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# Travel Daily

First with the news

Friday 11th Aug 2023



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## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features five pages of news, including our **Corporate Update** page, plus a front cover wrap from **Norwegian Cruise Line** and a full page from **The Travel Junction**.

## VN inks Expedia

**VIETNAM** Airlines now has all its fares and inventory available on Expedia Group's platform, following an expanded deal signed this week.

The carrier will also engage Expedia Group Media Solutions to increase its brand awareness and promote its flights under the terms of the revised agreement.

## NCL Flash Sale!

**NORWEIGIAN** Cruise Line (NCL) is offering up to 35% off sailings and \$500 in airfare credit on select departures as part of its latest Flash Sale promotion.

See the **front cover** for details.

## Australia back on ADS list

**THE** reinstatement of Australia's inclusion in China's Approved Destination Status (ADS) scheme (**TD** breaking news) is set to reignite the inbound travel sector, with the return of group tours now back on the radar for the first time since borders reopened.

Federal Tourism Minister Don Farrell also noted that the move is "another positive step towards the stabilisation of our relationship with China", which pre-COVID was Australia's largest and most valuable inbound market, with 2019 arrivals numbering more than 1.4 million.

Meanwhile, the Tourism & Transport Forum's CEO Margy Osmond said the long-awaited announcement is a major "relief" for operators across the country.

"Since borders reopened, Chinese visitors have been slow to return to Australia, with tourist numbers struggling to reach half of pre-COVID levels," she said.

"We've been working hard to try and entice more Chinese visitors to come to Australia, with mass campaigns like Tourism Australia's Ruby the Roo, but the lack of guided tour groups has been a major barrier."

While the news is a clear sign that relations between Australia and China are beginning to thaw, the forced shift by some tourism operators in the intervening years has meant they may be caught short in being able to cater for a sudden upswing in tourists, including capacity challenges due to staff shortages & infrastructure access - read **TB** **HERE** for more.

## TTJ discounts Fiji

**THE** Travel Junction (TTJ) has a wide range of amazing packages to Fiji available to access, plus up to 15% agent commissions on select accommodation - see the **back page** for more details.

## Interactive rail map

**RAILBOOKERS** Group has unveiled a new interactive online map for its brands, Railbookers and Amtrak Vacations, allowing travellers to learn more about train routes, stations, and hotels.

Once an itinerary is selected, the map shows train stations, major attractions, and their proximity to thousands of hotel options - view the tool **HERE**.

## Beyond eyes agents

**BEYOND** Travel has flagged the launch of agent famils, incentives and discounts over the coming weeks to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to the trade.

The wholesaler said the agent initiatives will be fuelled by a strong sales recovery, which is already at 90% of pre-COVID levels, and is expected to double by the end of next year.

Promotions to be revealed soon include savings for bookings to Europe made by the end of Sep.

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See website for full T&Cs and permit number

# Travel Daily

Friday 11th Aug 2023

## A 'new' Air India unveiled

A **RADICALLY** upgraded plan for the future has been announced by Air India overnight, with the carrier revealing wide-ranging enhancements to its fleet, digital services and branding.

The New Delhi-headquartered airline, which has been in discussions with several Aussie states to boost capacity this year, has confirmed previously flagged purchase deals (**TD** 17 Jan) to buy 470 aircraft from Airbus and Boeing at a cost of US\$70 billion, with deliveries starting in Nov.

Air India also revealed a US\$400 million program to refurbish the interiors of its legacy fleet of 43 widebody aircraft will commence from mid-2024, which will include new seats in every cabin, new in-flight entertainment systems, and improved wi-fi, which by Mar 2024, should see a third of the airline's widebody fleet upgraded.



Supporting the fleet renewal update is a new website and mobile app, which the carrier said offers "significantly improved" user experiences and a host of new digital tools and features, as well as a soon-to-be revamped loyalty program from early 2024.

Completely new lounges will be constructed at Delhi and New York JFK airports as part of an ongoing lounge network expansion, while a 24/7 customer service centre will also open by the end of this year.

Capping off the changes is a new global brand identity and aircraft livery (logo **pictured**), designed to represent the "window of possibilities" that lie ahead for the business.

Travellers will begin to see the new logo from Dec, when Air India's first Airbus A350 enters the fleet with the new livery.

### More cash & miles

**KOREAN** Air has increased the amount of miles Skypass members can use to buy tickets via its Cash and Miles program, moving from 20% to 30%.

Cash and Miles is an option that allows loyalty members to pay for tickets using a combination of cash and award miles, and is available for all departure dates and booking classes.

## Taiwan on the road

**CROOKED** Compass founder Lisa Pagotto will be hosting the upcoming Taiwan Tourism Roadshows in Sydney and Brisbane next month.

The events will equip attendees with a comprehensive understanding of Taiwan's tourism industry, as well provide a taste of the destination's culture, cuisine and hospitality.

Register for Syd (06 Sep) **HERE** and Bris (07 Sep) **HERE**; the roadshow will also head to Auckland (04 Sep), register **HERE**, and Melb (11 Sep), sign up **HERE**.

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## ATEC NSW training

**THE** Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) has partnered with Destination NSW to offer tourism businesses free inbound training in key growth markets.

Three training programs are on offer, including how best to market to China and India, as well as a module on how to be more accessible and inclusive.

Find out more details **HERE**.

## Rydges Syd rebrand

**SYDNEY'S** Tank Stream Hotel will be refurbished and rebranded as Rydges Australia Square from the middle of next year.

The property will also see EVT Hotels and Resorts take over as the sole operator and Rebecca Hamey appointed at GM.

Owned by Malaysia-based property developer IGB Berhad, renovations will enhance rooms, the ground floor and level 1, as well as food and beverage areas.

## Pelican in Narrabri

**FLYPELICAN** will launch a new direct service between Narrabri and Newcastle from 25 Aug.

The latest route is the 13th on Newcastle Airport's map.

## Schubert departs SIA

**TODAY** is the last day for Singapore Airlines Regional Manager Public Affairs & Government Relations, ANZ, Karl Schubert, who departs the airline to explore other opportunities, with recruitment now underway.



**MORE** than a quarter of Aussies have stars in their eyes when they book their holidays - that is to say, they factor astrology into their travel plans, according to a unique study from Skyscanner.

More than half (52%) of Australians believe in astrology, the research found, with 27% saying they use their star sign to guide their travel decisions, including figuring out which star signs are most compatible to travel with, how much planning they should do, and how likely it is for them to find love during their travels.

In case you were wondering, Leos and Geminis are the most likely to fall in love abroad, while Pisces and Capricorns can expect to make lifelong friends during their travels.

No such luck for Aquarius travellers though, who are apparently the least likely to make friends - yikes!

And if you're looking for a travel companion who is happy to go with the flow, you're best off asking a friend with the star sign of Cancer.

Despite their crabby reputation, 47% of Cancers are reportedly spontaneous and easygoing travellers.

If you'd rather a steady planner though, the stubborn Taurus is your best bet!



## Register your interest now!

August 28 - September 19

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## We could lead SAF push

**AUSTRALIA** is “well placed” to develop a thriving domestic sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) industry, according to a new SAF Roadmap published by Boeing

and the CSIRO.

Created in collaboration with more than 40 national and international organisations across the SAF value chain, the report identifies key opportunities for building an Australian SAF industry, as well as actions to overcome economic, regulatory and technological hurdles.

The roadmap demonstrates that Australia’s climate, farming practices and established supply chains put the country in an ideal position to develop a diverse range of organic matter feedstocks, like sugar cane, which can be used to create SAF blends.

Boeing and CSIRO found that by combining feedstocks with renewable energy resources and emerging green hydrogen technology, Australia is capable of producing more than five billion litres of SAF in 2025, and up to 14 billion litres by 2050.

See the full SAF Roadmap [HERE](#).

## Maui waiver issued

**IN RESPONSE** to the unfolding tragic fire events in Maui, Hawaiian Airlines has issued a waiver to allow guests booked to travel to and from Maui in the coming days flexibility to change or refund flights.

The carrier has also boosted services out of the severely impacted Kahului region to Honolulu to help evacuate the area, so far helping to transport 5,786 travellers from Maui.

Meanwhile the Hawai’i Tourism Authority has established temporary accommodation within the Hawai’i Convention Center for travellers unable to board flights over coming days.

## Caldwell glides away with prize



**FLIGHT** Centre’s Robert Caldwell was declared the lucky winner of Rail Online’s first major travel agent sales incentive (**TD** 22 May).

The Brisbane-based travel agent scored the eco-friendly Xiaomi e-Scooter, valued at \$1,000, after achieving the highest value of bookings through Rail Online’s online platform between 22 May and 30 Jun.

“I only live two kilometres from our store so it’s going to provide an easy way to get to work, and I’m looking forward to having some fun with it on the weekends,” he enthused.

Rail Online General Manager

Australia and New Zealand Kirsty Blows hailed the incentive as a “major success”.

“By featuring an eco-friendly prize, the incentive also helped remind agents of the environmental advantages of rail travel, which is of course driving extraordinary growth in the European market,” she said.

Since the incentive’s launch, Rail Online has expanded its product range, including the addition of Trenitalia’s full range of Italian train journeys (**TD** 26 Jul).

**Pictured:** Caldwell receives his newest mode of eco transport from Rail Online representative Chris Le Roux.

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## CORPORATE UPDATE

### Best in the biz revealed

**QANTAS** has been declared as one of the best airlines for business travellers in a new report from Tipalti, *The Business Travel Index*.

The Flying Kangaroo ranked ninth position in the list of top 10 airlines for Business class travellers, earning a score of 3.8/5 for its seats and lounges and 3.3/5 for in-flight entertainment, giving it an overall rating of 5.98/10.

Oman Air took the top spot however, with the Muscat-based carrier given a score of 5/5 for its seats, and 4/5 for staff service, lounge catering, and in-flight entertainment, adding up to achieve the highest overall score of 8.39/10.

Cathay Pacific was named as the

second-best choice for business travellers, with a score of 8.28, on account of its seats, which are deemed comfortable for long-haul travel, as well as the dining options in its lounges.

One of Taiwan's largest airlines, EVA Air, took third position with a score of 7.93 thanks to the quality of its Business class seats, lounges, and in-flight services.

Other carriers acknowledged in the top 10 include Qatar Airways, Vistara, Japan Airlines, Asiana Airlines, Kenya Airways, and Singapore Airlines.

The Tipalti report also revealed New York as the best city for those travelling for business purposes, giving it a score of 8.77 out of 10, while Melbourne and Sydney ranked seventh and eighth for the fastest average mobile internet speeds.

### FCM, Nutrip team up

**FCM** has partnered with Nutrip, a travel software provider, to deliver an "unparalleled" travel management solution for Monash University in Melbourne.

The new offering combines Nutrip's profile, risk, and pre-trip approval management services with FCM's booking services to create a seamless travel management system for the uni, providing more clarity and control of their trips, and program-wide visibility and efficiency.

The two companies expect the new solution to pave the way for other universities, govt agencies and non-govt organisations.

### Biz costs to stay high

**BUSINESS** travel and events costs around the world are expected to continue rising throughout the rest of 2023 and into next year, CWT's *2024 Global Business Travel Forecast* reveals.

The average air ticket price is expected to climb by 2.3% to US\$766 this year and an additional 1.8% to \$780 in 2024, up from \$749 in 2022.

Hotel prices are also forecast to rise by 4.3% in 2023 and 3.6% in 2024, as well as daily car rental prices, up 6.7% this year and a further 2.1% next year.



The Chat with Jenny  
Travel Daily  
A Conversation with Rachel Kingswell  
Travel Associates AU NZ  
CLICK HERE to listen

### Fusion launches new biz brand



**BUSINESS** travellers visiting Singapore now have a new accommodation option designed especially with their needs in mind, following the opening of HIIVE Binh Duong.

The 172-key property marks the debut of Fusion Hotel Group's (FHG) new business hotel brand HIIVE, featuring spacious rooms for longer stays, flexible meeting rooms, and co-working spaces.

Guests also have access to an all-day dining restaurant, a sports bar, a golf simulator, a 24-hour fitness centre, and guest laundry

### Finnair biz luggage

**FINNAIR** has implemented new restrictions on checked baggage allowance for Business class travellers, with pax flying to Europe now only allowed one checked bag weighing 23kg, instead of the previous allowance of two bags weighing 32kg each.

facilities on every floor.

The hotel's three meeting rooms feature whiteboard walls, flexible room layouts, and modern audio-visual technology.

"In an era when the boundaries between work and play have become blurred, we wanted to create spaces that satisfy these two needs," FHG CEO Peter Meyer explained.

The second HIIVE hotel is slated to open in Binh Duong early 2024.

### FCM gets Th!nking

**FCM** is preparing to launch its Th!nk series, which it says is designed to "inspire alternative approaches to traditional corporate travel management".

The initiative will include on-demand video, webinar registrations, downloadable one-pagers and guides as well as regular content updates, available from FCM's Th!nk library [HERE](#).

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Up to 35% off cruise fares and US\$200 per person of onboard credit are available on selected **Holland America Line** 2023-2024 Australia and New Zealand sailings. Passengers can enjoy seven-day discounted sailings aboard *Noordam*, as well as all of the usual onboard facilities such as the Spa & Salon, Pinnacle Grill restaurants and musical entertainment, Billboard Onboard. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

In a bid to encourage more travellers to the topical destination, **Aircalin** is offering passengers return flights between Sydney and Noumea from as low as \$580. Valid until 18 Aug, the offer is available for travel through to May 2024. T&Cs apply, learn more and book [HERE](#).

**Nesuto Apartment Hotel Parramatta** is offering meeting and events planners rewards for gatherings booked from now until 30 Nov. Rewards include an upgraded tea break when spending over \$1,500, upgraded tea breaks with \$2,500 of spend, as well as two complimentary room nights for delegates when a planner spends more than \$3,500. Learn more about the full deal [HERE](#).

To celebrate the summer season, **Sydney Airport** is offering up to 15% savings for domestic and international parking. Use promo code "YESPLEASE" when applying for the latest offer. The deal ends on 22 Aug, reserve your parking spot [HERE](#).

**Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia** has launched a special package for travellers to enjoy a holiday near Uluru. The promotion includes stays at Outback Hotel and Lodge at Ayers Rock Resort from only \$199 per night for a standard twin share room for bookings of a minimum of three nights. Call 1300 134 044 to find out more.

Book your overseas getaway from only \$130 with **AirAsia** and **AirAsia X's** Down Under Sale. Ending this Sun, popular one-way fares include Perth to Jakarta from \$149, Perth to Bali from \$149, Perth to Kuala Lumpur from \$219 for Economy class. Travellers can also book to Kuala Lumpur from Sydney from only \$299 one-way. Most fares are valid through to Mar 2024. [CLICK HERE](#) to book.

**Cruise Traveller** has released an all-inclusive package on the new 19-night Croatian Wilds and Grecian Isles package in Jul 2024. The package includes flights from many Aussie gateways, including Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide or Perth to Split in Croatia. Savings of \$3,060 per couple or \$6,110 per person are available with the new offering. The sale ends 31 Aug, call 1800 507 777 or book on [www.cruisetraveller.com.au](http://www.cruisetraveller.com.au).

## TOURISM & EVENTS, A LOVE STORY FOR THE AGES?

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## SportsLink backs the 'burras



**SPORTS** travel agency SportsLink Travel has joined forces with Australia's national hockey team, the Kookaburras, for the Oceania Cup, which kicked off in NZ yesterday.

The SportsLink Travel logo features front-and-centre on the team's shirts, which they will don as part of a one-off branding alignment for the three-match series against their Kiwi competitors, the Black Sticks.

"SportsLink Travel has had a considerable association with hockey in Australia over the years and shares similar values in

wanting to see the sport grow," Hockey Australia Chief David Pryles said.

SportsLink CEO Paul Kelly added, "we are extremely excited and proud to be managing their entire travel program as well as providing tour opportunities for family, friends and supporters to see them play around the world".

The Oceania Cup is the first opportunity for the Kookaburras to qualify for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

## Accor backs airshow

**ACCOR** has been named as the official accommodation provider for the Pacific Airshow Gold Coast (PAGC), which takes place in Surfers Paradise from 18-20 Aug.

This year marks the first time the aerobatics and entertainment event, normally held in California, will be hosted on the Gold Coast.

Airshow guests can enjoy a VIP experience at Hyde Paradiso at Peppers Soul Surfers Paradise, including a hosted experience of the event plus a food and beverage package, priced from \$400 - more info [HERE](#).

## Aussies in Maldives

**THE** Maldives is celebrating one million tourists for 2023, a month ahead of last year's achievement, putting the tropical destination on track to reaching its goal of 1.8 million tourists for the year.

As of Jun, Australia reclaimed its place in the Maldives top 10 source markets, with the island nation recording 18,000 arrivals from Australia for the month - just 2,000 shy of pre-pandemic Jun 2019 levels.

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

TOURISM 

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