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Travel Daily on location in Sunshine Coast

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Bonza, which is today flying for the first time from Sunshine Coast Airport to Whitsunday Coast Airport.

TODAY'S *TD* comes to you in the midst of aviation history, reporting from the very first flight of Australia's newest airline, Bonza.

This morning lucky passengers flew on board flight AB777 from Sunshine Coast Airport to Whitsunday Coast Airport, enjoying the airline's signature hospitality.

On arrival in the Whitsundays, guests were treated to a special lunch of local delights to celebrate the momentous occasion, before another smooth flight back to Bonza's Sunshine Coast Airport base.

FC buys UK luxury business

FLIGHT Centre this morning announced a binding agreement to acquire 100% of Luxury Travel Holdings Limited (Scott Dunn), a leading UK-based luxury travel business (*TD* breaking news).

The \$211 million purchase of the tailor-made luxury holiday business is designed to accelerate Flight Centre's foothold in the UK and United States luxury travel markets, areas the business feels it is underrepresented in.

Scott Dunn is considered to be a "resilient" operation with entrenched sales success in the UK and strong growth prospects in the US, offering travellers an "extensive and diverse" bespoke product range with a record of strong repeat bookings.

Providing travellers with end-to-end packages including flights, accommodation and activities with a broad and flexible itinerary appeal, Scott Dunn's tour types include honeymoons, safaris,

tailor-made touring, ski holidays and expedition cruising.

In the 12 months to 31 Dec 2022, Scott Dunn recorded a Total Transaction Volume (TTV) of \$199 million, and a revenue of \$51 million, with Flight Centre stating it was confident of being able to leverage the acquiree's growing loyalty and sales volumes using its own platforms and infrastructure to scale the brand for event sharper future growth.

Another factor leading to the acquisition of Scott Dunn was the British company's attractive sales margins, which are currently better than the Flight Centre leisure arm's average margin.

The business will also provide a small boost for Flight Centre in the Singaporean market, where Scott Dunn currently operates a small but growing and profitable operation.

The purchase is expected to be finalised before the end of Feb.

Today's issue of *TD*

Travel Daily today features six pages of the latest news including our **Sustainability** page, plus a full page from **Abercrombie & Kent**.

CATO's busy 2023

THE Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) has revealed more details about its events line-up for this year, kicking off with the International Women's Day lunch on 08 Mar (*TD* 25 Jan).

Other events include its Crisis, Risk & Resilience Conference on 15 May; AGM on 16 May; Travel Trivia on 03 Aug; and the Christmas Lunch on 07 Dec - all event details can be found **HERE**.

A&K limited edition

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K) is highlighting its collection of Limited Edition Small Group Journeys running in 2023 - for further details, see **page seven**.



CLUB ROYAL REWARDS

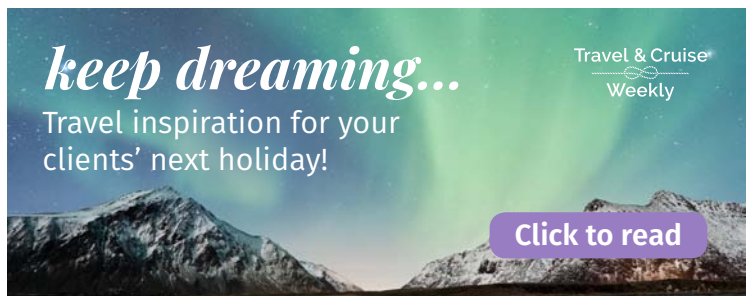
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A dash more Pepper

PEPPERS Waymouth Adelaide has unveiled the results of a multi-million dollar renovation, including refreshed guestrooms, two new luxury suites and two dedicated family rooms, as well as a new restaurant, dining room and guest library lounge.

Sky's the limit for agents

EXCLUSIVE

THE day has finally arrived for Australia's newest airline Bonza, which took to the skies for the first time this morning, just days after opening sales through its app-first approach (TD 27 Jan).

Bonza's first flight departed the carrier's Sunshine Coast base bound for the Whitsunday Coast, the first of 27 routes to be rolled out to 17 destinations across the country, marking a new era for regional tourism in Australia.

Close to 95% of the airline's proposed routes are not currently served by any airline, and 96% aren't served by a budget carrier.

"What better place to start than arguably two of the country's favourite holiday destinations," CEO Tim Jordan said this morning.

Speaking on the sidelines of the big launch, Jordan also told *Travel Daily* that Bonza very much "wanted to work with agents", noting that many customers prefer to book through travel

advisors, which is why hundreds of local agencies have already registered with Bonza to book their clients on the carrier.

"We want to work with agents, obviously we have to do that across spaces that work for us... we have huge respect for what [agents] do, they provide a service and that's fantastic, it just has to work with our cost base."

Since ticket sales opened last Fri, over 10,000 seats have already been sold, with Jordan indicating that both the airline and its app-first approach had been "very, very well received".

With three brand new Boeing 737-MAX 8 aircraft, soon to be expanded to five and then eight aircraft, the airline's fleet will also be the youngest and most efficient in Australia.

Passengers on today's flight enjoyed the full experience, including the opportunity to order from the all Aussie menu in the Fly Bonza app, where food was delivered directly to guests.

Air NZ eases pain

AIR New Zealand is offering a NZ\$250 per night accommodation goodwill payment to pax who were travelling internationally between 27-29 Jan and needed to source their own accommodation as a result of the Auckland Airport closure (TD yesterday).

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Travel Daily

Caravan fund plan

THE Caravan Industry Association of Australia has put forward a Pre-Federal Budget Submission calling for millions more in funding for a second round of the Caravan Parks Grant Program to support upgrades and new facilities at caravan parks across the country.

The industry group also proposes a continued role for Tourism Australia in domestic marketing, backed by additional \$50m funding over four years.

A \$1.5 million Market Readiness Report with a strategy to address electricification, including vehicles and carbon net zero, is also recommended by the submission.

“A successful and safe caravan and camping industry is good for Australia...[it] has long been Australian domestic tourism’s largest visitor and economic cohort, today a \$27 billion economic driver in tourism and local manufacturing activity,” Chief Executive Stuart Lamont said.

Jayride buys US website

JAYRIDE is pushing further into the American market with the purchase of a leading US airport shuttle booking website, AirportShuttles.com.

The Aussie airport transport company will complete the \$303,000 transaction in Feb, gaining the company’s assets including its top level domain, broader technology, IP, as well as existing website traffic.

Jayride Group co-founder and Managing Director, Rod Bishop, described the acquisition as “a compelling fit with our growth strategy to build the world’s leader in rides for travellers”.

“The traffic to the AirportShuttles.com website enhances the scale of our group, particularly in the United States, and accelerates our path to being cash flow positive.”

Jayride was the exclusive supplier of rides to AirportShuttles.com during the

pre-pandemic period of Nov 2019 until Feb 2020, during which time it earned net revenue for every website session, as well as for every Jayride ride booked.

The owner of AirportShuttles.com filed for bankruptcy in May last year, after the business conceded it was heavily impacted by the pandemic.

Prior to COVID, the website clocked up 1.83 million user sessions per year, however the latest month annualised sessions reached just 279,000 per year.

Around 70% of the website’s traffic and revenue is sourced from the US market, with Jayride believing that the domain will also be relevant to opportunities beyond the United States.

The company added it expects an immediate revenue uplift, contribution profits, and cash flows once AirportShuttles.com is integrated into its existing assets, at only a minor cost.



Window Seat

LAST night the first instalment of Channel 10 reality TV show *Australian Survivor* screened, featuring a face familiar to many in the travel industry.

Anjali Rao, the CNN anchor who hosted AFTA’s National Travel Industry Awards from 2016 to 2019, joined this year’s Samoa-based quest for survival - but sadly after just one episode heard the fateful words: “The tribe has spoken”.

Rao, who at the NTIAs was always impeccably turned out, showed a somewhat more unkempt side (**pictured**) after a challenge involving a mud pit.



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GDP finally back on track

NEW research compiled by The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has shown that travel and tourism recovery in Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth is helping each city's GDP make a steady rebound from the pandemic.

The *Cities Economic Impact Report*, which was sponsored by Visa in partnership with Oxford Economics, revealed that all three cities are now showing solid signs of recovery, albeit at different paces, with Perth showing the slowest trajectory, whose GDP contribution is forecast to hover at around half of what it was in 2019, at close to \$2.8 billion.

Tourists are also finally starting to flow back to our shores in greater numbers after a period of lean COVID isolation, the report noted, however big Aussie cities are still struggling to keep pace with global averages when it comes to visitor spend.

"Despite seeing signs of recovery in int'l visitor spending

and more tourists coming back to cities, this has taken longer in Australia due to its key source markets, such as China, extending their own border closures," the report said.

"But finally, these three Australian cities are beginning to bounce back, whilst international visitor spend is still on average 46% lower in 2022 than it was in 2019, all three cities are showing strong year-on-year increases."

Meanwhile on the jobs front, the report indicated that both Melbourne and Sydney are seeing stronger bounce backs; in Sydney job levels in 2023 are predicted to rise to over 118,500, only 16% below pre-pandemic levels, while in Melbourne job volumes are anticipated to be around 115,000, just 6% shy of pre-COVID levels.

Pelikin flies with TM

DIGITAL travel money card provider Pelikin has announced a new preferred partnership with TravelManagers.

The pact will see the card available to customers of all of the company's travel advisors throughout Australia.

Pelikin Founder & Chief Executive Officer Sam Brown said it is really exciting to be working with TravelManagers to be able to provide its digital travel money card affiliate program to the network's customers.

"Over the past year since we first launched the program we have made a number of enhancements to ensure it is as easy as possible for travel advisors to provide this value-added service to their clients," Brown said.

"We were approached by a number of agents in 2022 with an interest in offering the cards to their clients and were excited to have the opportunity to sign a preferred agreement."

There is no requirement to hold any card stock, and customers can be signed up online.

CELEBRITY chef Poh Ling Yeow (pictured) is cooking up her first dining experience at the QT Melbourne, in partnership with Scottish distillery The Singleton.

The Singleton's Delicious Discoveries train is set to "upend the traditional aperitif hour", with eight different desserts and savoury delights to cruise past diners on a sushi train-style conveyor belt, while enjoying two signature Plus Two cocktails.

The experience premieres in

QT's new events space on Thu.

"I wanted to take The Singleton's unique world of single malts into a new flavour realm, playing on QT's signature quirk to create a dining experience that is bursting with colour and taste," Poh enthused.

TTC launches AR

THE Travel Corporation (TTC) has launched an augmented reality experience called The Windows to the World.

The AR tech allows travellers to use their phone to experience some of the world's best touring holidays, transporting them to locations all over the globe.

The experience offers 360° walk-through views of sights and experiences available to tour with TTC brands - **CLICK HERE**.

Rex grows profits

REX has marked the fourth consecutive month that its domestic jet operations have been overall profitable since resuming in Feb 2022, after releasing its unaudited management accounts today for Dec 2022.

The Aussie carrier maintained an upward trend in profitability for its domestic Boeing 737 jet operations, with a Profit Before Tax (PBT) of \$4 million for last month - a notable increase from \$1.9 million in Oct and \$2.8 million in Nov.

Dec 2022 also marked the fourth month in a row that Rex's regional operations have been cash-flow positive since COVID.

It was also the third consecutive month that the entire Rex Group recorded an operational profit, with the underlying PBT for Dec coming in at \$3.7 million, the highest since COVID.

A significant improvement when compared to the PBT for the months of Oct and Nov, which were \$800k and \$3.1 million, respectively.

However, the airline's regional Saab 340 operations were still incurring a loss at a PBT level for the month of Dec, which Rex attributed to Qantas' "predatory behaviour".

S&S welcomes funds

FLIGHT Centre's entertainment industry travel management company Stage & Screen (S&S) has welcomed the Australian Government's new 'Revive' policy, which is aimed at greater funding of the arts & culture sector.

General Manager Adam Moon said the movie, TV, arts, and culture industries were now in the strongest position they had ever been in, and commended the \$286m, five-year investment.

"The Australian screen industry has made its mark on the international stage as talented, innovative, creative, passionate and hardworking ready to take on tentpole hits, franchise and indie films, sci-fi television series, all the way through to animated family films," he said.

"We're delighted to have partners like Ausfilm who work hard to help filmmakers and studios find what they need in Australia to bring stories to life".

'Big Sale' offers up to 25% off Intrepid

INTREPID Travel is offering up to 25% on this year's trips through its latest Big Sale promo.

From 30 Jan to 16 Feb, travellers can book an adventure for this year at up to 25% off, with discounts available on hundreds of international tours, and 15% off domestic trips.

For more info, **CLICK HERE**.

Stuba record sales

STUBA has reported a record sales week for both revenue and room nights booked, even outperforming pre-pandemic levels, with the week commencing 23 Jan producing a record day of sales.

Nearly 50% of bookings are for travel from May, suggesting the pre-pandemic pattern of early bookings is returning, with Cancun, Hawaii, Bali, and Barbados all performing well.



Reho certified

REHO Travel has successfully recertified as a B Corp business with an improved score of 98.2, representing an impressive increase from its score of 83.6 in 2019.

B Corp certification refers to companies that have demonstrated a significant commitment to factors such as environmental and sustainability issues, as well as wellness in leadership.

Greener catamarans

YACHT vacation company Dream Yacht Worldwide and catamaran designer Fountaine Pajot have announced an electric yacht partnership, which will see the launch of what is believed to be the world's first line of electric catamarans.

Fountaine Pajot's Aura 51 Smart Electric model will be first introduced to the Dream Yacht fleet, available for charter in Italy from Apr.

The partnership is expected to bring 20 yachts to the Dream fleet by mid-2024, boasting electric motors powered by two lithium technology batteries and an intelligent on-board energy management system.

WE NEED NUCLEAR FOR GOALS: CLARK

AUSTRALIA needs to embrace the use of nuclear power if its aviation sector is to speed up emissions cuts, Emirates President Tim Clark believes.

Speaking with the *AFR* recently, the Middle Eastern carrier's chief said that while Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) will eventually provide the solution to zero-emission air travel, he noted the source was not currently being produced at a scale to make any dramatic impact reduction to support the entire market.

The same criticism regarding SAF production has repeatedly been made by Qantas, particularly about Australia, where the sector is well behind other developed nations like the US and the United Kingdom, with the Flying Kangaroo taking the bull by the horns by creating a special SAF Coalition late last year (*TD* 11 Nov 2022).

Clark argues that nuclear sites



are needed to help bridge the gap between now and when SAFs are fully scaled, suggesting green hydrogen and synthetic fuels should be in the mix if the global aviation sector wants to hit its lofty 2050 reduction targets.

"Modular nuclear reactors around the coastlines of Australia or the United Kingdom would give you the power to drive the processes that allow you to extract green hydrogen," he said.

"Everybody says great idea but don't put one near me, the coastline of Australia is large and it is not well populated - perfect."

Outside of nuclear, Clark also suggested carbon reductions could be helped along by new aircraft innovations, such as the Rolls-Royce's UltraFan engines that went into testing in Dec.

Emirates remains committed to achieving carbon-neutrality by 2050, this week operating its first milestone SAF demonstration flight on a Boeing 777-300ER, taking off from Dubai International Airport.

Emirates' demonstration flight is the first of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa and will guide future SAF flights.

UNSW receives funding for regional plane conversion project

A **UNSW** eco-friendly aviation research & development project has received Cooperative Research Centre Projects funding from the Australian Government.

The R&D project, which has been awarded \$3 million in funding, is focused on making regional air services greener and more affordable.

The \$12.8 million project will look to convert a turboprop aircraft to electric propulsion, in order to provide more sustainable regional commuter services.

The project will develop, flight test, and certify the conversion, with a focus on emissions-free aircraft for use on rural routes in the future.

"Without needing to transit through a central hub, it will provide a convenient and quick means of transportation for residents of more remote areas," Senior Lecturer at UNSW Branislav Hredzak said.

The funding follows a Rex plan to convert turbine-powered aircraft into zero emissions electric planes (*TD* 22 Jul 2022).

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Farewell to the B747

ATLAS Air is preparing to take delivery of the last commercial Boeing 747 ever this week, more than five decades after the jumbo jet's first flight, which took off from New York on 22 Jan 1970.

Thousands of people, including current and former employees of Boeing, as well as customers and suppliers, will celebrate the "Queen of the Skies" at a ceremony in the Everett widebody production plant outside Seattle tomorrow.

A video recording of the milestone occasion will be made available on Boeing.com.

TTC treks for charity



THE Sydney team at The Travel Corporation (TTC) has dusted off their hiking shoes in preparation for a special upcoming event, one the company enthusiastically describes as "the ultimate active getaway with purpose".

Group Payroll Manager Caroline Gleeson rallied three teams to participate in Coastrek, a charity hiking challenge for women, which takes place on the Northern Beaches on 24 Mar.

The teams will hike 30km from Narrabeen to Balgowlah to raise awareness and funds for the Heart Foundation, in support of life-saving research into heart disease - Australia's leading cause of death.

Almost \$100,000 of the \$1.5m target goal has already been raised for Coastrek Sydney.

"Many of us were inspired by our interstate teammates to take part, but there are also some of us who have a personal connection to heart health and want to support a great cause," Gleeson said.

"It's also a great team building activity after working remotely

for the last few years - we train regularly and we are really looking forward to achieving this goal together," she added.

The TTC Sydney team was inspired by their team mates in Adelaide, who participated in the Coastrek event on the Fleurieu Peninsula in Sep 2022.

Not only does the event raise money for a great cause, it also gives regional tourism destinations a boost - the events take place on a Fri, with up to 2,000 trekkers to stay and enjoy the region over the weekend.

Registrations for Coastrek Sydney close on 12 Feb, with teams of four able to enter the traditional 45km or 30km day treks, or the new twilight 20km distance, which kicks off at 5pm.

Coastrek also takes place on the Mornington Peninsula, Sunshine Coast, Fleurieu Peninsula and Margaret River throughout 2023 - for more information about how to enter, [CLICK HERE](#).

Pictured: Gina Gavagnin, Ashleigh Loaney, Mylinda Joyce and Daniela Brizzi out training for Coastrek.

Viking on the box

VIKING will appear on the telly this Sun at 4.30pm AEDT on Channel Nine, with four episodes of *Explore TV* showcasing the cruise line's 15-day Trade Routes of the Middle Ages voyage.

Trevor Cochrane, the host of the experiential travel series, will take viewers on a journey from Scandinavia and Northern Europe down to the Mediterranean, while exploring the experiences on board the *Viking Venus*.

Highlights will include a visit to Monet's house, a tour of Britain's only tea estate, making Pralines in Bruges, and much more.

"If you have clients considering a cruise to any of these regions, these episodes provide a fantastic opportunity for them to learn about what life is like on board Viking's ships and the types of experiences they can enjoy," Cochrane said.

Massive VA sale

VIRGIN Australia has launched more than 500,000 Economy fares from \$55 one-way, including popular routes such as Sydney to Byron Bay, as part of its whopping Bring on 2023 sale.

The promo coincides with the airline's record business traveller (SME) growth, with bookings reaching more than 110% of pre-COVID levels this month.

To celebrate, VA is offering 150,000 bonus Velocity Points to Australian SMEs who switch their loyalty to VA before 31 Mar and meet eligible flight spend within the first 90 days of joining.

The sale is on from now until 06 Feb unless sold out prior, and applies to select dates from 01 Mar until 07 Dec - [CLICK HERE](#).

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.706

THE Australian currency has enjoyed a somewhat consistently positive trajectory over the last few weeks, supported by China's reopening, and the fact that the RBA is hiking rates at a faster pace than America's Federal Reserve.

At 7.8%, Australia's inflation rate is the highest it's been since 1990, which could inspire the RBA to raise rates yet again at its next meeting on 07 Feb.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.706
UK	£0.572
NZ	\$1.091
Euro	€0.651
Japan	¥92.09
Thailand	฿23.14
China	¥4.763
South Africa	12.29
Canada	\$0.945
Crude oil	US\$79.68

Abercrombie & Kent

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