



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of the latest news including **Business Events News**, a photo page from **MTA**, plus a full page from **Abercrombie & Kent**.

Sell Three, Sail Free

AGENTS who book three staterooms on any 2024/25 A&K Luxury Expedition Cruise between 01 Dec 2023 and 31 Mar 2024 will earn a free cruise for themselves and a guest - learn more on **p7**.

JQ beefs up MEL

JETSTAR has confirmed it will increase the number of direct flights operated between Melbourne and Singapore, Bangkok, and Phuket from 17 Jun.

The carrier will operate daily flights during peak periods on the Singapore-Melbourne route (up from six per week), while Bangkok-Melbourne and Phuket-Melbourne services will both add two more weekly flights to make it five times a week.

The news coincides with tickets on Jetstar's newly unveiled Perth routes to Southeast Asia going on sale today.

From Aug, the major Perth expansion (**TD** 21 Nov) will see Qantas' budget airline flying up to six times a week between Singapore and Perth, up to four weekly return flights from Phuket to Perth, and from Sep, Jetstar will begin flying four days a week between Bangkok and Perth.

Aussies to pay \$50 more

THE cost of overseas travel for Aussies is about to get more expensive after the Federal Government revealed passport fees will rise again next year.

While delivering his *Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook for 2023-24* yesterday, Federal Treasurer Jim Chalmers confirmed the cost of renewing passports will go up by 15% - equating to an extra \$50 for those applying for a 10-year period.

Describing the price hike as "relatively modest", Chalmers indicated the added costs were needed to fund key upgrades to the travel documents in a time of increased threats from scourges such as identify theft.

"This one-off increase is all about making sure that we can resource our passport systems and make them modern and fit for purpose...especially at a time where there are ongoing threats to people's security and their identity," Chalmers said.

"Revenue of \$349 million over three years from 2024-25 raised from this measure will be redirected to support priorities in the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio," he added.

Speaking to **TD** about the hike, ATIA CEO Dean Long called on the Federal Government to rethink the size of the rise given the hyperinflationary environment.

"ATIA is asking for the government to reverse the decision to increase the costs of passports in line with the CPI...



we believe this equates to just another tax on travellers they cannot afford," Long argued.

CATO MD Brett Jardine added that while an extra \$50 is unlikely to change an individual's mind around travel plans, it is still disappointing that the Federal Government is targeting travellers at a time "when our industry remains in a slow recovery phase post-COVID".

A recent study conducted by insurance company William Russell found that Australia has the most expensive passport in the world in 2023 - ahead of Mexico, Switzerland, Italy, and the United States. **AB**

SIA Marriott rewards

MARRIOTT International and Singapore Airlines (SIA) have expanded their partnership to offer enhanced benefits to their loyalty members, in addition to the two-way points and miles transfer benefits (**TD** 12 Jan).

Eligible members of Marriott Bonvoy and SIA's KrisFlyer rewards program may receive a status match and take advantage of a fast-tracked pathway to obtain a higher elite status, in addition to enjoying access to exclusive promotions.

Rex makes it 10

REX has taken delivery of its 10th B737-800NG jet this week - the third plane the carrier has received since Jul.

Touching down in Brisbane, the new aircraft will help Rex bolster existing frequencies on popular routes and also explore the option of adding more capital cities to its network.

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Norway famil chance

50 DEGREES North is giving agents the chance to win a free Norwegian Coastal Voyage with Havila when they sell two or more tours that include a Havila voyage by the end of Feb 2024.

Agents can also enjoy a 50% discount on a 2024 tour, [HERE](#).

Straight to work for AAC



EXCLUSIVE

THE inaugural meeting of the minds of the newly established ATAS Advisory Committee (AAC) saw the appointment of Sno'n'Ski's Executive Director David Walker as Chair and Link Travel Group's General Manager Scott Darlow made Vice Chair.

Formed to contribute robust oversight and strategic direction for ATAS moving into the future, the first AAC meeting included briefings from several experts, such as ATAS independent reviewer Graham McDonald, ATAS Complaints Appeal Committee Chair Hank Spier, as well as ATAS Complaints Appeal Committee member David Padman.

Another important address was communicated by Chair of the Consumer Federation of Australia Gerard Brody, with the inaugural members of the ATAS Advisory Committee - announced last month (**TD** 17 Nov) - taking in the advice in order to shape the future of the important scheme.

"The inaugural meeting of the ATAS Advisory Committee marks a pivotal moment in our

journey towards enhancing ATAS's relevance, rigour, and responsiveness," ATIA CEO Dean Long explained.

"We look forward to drawing upon our collective expertise across ATIA and AAC to ensure that ATAS continues to be a leading accreditation scheme, recognised by both travel businesses and consumers for its commitment to excellence, integrity, and improvement." **AB**

Pictured: The first AAC meeting taking place in Melbourne.

Bali appeal fades

BALI is being discarded by Aussie travellers for trips to Europe and Japan this summer instead, a new survey of 2,000 people released by the Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF) suggests.

The same report showed that 75% of Aussies intend to take a holiday over the summer period, while the percentage of people travelling interstate has risen from 18 to 26% on last summer.

Aussies travelling overseas has also increased from 6.5% to 14%, TTF figures showed, with a third of respondents stating they intend to holiday closer to home in places like NZ and the Gold Coast this summer.

Most people will be away from two to seven days (59%), while the vast majority of travellers (77%) will spend less than \$5,000 on all trip expenses.

One in 20 Aussies will fork out between \$10-20k, while only 1% will spend more than \$20k.

itravel



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LET'S TALK



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BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER APAC





Heritage Expeditions, New Zealand's family-owned and operated pioneers in responsible, authentic small-ship expedition cruising, are looking to appoint an experienced, innovative and results driven Business Development Manager APAC. Reporting to the Head of Sales Robert Halfpenny and based in Australia, this role will work closely with trade partners to deliver strategic growth nationally. Heritage Expeditions have been exploring the most remote islands, coasts and shorelines on Earth from the Ross Sea Antarctica, Subantarctic Islands, New Zealand, Kimberley, Melanesia, Indonesia and Japan with intrepid guests on bucket list voyages since 1984.

CV & Cover Letter to robert@heritage-expeditions.com

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Hotels welcome Trilogy

THREE high-profile hotel executives have founded a new company in Australia and NZ called Trilogy Hotels, offering hotel owners a new way to manage their operations.

The new independent management model is headed up by former Accor veteran Scott Boyes, who only exited the business after 30 years in Sep (TD 21 Sep), most recently holding the role of Senior Vice President Hotel Operations, Pacific North.

Joining him on the new venture are two other Accor alumni, including acquisition specialist Tony Ryan and respected asset manager Grant Alchin.

Central to Trilogy's value proposition is an operating platform for investment-grade assets where hotel operations can be managed independently by the new venture's team.

Hotel brands may, under a franchise agreement, provide globally established branding,



marketing, distribution, and loyalty programs, Trilogy said, adding the business will also drive operations, profit performance, and assist with team training.

"Here in Australia and New Zealand, the industry has relied heavily on the traditional hotel management agreement model where hotel owners engage with a particular hotel brand for both their distribution and operating capability," CEO Scott Boyes said.

"However, in the US and Europe the independent management model, with brand support under a franchise agreement, is the predominant model preferred by hotel owners and hotel brands alike," he added.

Trilogy plans to replicate the success from overseas by tailoring the model to the local market so that owners can still feel connected to their investment while at the same time taking advantage of better distribution.

After meeting with brands and hotel owners over the past few weeks, the Trilogy management team hinted they are "on the verge" of finalising "a ground-breaking deal" that it said is poised to transform the industry in Australia and New Zealand. *AB*

Parrtjima 2024 rego

VISITOR registrations are now open for Parrtjima - A Festival in Light, which will return to Alice Springs from 12-21 Apr 2024.

The free Aboriginal light festival will explore the theme of 'Interconnectedness', and will see almost two kilometres of the MacDonnell Ranges illuminated - register **HERE**, and for more events news, see **page five**.

Japan rail tweaked

INTERNATIONAL Rail has added further enhancements to its Japan Rail platform, introducing a new nine-month booking horizon on core routes in the country.

The improvement will allow travel advisors to book and pay for point-to-point Japan rail tickets with considerably greater planning and flexibility.

In further updates, International Rail is also now offering bus services from Nagoya to Hakuba.

Kids fly free in the NT

KIDS can fly free to the NT with rural carrier Nexus Airlines this summer, through a partnership which is set to boost visitation from Western Australia.

The Kids Fly Free promotion is supported by Tourism NT and Tourism WA, and is available on all Nexus routes across Western Australia and the NT, from key Western Australia source markets such as Broome, Kununurra, Karratha, and Port Hedland.



Window Seat

MOST travellers embrace the idea of packing light when flying overseas, but a Russian man took this trend to an unnerving extreme last month.

Sergey Ochigava reportedly arrived in the United States on a Scandinavian Airlines flight from Copenhagen without buying a ticket, presenting his passport, or even having any record that he had boarded the aircraft.

Bizarrely, the man was clearly not interested in keeping a low profile on the flight either, with passengers noting Ochigava repeatedly wandering down the aisles of the plane and changing his seat several times.

Stranger still, the man at one point even decided to chomp down on a bar of chocolate belonging to the cabin crew without asking.

Naturally, the incident has kicked off a serious investigation in the United States and for SAS about how the man managed to find his way through supposedly stringent security checkpoints.

For his part, Ochigava has stated he has no memory of being on the aircraft, or even how he got on board.

Part of the investigation also saw security teams pore through the contents of the mysterious passenger's cellphone, which has so far yielded no further clues.

Rail Europe adds OBB

RAIL Europe has announced the addition of Austria's OBB to its B2B platforms.

Under the new deal, advisors and partners now have access to a broader range of domestic and international rail routes to/from and within Austria, as well as Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Poland and Italy.

Access Rail Europe **HERE**.

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MTA says thank you to the industry

MTA Mobile Travel Agents recently hosted its annual Supplier Thank You events in Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane and Melbourne, bringing together MTA Advisors and valued industry partners from across the country.

The events - which doubled as end-of-year drinks for advisors - provided a wonderful opportunity to express appreciation to suppliers for their support throughout the year.

Lucky door prizes also added an extra element of excitement for suppliers.

The events strengthen MTA's commitment to celebrate the invaluable contribution of its important partners.



CLARE Hardie, MTA; Joanne Morrow, Hilton; and Neil Robertson, MTA.



SUE Gaddes, Shangri-La celebrates her Sydney lucky door prize win with Neil Robertson, MTA.



BELINDA Layt, ID Travel Group; Sandra Cavallin, Tasmanian Walking Co; Neil Robertson, MTA; Michelle Nickelson, Club Med; and Cilla Kambona, Go Insurance.



WAITING to announce the winner of the Sydney lucky door prize.



TAMARA Gleadhill, Gaye Findlay, Michelle MacKenzie and Amelia Roth cheers against the beautiful backdrop of voco Central in Melbourne.



NEIL Robertson, MTA; Albina Obilinovich, Qatar Airways; Steve McLaughlin, Aurora Expeditions; and Terri Cordin, Wildlife Safaris.



SIPPING success in Brisbane - Qld-based MTA advisors toast their achievements during the year.



BLUE hues and Melbourne views! Katy Shane-Leitini, Georgia Trill, Rhiannon Hutton, Beate Carr and Marian Stanley.



MTA advisors and suppliers in Melbourne celebrate making it through 2023.



MTA seized the opportunity to bring advisors together for a business update ahead of the main event.



GETTING EVENTS TO NET ZERO

NET Zero Carbon Events (NZCE), the climate change initiative for the global events industry, has this week published seven guidance documents to help organisations reduce their environmental footprint.

The digital guides, launched on Mon at ExCel London, offer actionable insights and strategies for events businesses who are implementing plans to achieve net zero carbon emissions.

The documents cover priority areas identified by the initiative's existing Roadmap, including venue energy; smart product and waste management; logistics; travel and accommodation; food and food waste; and offsetting and measurement.

The new resources include comprehensive guides for understanding and quantifying event-level emissions, as well



as an extensive list of different materials used in events with their specific emissions factors.

"These documents, vital to the development of an industry-wide standard pathway towards net zero carbon events, represent the largest, most inclusive collaboration across the events industry ever achieved," James Rees (**pictured**), President of Joint Meetings Industry Council, the driving force behind NZCE, said.

"This achievement is the result of the hard work of

over 100 industry volunteers whose support, added together, represents many years of working time to develop, critique and finalise these guidance documents to be used in practice and improve upon over time as NZCE evolves."

The documents were compiled with the assistance of senior operations and sustainability experts from event organisers, venues and service suppliers around the world.

Rees said the next stage of the initiative will be a "major change and exciting step forward" and will require "the total commitment and active engagement of everyone from CEOs downwards to achieve net zero".

The documents can be downloaded **HERE**, and event organisations can register for the initiative **HERE** free of charge. *JM*

AI's role in events

ARTIFICIAL intelligence (AI) will never be a substitute for human connection when it comes to event hosting, Elevate Communications Event Manager, Gina Shaw, recently shared.

"There's been a lot of talk about AI in our industry, but we are yet to define exactly how that can help us.

"At its core, our industry is about the human connection, sitting down and having proper conversations with people...it's hard to convey that authenticity through AI," she posited.

The Brisbane-based events professional, who has 15 years of industry experience under her belt, did concede that the use of AI to increase engagement of presentations could "get really exciting".

Perth Masters '29

PERTH has secured the rights to host the 2029 World Masters Games, which will see up to 30,000 athletes from over 100 countries descend on the WA capital to participate in the 12-day, multi-sport event.

This marks the fourth time the amateur sport event has been held in Australia, with the 2029 iteration backed by a \$16.3m investment from the Federal Government.

Qudos gets kudos

SYDNEY'S Qudos Bank Arena has been named among the top 10 live music venues in the world, in Billboard's recently released 2023 year-end list.

Claiming the seventh spot, it was the only venue from the Asia-Pacific region that was recognised in the list.

From Nov 2022 to Sep 2023, Qudos generated \$79.4 million in ticket sales and hosted over 785,000 guests.

Vic gets Thinking

THE International Conference on Thinking (ICOT) is set to return to Melbourne in Jul 2024 to celebrate its 40th year.

It will be the second time the event is held in Australia's 'cultural capital', which played host in 2005.

The conference boasts a line-up of international speakers, and will attract local academics, educators, artists, and business leaders.

All eyes on Brissy

MORE than 400 professional conference organisers, event planners and meeting industry professionals will gather in Brisbane in Dec 2024 for The Professional Conference Organisers Association Conference, after Brisbane Economic Development Agency (BEDA) and The Star Brisbane won the hosting rights.

The delegates will be among the first in the world to experience the new \$3.6b Queen's Wharf entertainment precinct.

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Wollongong's peak tourism body **Destination Wollongong** has invited **Brooke Robson**, Head of Marketing at Experience Co, to its Board of Directors. Robson brings 12 years of marketing experience and a strong background in tourism to the board. The appointment comes as the DMO focuses on boosting the region's visitor economy, as well as gearing up for significant infrastructure developments.

Hilton Sydney has announced the appointment of **Malcolm Zancanaro** as its new General Manager. The seasoned professional brings over 30 years of experience in the industry, both here and internationally. He will oversee the management, food and beverage operations, as well as conferencing and events in his new role. Zancanaro was previously the Director of New Hotels APAC at InterContinental Hotels Group.

The chief of The Travel Corporation (TTC) **David Hosking** has joined the Board of the **Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA)** to fill a casual vacancy, marking the first time TTC has been represented on ATIA's board since the departure of Katrina Barry in 2022. Hosking boasts a wealth of tourism experience, with his resume dating all the way back to 1976, when he started out as a trip leader at Contiki.

Qatar Airways Group's CEO has been elected as a new member of the **International Air Transport Association's (IATA)** Board of Governors. **Badr Mohammed Al Meer** will help shape the future growth of safe, secure and sustainable air transport in his new position, while working with others in the industry to connect and enrich air travel as a whole.

Stephanie Pope has been appointed as **Boeing's** Chief Operating Officer, effective 01 Jan 2024. The newly created role tasks Pope with overseeing the performance of the company's three business units to drive supply chain, quality, manufacturing and engineering excellence. She has served as Boeing Global Services' President and Chief Executive Officer since Apr 2022.

Lufthansa Group has announced key changes to its C-suite in order to strengthen its operational and management sectors. **Heike Birlenbach** will become the new Chief Commercial Officer of Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS), succeeding **Tamur Goudarzi Pour**, who will take over the Customer Experience division within Lufthansa Group. Birlenbach has been the Head of Customer Experience for the Group's airlines since 2021, while Pour has been the CCO of SWISS since 2019. Both positions will be effective from 01 Jan 2024.

Fiji Marriott Resort Momi Bay has welcomed renowned Fijian pastry chef **Ken Li** to the resort, where he will use his passion and expertise to deliver new innovations to its menu. Li is well-regarded among his peers for his classical and innovative culinary approaches, and has attracted recognition for his creative and delectable pastry creations in the past.

Intrepid hits record

INTREPID Travel achieved a record sales month globally in Nov, including the highest sales day in the company's history.

Total sales in Australia were close to \$25 million, with the final day of the annual Cyber Sale seeing \$4 million in sales alone.

Local passenger numbers grew by 6% compared to the same period last year, with the top-selling destinations for Australians including Japan, Peru, Morocco, Vietnam, and Turkey.

Southeast Asia also saw a huge resurgence in demand, with Thailand up 36% and neighbouring Cambodia up 41%.

The figures also revealed more customers globally are avoiding peak season travel in favour of shoulder season departures, with Sep, Apr and May set to be the most popular months to travel next year.

Poon Tip tips Japan

JAPAN is the leading destination making the biggest post-COVID comeback next year, according to new forecasts from G Adventures.

Founder Bruce Poon Tip said travellers are now looking for deeper, more meaningful experiences, in a way that gives back to local people and communities, with Japan up a whopping 134% for next year.

Other destinations making big comebacks include Portugal, Uzbekistan, India, and Mexico.

Rounding out the top 10 are Vietnam, Greece, Thailand, South Korea, and Italy.

"Instead of taking three one-week trips a year, they're staying longer in a single destination," Poon Tip explained.

SYD's Uber change

UBER rides are coming kerbside at Sydney Airport's T3 domestic terminal, with the new pickup zone launching on 21 Dec.

T2 passengers accessing Uber will continue to use the existing Priority Pickup area, to which traffic is set to reduce by 35%.

There will be no changes to taxi stands or arrangements for other rideshare operators.

Egg marks the spot

THIS masterpiece is no yolk.

The ultimate luxury collaboration has come to fruition with the unveiling of Regent Seven Seas Cruises' (RSSC) custom-designed Faberge egg, aptly named 'Journey in Jewels'.

Revealing the egg at the christening of *Seven Seas Grandeur* earlier this week, ship godmother and Faberge heir, Sarah Faberge, explained the synergy of the two brands.

"Our two companies share appreciation for studying the techniques of the past in order to bring luxury experiences to 21st century audiences."

RSSC President Andrea DeMarco also shared her pride in the collaboration and the aligned values of the two brands.

"Our collaboration with Faberge transcends the boundary of ordinary luxury," DeMarco said.

"Faberge's storied legacy of unwavering perfection, unparalleled craftsmanship, and relentless pursuit of excellence, aligns harmoniously with the core values of our own distinguished luxury brand."

Journey in Jewels will reside permanently on display aboard *Seven Seas Grandeur*.



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