



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of the latest industry news including our **Sustainability** page.

New Cal bargains

TRAVELLERS can fly direct from Sydney or Brisbane to Noumea with Airalin from only \$589 return, as part of the airline's Discover New Caledonia sale.

The deal ends 21 Apr, and applies to travel between 17 Apr to 07 Dec, with some blackout periods applying.

Ticket prices include checked luggage (one piece up to 23kg), a meal and beverage service, and in-flight entertainment.

NCLH sees stars

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) is preparing to roll out SpaceX's Starlink high-speed internet across its entire fleet.

The technology uses advanced low earth orbit satellite to deliver broadband internet connectivity, improving the capacity, speed and reliability of internet on board.

The cruise line is currently trialling Starlink on *Norwegian Breakaway*, and, if successful, will equip seven more vessels with Starlink by the end of 2023, including all three of its new additions this year, *Oceania Cruises' Vista*, *Norwegian Viva* and *Regent's Seven Seas Grandeur* - for more, see today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

Newcastle funding boost

NEWCASTLE Airport has secured major funding for its ambitious expansion project (**TD** 20 Apr 2022), with the Commonwealth Bank recently signing a deal with the hub to inject \$240 million towards significant upgrades.

Renovations will include increasing domestic capacity and developing a new international terminal at the site, as well as adjoining developments such as a commercial office for aerospace company Astra Aerolab.

"We are delighted to partner with CBA on this critical development to support the growth and sustainability of our region," Newcastle Airport CFO, Allanna Ryan said.

"The biggest beneficiaries of the airport's upgrade will be the people of the Hunter region," she added, with the population expected to rise to around 950,000 by 2041.

The cash stumped up by the major Aussie bank will add to the existing \$121 million in Federal Government funding to help make Newcastle Airport a major player in the international travel market, with designs on dispersing visitors to attractions throughout the Hunter region.

Newcastle Airport CEO, Peter Cock, added that the new funding is key to repositioning Newcastle as a major tourism drawcard.

"Driving greater economic and social benefits by broadening our domestic and international



destinations and contributing to Newcastle's transformation from a major regional hub into an international destination and a significant second international gateway to NSW, is key to our purpose," Cock said.

It is estimated that revamped terminals at Newcastle Airport will see an additional 850,000 tourists visit the NSW city annually, injecting close to \$13 billion into the local economy over the next 20 years.

Pictured: Commonwealth Bank Relationship Executive James Hodgson; Newcastle Airport CEO, Peter Cock; Newcastle Airport CFO Allanna Ryan; and Executive Manager, Commonwealth Bank Regional and Agribusiness Banking NSW Newcastle and Hunter Valley, Paul Cragg.

QR donates \$80k

QATAR Airways has donated \$80,000 to the Good Friday Appeal for the third year in a row, helping to raise critical funds for The Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, as well as gifting two Business class tickets to Europe to the charity's raffle.

Lutoff-Perlo departs

CELEBRITY Cruises President and CEO Lisa Lutoff-Perlo has announced she will retire from the cruise line, with Laura Hodges Bethge named as her replacement.

Lutoff-Perlo began her career with the Royal Caribbean Group in 1985, and in 2014 became the first woman in the company to hold a position of President or Chief Executive Officer.

She will step down from the helm of Celebrity on 01 May to assume the position of Vice Chair, External Relations for the Royal Caribbean Group.

"In this role, and wherever my journey takes me, I remain a passionate advocate for this company," Lutoff-Perlo said.

WA travel warning

HOLIDAYMAKERS visiting WA between Port Hedland and Broome are being urged to leave immediately and head south, as a category four cyclone is expected to land in the area on Thu, bringing with it heavy rainfall and winds in excess of 200km/h.

Kaitaki ferry returns

INTERISLANDER'S Kaitaki ferry will return tomorrow to offer full service between New Zealand's North and South Islands, after being out of action since 04 Mar due to a gearbox issue.

Additionally, Interislander revealed it has purchased two hybrid electric/diesel vessels, due to arrive in 2025 and 2026.



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Travel Daily



Club Med brand evolves

CLUB Med has unveiled an all-new, modernised brand identity to reflect its evolution into providing more premium, family-friendly, and eco-conscious experiences.

Senior Director of Brand & Communications for Club Med North America and the Caribbean, Kevin Armstrong, said the new branding encapsulates its "simplicity, modernised luxury, and playfulness", with a new website to launch in Nov, and refreshed consumer communication touchpoints across emails, apps and in-resort signage going live this month.

"When the complexities of everyday life are removed so one can focus on special moments, like having ice cream for breakfast and putting on ski boots, or if your family vacation actually feels like

a vacation - That's L'Esprit Libre," Armstrong said.

The brand evolution comes after Club Med posted strong financial results for 2022, with business volumes increasing by 100% compared to 2021 and resort capacity up by 62%.

The all-inclusive operator, owned by Fosun International, boasts a portfolio of nearly 70 beach and mountain resorts worldwide.

Saudi marketing deal

TRIP.COM group will promote Saudi Arabia as a tourist destination as part of a new agreement with the Saudi Tourism Authority.

As stipulated in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the two parties will launch a series of joint marketing campaigns in several markets, including Australia, to drive awareness and attract tourists to the Kingdom, through global platforms such as Trip.com, Ctrip, and Travix.

Both parties will also run several capacity building and knowledge sharing initiatives, including digital payment solutions, sustainability, ticketing and staff training programs.

Data from Trip.com from Jan to Mar 2023 revealed the number of users searching for Saudi Arabian travel products almost doubled compared to Jan to Mar 2022, with flight bookings to the Kingdom also seeing an increase.

Euribia tastes better

MSC Cruises has revealed more details about its newest ship, *MSC Euribia*, which will offer 10 unique dining venues, including five speciality restaurants and five main dining spots, as well as 21 varied bars and lounges.

Brand-new offerings from the cruise line include the immersive and digital Helios Wine Bar and new speciality restaurant Le Grille, described as "French bistro meets steakhouse".

The vessel will also offer a Robotayaki space for the first time at Kaito Teppanyaki & Sushi Bar.

Rex pioneer passes away



REX Airlines has paid tribute to aviation pioneer Max Hazelton, one of the founding fathers of the Australian regional airline.

Hazelton passed away peacefully on Sun night in Orange, NSW, just three weeks before his 96th birthday.

"Max was a much loved member of the Rex family who will be forever remembered as a remarkable trailblazer who built an airline from scratch, was a catalyst for change and left an indelible mark on the Australian aviation industry," Rex Executive Chairman Lim Kim Hai said.

In light of his contribution to aviation, Hazelton was awarded an OBE in 1980 & an AM in 1991.

Described by Rex Deputy Chairman and close friend John Sharp as "a true national treasure", Hazelton remained close to the airline as an ambassador up until his passing.

"Max's heart was always in the country which is why this

sentiment is emblazoned on our aircraft and remains the ethos on which this company has been built," Sharp said.

Pictured: Max Hazelton celebrating Rex's silver anniversary in 1978 with his wife Laurel and their children Graham and Carolyn.

All aboard Albury

BONZA marked its first flight to Albury over the Easter long weekend, with customers treated to a visit from the Easter Bunny as well as purple hot cross buns from Adriana Zumbo when departing Sunshine Coast Airport.

The new service will operate twice-weekly, and is one of the budget carrier's best-selling routes so far.

MEANWHILE, Bonza has launched its first flight from Melbourne to Rockhampton today, with the service to operate twice weekly (**TD** 14 Mar).

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Window Seat

TRAVEL is renowned for delivering a major 'high' for Aussies, but now the San Francisco Travel Association is showing people its reputation as a tourist attraction is not simply all smoke and mirrors.

Catering to the 'cannabis' traveller, the tourism body has partnered with a range of groups, including Evergreen San Francisco and the San Francisco Cannabis Retailers Alliance, to celebrate the city's cannabis scene.

"The Evergreen San Francisco festival invites you to explore the city, our many cannabis lounges and dispensaries, as well as to learn about cannabis's rich history here," the California Nightlife Association said, with 25 cannabis shops and lounges participating, offering promotions and curated experiences to celebrate the cannabis holiday.

Nothing sweeter than sport



FULL service travel agency Sportslink Travel was very 'egg-cited' to hop to it and show its Easter cheer in the office last week (pictured), with the team posing with some chocolate bunnies, which were no doubt consumed only moments after this joyous photo was taken.

The business provides a full range of travel and tour services for sports teams, associations and, of course, the fans.

Founded by Paul Kelly, the agency specialises in overseas tournaments all over the world.

EK ups Toronto

EMIRATES will offer daily flights to Toronto from 20 Apr.

As part of an enhanced UAE-Canada agreement, more than 6,800 seats on the popular DXB-YYZ route will be offered - representing a 40% increase.

No Taiwan impact

DESPITE a major Chinese military drill taking place around Taiwan's air space over the weekend, China Airlines confirmed to **Travel Daily** that there has been no impact to commercial flight schedules.

The three-day military exercise, which simulated targeting Taiwan with missile attacks, was launched in response to Taiwan's President, Tsai Ing-wen, meeting the US house speaker Kevin McCarthy in LA last week.

Vietjet lands in MEL

VIETJET has commenced services from Ho Chi Minh City to Melbourne, marking the Vietnamese low-cost carrier's arrival in Australia.

The airline will initially operate three return services each week via its 377-seat Airbus A330, with plans to increase to daily services by Dec 2024.

The route will significantly boost seat capacity to Vietnam and offer increased choice for travellers heading to the region.

Proposed Bali tax back on the table

INDONESIA'S Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut Pandjaitan, has put the idea of a levy on tourists to Bali back on the agenda, last week urging legislators to create a new revenue stream to finance infrastructure development and tourism promotions.

The idea of a tax on visitors to the popular Aussie travel hub is not new, with local authorities proposing the idea in 2019 (TD 22 Jan 2019), with Pandjaitan's idea accompanied by a call to "crack down" on tourist misbehaviour.

Avis sings new Opera

AVIS Australia has announced a three-year partnership with the Sydney Opera House to offer a free pick up and drop off service for visitors between the iconic venue and Circular Quay.

The Avis Connect shuttle service includes a new accessible bus for travel between Circular Quay and the Opera House, as well as three buggies to transport visitors around the Opera House precinct.

The collaboration aims to deliver "seamless experiences" for visitors and audiences.

Juicy comeback in SA

A FORMER South Australian tourist attraction, which has been closed for almost two decades, may be about to burst back to life, with a new development plan asking for permission to construct a brewery, distillery, bar and restaurant at the site.

The Big Orange (pictured) has endured a troubled financial history, with the most recent bid lodged by Adelaide-based urban planner Mark Kwiatkowski.



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WLG sustainable finance facility

NEW ZEALAND'S

Wellington Airport has renegotiated its bank facilities into "sustainability linked loans".

The move means the potential for lower lending costs if it achieves certain sustainability targets.

Current goals include addressing greenhouse gas emissions for which WLG is directly responsible, as well as supporting and enabling low-emission commercial flights and reducing landfill waste contributions.

The airport is also progressing through the institutionally endorsed Airport Carbon Accreditation program as part of the deal.

WORLD'S FIRST GREEN CORRIDOR

CARNIVAL Corporation, Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings and Royal Caribbean Group are just some of the signatories on a new charter to create a green corridor between Seattle and Juneau in Alaska.

A number of cruise lines and ports have agreed to the concept of a zero-emission route, with the next steps to evaluate the technological, economic, infrastructure, and regulatory requirements to make the "green corridor" project a reality.

Action points agreed to include: exploring near-term opportunities to accelerate the decarbonisation of emissions, working collaboratively to regularly update shared workplans, and an initial focus on cruise ships and shorepower infrastructure.

The setting up of the zero emissions corridor will happen

in three phases, including a landscape assessment, followed by a strategic plan before a final implementation, with all parties voluntarily committing to phase one, which examines areas such as alternative cruise ships fuel, as well as lowering the carbon footprint of cruise terminals, related tours and ground transportation from ports.

The idea for the green corridor was first mooted in May last year, with a number of stakeholders putting forward the pioneering proposal to make the Pacific Northwest to Alaska corridor the world's first green corridor project to include cruise ships.

Such concepts are aiming to address the climate emergency of rising temperatures whilst at the same time seeking to maintain economic opportunities for both land and sea operations associated with important



industries such as cruising.

In 2021, 24 countries, including the United States and Canada, signed the Clydebank Declaration, which committed to the creation of at least six green corridors by 2025, with the ultimate ambition of scaling up activity over the next several years.

Alaska has been vocal about protecting its waters from cruise ship pollution, which can include graywater, oily bilge water, ballast water, and air pollution.

Via Rail zero

CANADIAN

train operator Via Rail continues to work towards a zero waste target by 2025, with recent key changes to onboard food and beverage packaging.

Initiatives include the introduction of reusable glassware as each of its new Corridor trains enters service, switching to bamboo cocktail stir sticks and the completion of training for over 70% of employees to improve recycling efficiencies.

MSC and UNICEF hit €12m milestone

MSC FOUNDATION, the charitable offshoot of MSC Cruises, is celebrating a 13-year partnership with UNICEF which has now seen over €12 million donated to life-changing programs globally.

The pact has been in place since 2009, supporting a wide range of projects including the "Plastic Waste Goes to School" initiative in Ivory

Coast which simultaneously supports marginalised women waste collectors while recycling plastic into special bricks which are used to build eco-friendly modern classrooms.

Other support includes work to fight malaria in Africa, providing therapeutic food treatments for malnourished children in Africa and China, and raising UNICEF's visibility.

Finnair goes bus

FINNAIR will scrap two of its domestic routes from Helsinki from 01 May in order to lower carbon emissions.

The carrier's Turku and Tampere routes will now run as bus services, due to the shortness of the trip length (each take around 25 minutes via air) and the low passenger numbers, which averaged 35% load factor.

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MONEY

WELCOME to Money, *TD's* Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US\$0.665

IT WAS a quiet trading session over the Easter break as both the AUD and NZD dropped to two-week lows of 0.5% against the US dollar.

Financial pundits believe the Aussie dollar may be under stress against foreign currencies this week as the country battles a combination of high interest rates and high inflation, a double whammy dampening confidence in the private sector.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.665
UK	£0.537
NZ	\$1.068
Euro	€0.612
Japan	¥88.78
Thailand	฿22.84
China	¥4.575
South Africa	12.29
Canada	\$0.897
Crude oil	US\$79.74

Pandaw Laos ready!

THE new Pandaw 2023 Laos itinerary will offer passengers an extended period at the UNESCO listed city of Luang Prabang, and introduce a new excursion at the popular Mekong Elephant Park in Pak Beng.

The 10-night itinerary sailing between Chiang Khong in Thailand and Pak Lay on the Mekong river has removed tours of the Laos capital of Vientiane from tours, with transfers to Chaing Mai or Chiang Rai still available in the revised itinerary.

Learn more about the new itinerary **HERE**.

Fishest campaign ever for the NT

THE eighth season of Million Dollar Fish in the NT has been the biggest season to date.

The season concluded on 31 Mar, with participants catching themselves plenty of prizes as part of the \$230,000 giveaway, including 20 \$10,000 tagged barramundi fish caught.

Season eight of the Million Dollar Fish promo saw the most winning fish ever caught, albeit not the elusive million dollar fish.

More than half of the participants travelled to the Top End from interstate.

A thrilling time in Tahiti



TAHITI Tourisme hosted its best performing travel agents from Australia on a trade famil to The Islands of Tahiti last week, as part of its innovative e-learning specialist program.

The lucky agents were invited to the famil thanks to their registration and results in the Tahiti Specialist Programme.

Over nine days, the group experienced some of the

destination's most stunning locations, including the main island Tahiti, the majestic sister island Moorea, the lesser-known Huahine and beloved Bora Bora.

Standout moments from the famil included a visit to the luxury Conrad Bora Bora Resort, a trip to a vanilla plantation, a 4WD tour to the waterfalls in Papenoo Valley, sampling street food in Papeete, and swimming with lemon sharks.

Agents who want to brush up on their knowledge of Tahiti and have the opportunity to be invited on a trade famil to The Islands of Tahiti can join the Tahiti Specialist Programme **HERE**.

TM's double recruit

MELINDA Rowe has been appointed as a BDM for TravelManagers, bringing with her 25 years of travel experience to the role, which will see her work with agents across regional NSW and ACT.

Rowe joins alongside Brooke Wilson, who has also been recruited as a BDM to support advisors in Sydney metro & NSW.

Icelandair Airbus

ICELANDAIR and Airbus have signed a memorandum of understanding for the purchase of up to 25 A321XLR aircraft.

The MOU will see Icelandair purchase 13 aircraft, and rights for another 12, with delivery to start in 2029.

Icelandair plans to start operating Airbus aircraft in 2025, and is currently in advanced stages of negotiations for four leased Airbus A321LRs.

Premium Suites in Syd

THREE new premium suites have been unveiled by InterContinental Sydney following a \$120m transformation.

The Presidential Opera Suite boasts an expansive area of 245m² with views overlooking the eastern harbour, while the Royal Opera Suite offers an outlook to the city's landmarks and the Governor Opera Suite features open plan living.

Air close to 2019

GLOBAL air travel growth has continued its positive momentum throughout Feb, with the latest data from The International Air Transport Association (IATA) revealing traffic is now at 84.9% of pre-pandemic Feb 2019 levels.

Australia's domestic traffic surged by 73% in Feb compared to a year ago, while Japan enjoyed the fastest recovery, seeing a rise of 161.4%, putting it at 89.9% of pre-COVID levels.

APAC airlines saw the biggest growth spike, with a 378.7% increase in Feb 2023 traffic compared to Feb 2022, followed by European carriers with a 47.9% traffic rise versus Feb 2022.