at Melbourne Airport last night, after a pax alerted staff that he was one of between 40 and 60 pax who had not been screened by security.

The traveller said he and the other pax who disembarked a flight from Orange Airport were allowed to proceed through Sydney Airport to their next flight without going through security.

"We will investigate to understand how this incident occurred and we apologise for any inconvenience to passengers on the flight," QF stated.

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Travel & Cruise Weekly

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Air NZ enjoys sales revival

AIR New Zealand has experienced high booking volumes throughout Jul and Aug, a surging period of sales that the carrier's CEO Greg Foran described as being "much stronger than anybody had anticipated".

The admission was made during a market update released to the ASX this morning, which also showed that Air NZ is enjoying strong liquidity of NZ\$2.3 billion as of 23 Aug, comprised of around NZ\$1.9 billion in cash and NZ\$400 million via an unsecured loan facility with the Crown.

The airline said it was expecting flying capacity during the 2023 financial year to be 75-80% of pre-COVID levels, which will play a significant role in reviving its future financial performance.

"Having adjusted our schedule to provide customers with increased surety over their travel plans for the coming spring and summer, I am hugely appreciative of the work the Air New Zealand whanau has done to deliver more than 25,000 flights across Jun and Jul alone," Foran enthused.

"Our rehiring efforts and training capability have been excellent, as has the work to get our Boeing 777-300ER aircraft back flying again," he added.

Ponant Chatham

PONANT has announced a new itinerary exploring the treasures of New Zealand and the Chatham Islands, departing 07 Jan 2023 aboard small luxury expedition ship, *Le Laperouse*.

Highlights of the nine-night New Zealand Mosaic and Chatham Islands journey include bird-spotting amid the isolated beaches and sheer cliffs in the Chatham Islands; the volcanoes and hot springs of Tauranga; and the city of Gisborne, known for its wineries and colonial history.

Guests will be joined on board by award-winning photographer Nick Rains, who will be on hand to share secret tips and tricks to capture the perfect shot.

Guests can save 50% on the second guest and up to 30% off the brochure fare for a limited time - **CLICK HERE** for details.



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TravelManagers celebrates connection

AS WELL as inspirational addresses and intriguing industry updates, this week's TravelManagers conference in Sydney has been notable for the sheer joy of seeing the group's members and industry suppliers relish the opportunity to get together in person after the travails of the last two years. Networking opportunities so far have included an opening night cocktail party and a harbour cruise, while tonight participants will don their

best glitz and glam for a disco-themed gala dinner.

More than 300 delegates are attending the event, which has also included educational workshops and a full briefing on TravelManagers' comprehensive suite of consumer protection initiatives.



THE opening night cocktails were sponsored by Collette, including an inspirational speech from the inimitable David Farrar who is the company's newest employee having only started on Mon this week. He's pictured with NSW BDM Darren Sinclair and TravelManagers GM Michael Gazal.



NEWLY appointed cruise chiefs Victoria Chigwidden from Azamara and MSC Cruises' Lisa Teiotu with Brownyn Knight from MSC Cruises.

CORPORATE UPDATE

ATMC blasts QDP push



THE Association of Travel Management Companies (ATMC) says there's been a "disappointing lack of industry consultation" around the Qantas Distribution Platform (QDP), with the carrier continuing to urge adoption of the system which is aligned with IATA's New Distribution Capability (NDC) protocols.

Speaking at the BTTB conference in Sydney earlier this week (**TD** 07 Sep), ATMC Executive Director Oliver Tams said NDC represents one of the biggest opportunities - and risks - for TMCs and corporate travel buyers in the current environment, highlighting how the organisation's members are working hard to help buyers understand and navigate the teething problems and challenges associated with the system.

With regard to Qantas, he noted that the carrier's heavily touted QDP offering is "very much in its infancy".

"It doesn't yet allow the booking of multiple passengers, use of multiple forms of payment, allow for changes to bookings or work through Online Booking Tools amongst other things - which is why most TMCs are still holding off signing up for it.

"We won't take the risk of inconveniencing our clients," Tams told delegates at the event.

Qantas recently announced that it would be offering discounted fares to the industry if they switch to the QDP (**TD** 31 Aug), but Tams noted that these comments "felt a little like they were jumping the gun given the gap between the promise and reality".

"It's great that NDC will allow lower fares, but from a corporate travel perspective for it to work, the solution also needs to accommodate the necessary flexibilities," he said.

"Despite IATA's global NDC project having been under way for more than a decade now, only 1% of flight bookings across the world are currently implemented using the multiple variations of the system, and most of those are in the leisure space rather than corporate," Tams said.

With the protocols aiming to provide more personalised interactions with travellers, the rollout is different for each carrier and the complexities and costs of implementing multiple interfaces are proving to be problematic and expensive, Tams said.

He was joined on stage for a panel discussion with several key players highlighting their real-life experiences with the platform.

Pictured from left: Bridget Spinoulas from AIG; Peter Hosper of ATPI; Oliver Tams from ATMC; and BCD Travel's Kay Shrimpton.

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WoAG consultation extended

AN ADDENDUM to the Industry Consultation Paper issued by the Federal Department of Finance into the Whole of Australian Government (WoAG) arrangements (**TD** 26 Aug) has extended the closing time for responses to 5pm AEST on 16 Sep.

The update also encourages respondents to keep the information in their submissions concise, with Finance "interested in gathering high-level feedback and ideas from all levels of the travel industry".

Open and frank feedback is also being sought, with the department "keen to maximise access to opportunities in the industry and take full advantage of best-in-market products and services," the addendum notes.

"It is important that Finance understands if the Australian Government's travel processes or proposed arrangements could limit the ability to achieve these results," the update adds.

See the paper by [CLICKING HERE](#).

GBT + Travelport

AMERICAN Express Global Business Travel (GBT) has signed a multi-year renewal agreement with GDS provider Travelport, with the pact seeing the TMC upgrade to the next generation Travelport Plus platform.

Travelport Plus will eventually become the tech company's sole GDS platform, replacing Apollo, Galileo and Worldspan.

Travelport noted that GBT would have access to all NDC content available in the system, with an existing connection now live in most markets worldwide with American Airlines and expectations of the addition of United Airlines by the end of 2022 after a trial program.

The GDS company said it had also established NDC connections with Qantas and Singapore Airlines, and plans to release NDC content for Air France-KLM soon.

Mesh raises \$60m

FINANCE automation platform Mesh Payments has raised US\$60 million in additional capital, with the company saying the funding will help it further enhance its platform to make the most of a "dramatic shift from companies hyper-focusing on growth to cutting spend and costs".

The company said its system "makes legacy corporate cards obsolete", with its insight-driven automation platform giving finance managers more granular control and leverage over their corporate spend.

An intriguing part of the Mesh offering is the industry's only "numberless" VISA physical card which automatically syncs with virtual cards to add flexibility and control, with Mesh claiming its 1,000 mid-market corporate clients are five times more efficient than their peers.

Tramada benefits for all: CTM

CORPORATE Travel Management CEO Jamie Pherous says the company continues to actively develop and support the Tramada platform which it acquired two years ago (**TD** 29 Oct 2020), sharing any enhancements with all customers of the TMC mid-office system.

Speaking at the BTTB conference in Sydney earlier this week, Pherous said despite Tramada users being competitors in some cases, "we're very ethical...we think we can change the industry to be more efficient, so all the developments we're doing we're giving to every customer without exception".

"I'd be very surprised if any customer of Tramada didn't think we'd done the right thing...I'd like to think, hand on heart, they're getting more development, more feedback, more proactivity than ever before," Pherous added.

The fact CTM uses Tramada itself is helpful because "we know what the business needs," he said.

ACA Conference ropes up in FNQ

LAST night the Australian Cruise Association (ACA) brought its 2022 Conference to a close with attendees dressing up in their best cowboy outfit for a night at Hervey Range Rodeo Grounds.

The group was then treated to a full range of rodeo craft, followed by some delicious dinner, some classic boot-scooting, and most importantly, some classic cowboy tunes - yeehaw!



TOBY lemma, Michelle Black, Jane Moggridge, Viking.



WRONG Cowboys guys! While these two didn't look out of place in Townsville, they slightly missed the memo...



BILL Drennan, Inchcape Shipping Services, with two friendly cowpokes.



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Aranui short trips

ARANUI Cruises has released details of its first short-trip cruise, with the five-day roundtrip voyage to sail from Papeete, Tahiti to the Tuamotu islands on board *Aranui 5*.

The itinerary will kick off on 28 Apr 2023 and feature calls to low coral islands of Makatea, Mataiva and Anaa, as well as some scenic cruising around Tahiti at the start and end of the voyage.

It will be the first cruise to solely visit the Tuamotu islands, an archipelago made up of more than 70 islands covering an 850km² area, which Aranui Cruises touts as the "up-and-coming stars of French Polynesia".

For further details, **CLICK HERE**.

SYD reboots jobs

SYDNEY Airport will host a second jobs fair to help tackle the ongoing staff shortage, with more than 4,000 vacancies open heading into the Sep school holidays and Christmas period.

On Wed 21 Sep from 10am to 4pm on level 3 of the T1 International Terminal, 50 of the airport's largest employers will gather with job seekers, who can meet representatives and apply for jobs on the spot.

The first jobs fair in Jun was described as "really successful" by Sydney Airport CEO Geoff Culbert, with around half of the 5,000 available roles at the time being filled, "but it's time for another push," he added.

Bon voyage Jessica!



JESSICA Trinh, Operations Manager from Mariner Travel, has been named the lucky winner at the Atout France workshop in Melbourne on Wed 07 Sep, scoring herself two Economy class tickets with Air France.

The French tourism agency's biannual workshops were held in Sydney and Melbourne this week, showcasing French tourism

organisations and destinations, as well as the latest information on attractions and services to between 400 and 600 Australian travel agents.

Pictured: Country Sales Manager for Australia & the Philippines Arthur Plugge and Account Manager for Australia & New Zealand George Siljanoski congratulate Jessica Trinh.

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

Australian travellers can take advantage of **Singapore Airline's** first earlybird promotion since 2019, offering discounted return air fares from seven Australian cities to over 50 destinations, including return Economy tickets from \$699 for departures from Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane to Singapore, or \$499 from Darwin. Offer ends 30 Sep for select travel periods from 22 Jan to 05 Sep 23 - www.singaporeair.com.

These spring school holidays, **Out of the Ordinary Outback** is offering holidaymakers a 10% discount on stays at two or more of its seven properties, including the dune-cradled Broken Hill Outback Resort and the Copper City Motel/Hotel in Cobar. Call 1300 679 688 for more details.

Cunard's Annual Savings Event has begun, enabling guests to save up to 25% off select 22/23 and 23/24 itineraries, including the 13-night New Zealand voyage now priced from \$2,499 instead of \$4,749 - offer ends 30 Sep. Phone 13 24 41 for bookings.

Travellers can enjoy savings with **Aircalin's** New Caledonia Spring Sale, offering direct flights from Sydney or Brisbane to Noumea from only \$599 return. The sale kicks off today and will end on 23 Sep, for select travel periods between now and 30 Jun 2023 - www.aircalin.com.

5% Accor discounts

ACCOR has launched a special Members' Rate in the Pacific region for members of its Accor Live Limitless (ALL) loyalty program.

Members of ALL can now take advantage of a 5% discount at more than 380 participating hotels, resorts and apartments across Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and French Polynesia.

The special rate applies to bookings made via its website or on the Accor ALL app.

Murray upskilling

MURRAY Regional Tourism has partnered with Tourism Tribe to offer tourism operators in the Murray region free digital upskilling, with the aim of growing the digital capability of the tourism industry.

Each business participating in The Digital Champions Program will get access to free resources and workshops from 15 Sep until 15 Feb 2023, including one-on-one coaching - for more details on the initiative, **CLICK HERE**.

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

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Japan & Northeast Asia with MW Tours

With tours exploring Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, our new 2023 e-brochure and website packages include experiences for every traveller.

Northeast Asia is one of our favourite destinations, filled with delicious cuisine, beautiful and genuine local people, and a rich culture and history. Wander through temples and museums, travel on high speed bullet trains, and hike to cascading waterfalls. While one of the most popular times to visit is spring to see the famous cherry blossoms, your clients can also enjoy the vibrant fall leaves in autumn, and some of the world's best snow in winter.

The product in our new 2023 e-brochure continues to ensure we offer a luxury product at competitive pricing. We have introduced new tours to beautiful Kyushu Island, as well as

self-guided walks and hikes through the Kii Peninsula in Kumano Kodo and Nakasendo. These tours are perfect for clients looking for adventure, history and culture, and to take in the spectacular hidden scenery of Japan. We also have additional Excursion options in Taiwan that can be used as pre/post stays or combined for the perfect package.

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