



## VS to join SkyTeam

**VIRGIN** Atlantic Airways has announced its intention of joining the SkyTeam airline alliance.

The move will further expand cooperation opportunities with the carrier's transatlantic joint venture partners Delta Air Lines and Air France-KLM, which are both longstanding SkyTeam members.

VS, DL, AF and KL already all operate alongside each other at London Heathrow Terminal 3, along with other SkyTeam members China Eastern Airlines and Aeromexico.

Virgin Atlantic CEO Shai Weiss confirmed that interline agreements are already in place with all SkyTeam members, along with codeshares with Aeromexico and Middle East Airlines, with more to follow.

Loyalty benefits will see VS Flying Club Silver level members recognised as SkyTeam Elite Members, while Gold cardholders will be Elite Plus.

## Journey Beyond goes global

**EXCLUSIVE**

**JOURNEY** Beyond CEO Chris Tallent has been named as the head of a newly created "overnight division" by the company's new owners, Hornblower Group (**TD** 13 Jan).

In his expanded role, Adelaide-based Tallent will also oversee American Queen Voyages (AQV), Hornblower's US-based small ship operation which offers a range of river, lake, ocean and expedition cruise experiences.

"This division will further benefit American Queen Voyages by having it join the iconic overnight rail and lodging brands of Journey Beyond, and aligning them with AQV to strengthen its global go-to-market strategy, uniting Hornblower's portfolio to trade partners and further reinforcing the connectivity and alignment between all of Hornblower's brands," the company said.

Hornblower Group, which

is backed by private equity firm Crestview Partners, also announced the appointment of former Cruise Lines International Association Global President and CEO Cindy D'Aoust to head up American Queen Voyages.

D'Aoust joins Hornblower with more than two decades of experience as a "high performing executive within the corporate travel and hospitality industry", most recently as President of Hospitality for Cape Resorts Management Company, a portfolio of "classic American destination properties" in Cape May and The Hamptons.

During her four year CLIA tenure D'Aoust and her team significantly boosted the organisation's travel agent membership by over 400%, with the development of educational programs, engagement and events.

She takes over at AQV from Acting CEO David Giersdorf.

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features six pages of news plus a full page from **Entire Travel Group**.

## TD's new recruit!

**THE** Business Publishing Group has welcomed Nicki Harford as our new Advertising Operations & Customer Service Coordinator.

Harford joins the team from her most recent role with Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, along with previous experience at Air New Zealand, Infinity Holidays and Globus Family of Brands.

More appointments on **page 6**.

## QF ups Timor-Leste

**QANTAS** has lodged an application with the International Air Services Commission for additional capacity on the Timor-Leste route, requesting two additional weekly frequencies which will allow it to operate daily E190 Darwin-Dili flights.



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## The King of travel passes



**THE** founding patriarch of the AAT Kings business has passed away this week in Melbourne at the age of 92.

Bill King created Bill King's Northern Safaris in 1967, where he operated outback tours that took city slickers off the beaten track in his custom 4WD vehicles,

and by 1979, boasted 10 vehicles and four Greyhound coaches on charter to keep pace with the growing operation.

The growing business would ultimately become AAT Kings in 1980, with the TTC-owned company today paying tribute to Bill, stating "the respect Bill had for the land, its people and his sense of adventure are a great legacy and one that AAT Kings continue to honour".

## Expedia accelerates

**EXPEDIA** Group has launched a new accelerator initiative to assist SMEs in the travel sector to innovate and fast-track growth.

The Open World Accelerator launches today and will arm startups and/or small businesses seeking to make travel more accessible with tools such as tech support, meetings with experts, participation in industry networking events, and access to the Expedia Group platform.

Prospective businesses globally can apply for the six-month program **HERE** before 21 Oct, and must have been founded less than 10 years ago and at least be able to present a minimum viable product to be eligible.

## ACCC gives its tick

**APOLLO** Tourism & Leisure has this morning been granted its long-awaited approval by the ACCC to proceed with its mooted merger with Tourism Holdings Limited (THL) (**TD** breaking news).

The clearance from the consumer watchdog is subject to Apollo going ahead with its sale of assets to Jucy and refinancing by THL, as well as the divestment of leases for Apollo rental branches and depots located in Alice Springs, Darwin, Hobart and Perth, and the Apollo Star RV motorhome brand.

## AFTA previews finalists

**AFTA** has announced the finalists for its two 'Most Popular' categories ahead of the National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA) taking place on 15 Oct in Sydney.

Amadeus, Cover-More Travel Insurance, nib Travel Insurance, Sabre and TravelPay have all made it through to the final of the Most Popular Travel Support Service category, while Hawai'i Tourism Oceania, Japan National Tourism Organization, Qatar Tourism, Singapore Tourism Board and Tahiti Tourisme will duke it out for the honour of Most Popular Tourism Office.

6,000 votes have been cast and counted for travel's big night of nights, with AFTA CEO Dean Long stating the evolving nature of travel only makes the aforementioned categories more important moving forward.

"With the travel landscape now increasingly complex, it's important we also recognise the key roles played by tourism offices and travel support services, who work closely with travel professionals to provide tailored and treasured experiences plus travel insurance,

so clients have precious peace of mind wherever they go," he said.

"It's been great to hear recently how so many travel agents and businesses have their phones ringing off the hook and inboxes buzzing as consumer confidence keeps building and our completely sold-out NTIA 2022 creeps closer," Long added.

The finalists for the Most Outstanding Consumer Travel Journalist has also been teased, with Fiona Carruthers, Lisa Allen, Louise Goldsbury and Katrina Loblely all making the cut.

"Australians are realising that we are entering the golden age of travel professionals, and our finalists for Most Outstanding Consumer Travel Journalists have all played a key role in sharing the value of our experience and skills with their audiences," Long said.

"I warmly congratulate all those journalists that work hard to continue supporting ATAS-accredited travel agents and businesses through drawing on our expertise to bring their content to life, whether it's phone calls, emails or face-to-face meetings," he added.

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## Bonza ramps up digital support



TSA Group has been appointed by Bonza to deliver the airline a digital support centre ahead of its imminent launch to the market.

The customer experience consultancy was chosen because of its tourism expertise and history of executing successful communications with customers in regional Australia, with Bonza hopeful the partner will cement its plan of becoming a digitally-focused carrier which avoids long call wait times for its customers through an online chat function.

Bonza added the digital approach also has a clear advantage for a customer's ability to self-serve and access customer support real time.

"Our ethos is to communicate with customers how we would like to be communicated to as travellers ourselves," Bonza's CCO Carly Povey said.

## AC carbon offset

AIR Canada has partnered with the Amadeus-backed Choose to launch its new carbon offset program to the market.

AC customers now have the option of purchasing verified carbon offsets within the airline's booking website, with the Choose platform automatically estimating the emissions load of any given flight and providing a calculation of offset options.

The airline's loyalty program Aeroplan members also have the option to redeem points in exchange for carbon offsets.

"Welcoming TSA Group as part of our team, coupled with in-house customer communication roles and the app functionalities, we hope we will create the new purple standard in customer care," she added.

MEANWHILE, Bonza said it continues to work with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority regarding its launch date.

"We respect the process...it is wrong of us to comment on when that process will be completed," Povey said.

**Pictured:** Povey (back row, third from left) with the TSA team after inking the agreement.

## Four Seasons Yachts

THE identity of the mysterious luxury ship order lodged with the Fincantieri shipyard last Jul (TD 14 Jul) has finally been revealed, with Four Seasons Hotels formally announcing plans to launch its first vessel in 2025.

The order for the new Four Seasons Yachts division includes the option for two more ships, and will be led by veteran luxury cruise executive Larry Pimentel.

Details of the designs show the ships will be 207 metres long and 27 metres wide, and will boast 14 decks, 95 spacious suites, multiples restaurants and bars, as well as a full-service spa, salon, and wellness program.

Pimentel was most recently the CEO of Azamara until 2020, and before that led major brands such as Cunard and Seabourn.

## Japan bookings surge

DEMAND for trips to Japan by Australian travellers has soared since last week's announcement by the island country's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida that all border restrictions will be removed on 11 Oct (TD 23 Sep).

Since the development, one brand enjoying a major bump in booking enquiries has been Club Med, which has seen a 35% jump in online interest, reaching the height of pre-pandemic levels.

The company's bookings have also surged ahead by 275% compared to 2019, with the highest booking percentages coming from NSW (43%) and Victoria (30%).

Meanwhile, All Nippon Airways has also reported a tripling in sales growth since the news of unrestricted travel, while Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) Sydney observed the news arrived at a "perfect time" for the outbound Aussie travel sector.

"While Australians will be able to take advantage of the strong Australian dollar, the changes will be especially welcomed by travellers planning snowsports trips over the winter, or those booking ahead for the popular cherry blossom season next year," local Executive Director, Yoko

Tanaka said.

JNTO also confirmed Australia is on the list of 68 countries with which the visa waiver program will be reinstated.

## Intrepid ups Premium

INTREPID Travel has expanded its Premium range with 10 new tours, a year-and-a-half after the brand's launch (TD 25 Aug 2021).

The 10 extra adventures include six new trips in Europe, in the Baltics, the Balkans, and Northern Spain, and four new trips in the Americas, bringing the total number of Premium trips to 97.

The launch will also mark the first of the brand's itineraries in the United States, with the introduction of Premium Alaska.

Other new tours in the Americas include Premium Costa Rica and Premium Patagonia.

With the introduction of these new itineraries, the Premium range will now span 42 countries, featuring Intrepid's highest-standard accommodation and exceptional on-trip experiences, while minimising their environmental footprint.

They have quickly become Intrepid's most successful product launch in the brand's history.

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## A&K enjoys a big taste of Italy



**ABERCROMBIE & Kent's** (A&K) regional Italy experts have just returned from a famil trip through Italy, kicking off in Rome where the group explored the city on Vespas.

The team participated in a private cobbler class with renowned shoemaker Francesca Latini, before putting their cooking skills to the test at an intimate pizza-making lesson.

The lucky agents then made their way to the Tuscan

countryside, checking out the medieval town of Orvieto before learning about the gravity fermenting process at Podere Le Ripi Winery and Organic Farm.

Whilst in Tuscany, the group stayed at the sprawling, luxury estates of Rosewood's Castiglion del Bosco and Belmond's Castello Di Casole.

**Pictured:** The group take a selfie with the 'Gelato King', Sergio Dondoli, who is an expert at crafting Italy's favourite dessert.

## Murray ship to debut in '24

A NEW \$6.75m cruise vessel has been announced by Murray River Paddlesteamers, set to be the first of her kind in Australia when she launches in 2024.

The luxury 20-cabin vessel, with the working title PS *Australian Star*, will offer cruises on the Murray of up to one week.

She will be a "game-changing, hero drawcard" for the region, Director Craig Burgess told *Travel Daily*, as she prepares to ferry 40 guests on three- and four-night, back-to-back cruises.

*Australian Star* is being supported with \$2.25 million in funding by the Victorian State

## Mel Airport rail plan

**THE** Victorian Government has released a plan to build an above-ground station for the Melbourne Airport rail link, and a station at Keilor East in Melbourne's north.

The rail link will allow pax to travel between the airport and the CBD through Melbourne's western suburbs, with trains running every 10 minutes, resulting in journeys connecting the airport and the CBD in taking less than 30 minutes.

The project is slated to be completed by 2029 at a cost of around \$10.5 billion.

## Qatar, ALL expands

**QATAR** Airways Privilege Club and ALL - Accor Live Limitless have announced the expansion of their strategic partnership to offer new ways for members to earn reward points, while also fast tracking their tier status.

Privilege Club and ALL members globally can now earn both Avios and ALL Reward points upon their first eligible Accor stay or Qatar Airways flight, as well as enjoy an exclusive offer to advance tiers.

Government - financing which has brought the project forward by three years.

The two-year build will commence on the banks of the Murray in Mildura in late 2022, with cruise dates, itineraries, and special launch fares expected to be released in mid-2023.

The three-deck vessel will boast a fine dining restaurant called Redgums, panoramic lounges, function areas, bars, an outside relaxation space, and hybrid steam-diesel propulsion.

Encompassing a range of styles from King and Queen suites to generously proportioned Queen and Twin-Bed cabins, all staterooms will open to a verandah, and will offer luxury linen and an en suite.

The voyages will sail year-round from Echuca, and agents will be offered 10% commission, as well as bonuses for multiple bookings.

Cruises will be all-inclusive, offering onboard meals, lectures, wi-fi, and beer & wine with lunch.

## Visit Our Country

**TOURISM** Australia has teamed up with Australian Geographic to launch the Australian Geographic: Our Country Immersive Experience, an international touring event showcasing the tourism allure of the Australian wilderness to the world.

The experience will debut in Sydney on 19 Nov at Hall 7, ICC Sydney Exhibition Centre in strategic partnership with Destination NSW, and supported by official partner, AAT Kings.

Through cinematography and 360° surround sound, the immersive experience explores the best of Australia's natural landscape, wildlife, people and places, and inspires the audience to experience it first-hand.

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## Fiji incentives

**AUSTRALIAN-BASED** event management company Arinex recently hosted seven international incentive representatives on a six-day education trip to Fiji.

The delegates visited resort areas on the main island of Viti Levu and nearby private islands, allowing them to discover why Fiji is a top destination for eco-friendly incentive experiences.

The participants enjoyed an overnight stay at Six Senses Resort on Malolo Island and visited the resort's Earth Lab to learn about the largest off-grid solar system in Fiji.

Other highlights included a visit to Kokomo Private Island Resort, where the group toured the resort's 5.5-acre farm and snorkelled the Great Astrolabe Reef.

## THE EIC IS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC

**THE** recovery of business events has gained traction in the second quarter of 2022, according to the 2022 Q2 *Global Business Events Barometer* released today by the Events Industry Council (EIC).

The EIC encompasses more than 30 member organisations representing over 103,500 individuals and 19,500 firms and properties actively involved in the events industry.

The *Barometer*, created by Oxford Economics and using data provided by Amadeus Hospitality, Cvent, the Global Business Travel Association and STR Global, monitors the changes within the market relative to pre-pandemic (2019) levels.

The research found that globally, hotel group room nights and requests for proposals released by business professionals seeking venues and accommodation for future events

(RFP activity), both increased to reach over 80% of 2019 levels.

RFP activity was strongest for large and medium events (200+ room nights on peak) with short lead times (within 12 months), with Australia showing the most promising recovery at 114% of 2019 levels.

The hotel group room nights, which measures guest stays that occurred during 2022 Q2 and were booked as part of a group (most of which typically relate to business events), showed the strongest recovery in the Middle East and North America regions.

On a global scale, domestic business travel has increased by 15% from 2019 levels, while international business travel remains in the negative, at -33.3% of pre-pandemic levels.

EIC CEO Amy Calvert said, "it is incredibly heartening to witness the significant momentum in the

second quarter of the year".

"However, with rising inflation rates, the impact of the energy crisis and ongoing sociopolitical events, we must remain confident in our capacity and yet prepared for all possibilities, continuing to build upon the momentum and celebrating what we have achieved thus far."

The *Barometer* shows that global economic growth prospects have worsened since last quarter, spurred on by high inflation which has increased business costs and weakened consumer spending power.

The Russia-Ukraine war was identified by a survey of 164 businesses as the most prominent near-term global risk, followed by rapid central bank tightening, higher inflation, which is triggering market turmoil, and inflation, which is expected to remain elevated.

## Stellar win for Syd

**SYDNEY** has been chosen as the host city for International Astronautical Congress (IAC) in 2025, which is set to be held at the International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC) from 29 Sep - 03 Oct 2025.

The bid was secured by BESydney, as well as the NSW Government, the Space Industry Association of Australia, and the Australian Space Agency.

The five-day event is anticipated to attract 4,500 delegates and see an estimated \$21 million in direct expenditure poured into the local economy.

Highlights of the conference will include the latest space information and developments in academia and industry, networking opportunities, contacts and potential partnerships.

The last time the Congress was held in Australia was in Adelaide in 2017, and it is credited as the key driver for the formation of the Australian Space Agency.

## Qatar inVOYAGE

**THE** inVOYAGE luxury incentives and events showcase will be held in Qatar for the first time next month, and is expected to attract up to 200 event professionals from more than 24 countries.

Hosted in partnership with the Rixos Gulf Hotel Doha, Qatar Tourism, Discover Qatar, and Qatar Airways, the event will take place over 02-05 Oct at the soon-to-open new Rixos Gulf Hotel Doha.

Discover Qatar Senior VP Steven Reynolds said, "this is a wonderful opportunity... to showcase just how much luxury Qatar has to offer, cementing its place as the perfect destination to host luxury & high-profile events".

By 2030, Qatar aims to welcome over six million visitors a year, with around 20% of them MICE travellers.

## Tourism New Zealand MICE champions

**TOURISM** New Zealand (TNZ) celebrated key industry leaders at its Business Events National Awards on Tue night at national museum Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington.

The event recognised 61 conference champions from across New Zealand who have successfully bid for and won international conferences.

Chief Executive Rene de Monchy said, "the hard work of these influential and talented individuals plays an integral



part in attracting these events to our shores".

Last financial year, New Zealand won 34 conferences worth around NZ\$41.6 million to the local economy.

## Aussie icon turns 50

**THE** Sydney Opera House will kick off a huge year-long line-up of events next month until Oct 2023 to mark its 50th anniversary.

In excess of 200 performances, events and experiences will be presented at the iconic venue, including the Sydney Symphony Orchestra - [CLICK HERE](#) to see the full list of events.

## MCEC Botanic

**MELBOURNE** Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) is preparing to host the 7th Global Botanic Gardens Congress, which is expected to attract more than 400 international visitors and generate \$3.2 million for the state's economy.



## 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.

**Keith Stanley** has been appointed as the CEO of **Ananda Wellness Group**, an "ethics approved medical cannabis service". Stanley has had an extensive travel industry career, including roles as CEO of Stella Travel Service, as well as at NRMA Tourism & Leisure and Flight Centre.

**Globus Family of Brands** has appointed three new business development managers. Joining the team are **Anji Tierney** representing the group in Queensland South & West, **Matthew Beggs** for NSW North and **Natalie Hemms** looking after NSW South and ACT.

**Katerina Giannouka** has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer of **Jumeirah Group**. She joins Jumeirah from her previous role as President Asia-Pacific for Radisson Hotel Group, as well as former positions with Rosewood Hotels & Resorts.

**Entire Travel Group** has expanded its Canada team with the appointment of Rocky Mountaineer and rail specialist **Zoe Condon** as its new Travel & Product Advisor.

Former Castaway Island Resort and Outrigger Fiji owner **Geoffrey Shaw** has been appointed to the Board of **Tokoriki Island Resort**.

**Rashveen Maini** has been appointed to the newly created position of Group Sustainability Manager at **Kelsian Limited**.

**Crown Resorts** has named former Virgin Australia Public Affairs Manager **Kris Taute** as its new Head of Corporate Communications.

**Marriott International** has made a number of general manager appointments across its portfolio in Sydney and Melbourne. The new roles include **Bennah Eeva** as GM of Marriott North Ryde, **Sudhir Yadav** as GM of AC by Marriott Melbourne Southbank, **Scott MacDonald** as GM of Four Points by Sheraton Sydney Central Park, and **Michelle Scott** as GM of Moxy Sydney Airport Hotel.

As **Rocky Mountaineer's** Asia-Pacific Regional Sales Manager, **Tony Soden** will report to the company's newly appointed Vice President, Global Sales, **Violet Thumlert**, who joins the rail operator after 12 years with Canadian attraction and hospitality operator Pursuit Collection.

**Jessica Fornito** has been appointed as Group Marketing Communications Manager for **Ovolo Hotels** working from Melbourne, while Hong Kong-based **Emily Tsui** has joined the organisation as Group Brand Marketing Manager.

**Chimu Adventures** has appointed former Dream Cruises, Crystal Cruises, Holland America Line and Seabourn staffer **Andrew Loving** as its new Relationship Manager.

**Ponant Cruises** has named former APT Travel Group CEO **Chris Hall** as its new Asia-Pacific Chief Executive Officer. Hall left ATG late last year as part of a restructure of the organisation.

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## TIME's newest graduate



**KYLIE** Nukanuka from the Travel Authority Group celebrated her recent graduation from TIME, which she said pushed her outside of her comfort zone and was "well worth it".

In particular, the newest TIME graduate said getting to know her mentor, Judith Crompton, was a highlight of the program.

With insight from Crompton, Nukanuka was able to develop trust in her natural ability to lead a team, believe in herself, and not let limiting beliefs get in the way of how she shows up to work.

Nukanuka said a key

practical takeaway from the program was learning how to effectively manage her to-do list and prioritise tasks based on importance rather than when they were added to the list.

**Pictured:** TIME graduate Kylie Nukanuka with her valued mentor Judith Crompton.

## Bamboo adds LGW

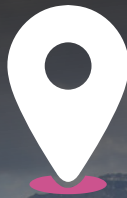
**BAMBOO** Airways has announced a new route between Ho Chi Minh City and London Gatwick, with the introduction of the once-weekly Boeing 787-9 service from 07 Dec following the recent launch of non-stops between Hanoi and LGW.

## Fighter jets escort SQ aircraft in hoax

**A SINGAPORE** Airlines flight from San Francisco has been escorted into Changi Airport by fighter jets, which were scrambled into action due to a suspected bomb threat.

A statement from the Singapore Air Force confirmed the incident, which saw the army "mobilised immediately" to investigate, finding a 37-year-old male passenger had allegedly assaulted crew and falsely claimed his carry-on bag contained a bomb.





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