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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of the latest news, plus a front cover wrap from **CVFR Consolidation Services** and a full page from **APT Travel Group**.

CVFR urges switch

CVFR Travel Group is inviting independent agencies to open an account, enabling them to issue tickets from a provider offering "market leading technology, the scale and size to deliver great deals, stability and service".

More details on the **cover page**.

ATG agents are VIPs

APT Travel Group's revamped VIP Agents Reward program offers a host of benefits including partnership funding, prizes, priority reservations and rewards earned when deposits are paid.

Discounted rates are also on offer for VIP trade partners - see the **last page** for details.

ABEA launches new era

THE newly formed Australian Business Events Association (ABEA) has formally kicked off today, with the release of a 90-day plan providing a detailed short-term roadmap for the peak organisation formed by EEAA, AACB and ACCG (**TD 25 May**).

New MU timeline

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has updated the timeline for its draft determination on the long-considered Extended Joint Coordination Agreement between Qantas and China Eastern Airlines.

After issuing an interim authorisation on the same day as its interim ruling on the QF/EK alliance (**TD 24 Mar**) the China Eastern draft ruling is now expected sometime this month, followed by a public consultation period and then a final determination in Aug.

ABEA Chair Peter King said the Association wants to quickly bring to life its five core pillars of industry development, community, research, advocacy and professional development.

"We've had plenty of time to gain clarity over what will benefit our members and the industry most...we understand that a new Association needs to prove its worth to its people, and we are confident not only in what we are offering but in our ability to deliver it," he said.

All existing EEAA, AACB and ACCG members are being transferred to the new group, while a CEO is expected to be appointed later this month.

A new Advocacy Framework is being established to identify key stakeholders in government and industry, while state and territory Chapters are also being set up along with member events across the country - see abea.org.au.

ETG transition OK

EXPRESS Travel Group has confirmed that all of its agents requiring transition to the new Express Tickets system were successfully transferred on Fri.

The new platform will allow the Express Tickets team to continue providing market-leading support to all ETG members, according to CEO Tom Manwaring.

"This has been a fantastic team effort, a process which has seen a smooth transition to the new technology platform as planned and in professional style.

"My thanks to all our Express Tickets team members and our GDS partners for ensuring it is business as usual with the same fast and personal service we're so proud of," Manwaring enthused.

The transition comes in the lead-up to the special Helloworld Travel Limited meeting of shareholders to vote on the company's proposed \$70 million acquisition of Express Travel Group (**TD 22 Jun**).

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STEVE LABROSKI 0409 287 547
JO HOWARD 0409 157 209

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France travel advice

SMARTTRAVELLER is advising Aussie travellers to exercise a high degree of caution in France due to the threat of terrorism.

Violent riots have been occurring across the country since 27 Jun, leading to curfews in some cities and impacts to public transport.

JQ flights vital for Cooks

EXCLUSIVE

WITH Jetstar recently launching direct flights from Sydney (TD 30 Jun), the Cook Islands now have double the non-stop capacity from Australia than any time in history.

Speaking with *Travel Daily* in Rarotonga over the weekend, Cook Islands Tourism GM Australasia, Graeme West, said without non-stop airlift from countries such as Australia, it would be "very difficult" to grow a market in the Pacific.

"[Flight capacity] is incredibly important," West noted, adding the tropical destination is expecting to see around 2,500 Australians arrive in the Cook Islands a month for the majority of the year, with some of that traffic still expected to arrive via Auckland through carriers like Jetstar and Air New Zealand.

The Cook Islands are in the early stages of a resurgence, with the market only really "getting going again" in May last year, seeing smaller overall numbers for 2022 (9,000 visitors) than pre-COVID, which saw a much larger 29,000 Aussie tourists arrive in 2019.

West also revealed that educating the Aussie travel trade will be key to growing its arrival numbers over the coming years.

"We are working with wholesalers and the trade to expand their product offerings and have had campaigns running with several of the wholesalers, with more planned," he said.

"During the past three years,

we also ran a series of webinars for the trade, some covered general information about the Cook Islands and others focused on specific areas such as accommodation, activities, dining etc, and we will be running some trade breakfasts later in the year."

Outside of the largest island Rarotonga, West also confirmed that developing other island markets like Aitutaki was key to securing ongoing tourist growth.

"Aitutaki is considered one of the most stunning lagoons in the world and it is imperative that visitors get on the lagoon either on a group boat trip or charter their own boat for a half or full day," West enthused.

"Activities that are favourites on Rarotonga are lagoon cruises, snorkelling with turtles, buggy tours, paddleboarding, deep sea fishing, scuba diving and much more...Atiu and Mangaia are also two of the smaller islands that travellers seeking a more unique back to nature experience visit," West added.

Tourism in the Cook Islands is the most important sector for the country's economy, making up around 75% of GDP, with the market differentiating itself from other Pacific Islands via its unique activities/entertainment offering.

"Compared to places like Fiji, the major difference is the fact that visitors get out and about around the island(s) and don't spend most of their time in their resort," West concluded.

Maldives non-stop?

A NEWLY formed Maldives-based carrier has flagged direct services from Perth to Male.

Dubbed Beond, the fledgling premium leisure carrier promises a "private jet-like experience" with Perth set to launch within 12 months, reports Nine Publishing.



VIKING

NEW EXPEDITIONS BROCHURE

Our new 2023-2025 Expeditions brochure is now available to order from TIFS.

[VIEW ONLINE](#)



VIKING

NEW ARCTIC VOYAGES

We've released three new itineraries that will tour parts of the Arctic Circle in 2025.

[VIEW ITINERARIES](#)



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Window Seat

A PASSENGER on a Ryanair flight has been “trolled” by the airline after complaining about his seat’s lack of leg room.

Noah Ellis, a nearly two-metre tall 20-year-old student, posted a photo of himself on Twitter showing him cramped in his seat while flying with friends from the UK to Poland, and said, “Please can there be bigger seats without paying 20 quid (AUD\$38) @Ryanair”.

The budget carrier responded “savagely” with an image of Ellis’ head cut and pasted onto a photograph of a child in a car booster seat.

Ellis said he and his friends found the post “really funny”, and admitted that since he was so tall it was his own fault for not booking a seat with the extra legroom.

Domestic spend up, trips flat

AUSTRALIAN residents spent \$108 billion on overnight travel for the 12 months to 31 Mar, an increase of 37% - but the actual number of trips was on par with the prior corresponding period at about 112 million.

The results of the latest National Visitor Survey from Tourism Research Australia released last week indicated an ongoing trend for close-to-home travel, with intrastate trips up 2% while interstate trips dropped 5%.

Trips to regional areas rose, versus capital city travel which declined although overall spend was up for both regional and urban travel during the year.

The quarterly results to 31 Mar showed a significant uplift on the same period in 2022, with domestic overnight trips up 16% to 28.3 million and a 13% increase in nights stayed to 109m.

There was a 66% increase in quarterly spend on holiday trips

which rose to \$6.6 billion, while visiting friends and relatives spending rose 45% to \$1.7 billion and business travel was up 32% to \$1.2 billion for the quarter.

The biggest increase in spending was on accommodation, up 71% to \$8.4 billion, while spending on airfares by domestic travellers was up 40% to \$3.2 billion.

More at tra.gov.au.

Merlin’s magic result

MERLIN Entertainments has seen a strong post-pandemic rebound, with the company’s 2022 financial results showing revenues up 59% to \$3.8 billion.

The company’s global portfolio of theme parks, aquariums and experiences attracted 56 million visitors during the year.

Quarterly results to 31 Mar confirmed the ongoing recovery, with revenue and visitors up over 30% year-on-year.

ETC adds Compass

EVOLUTION Travel Collective (ETC) has announced a new partnership with Compass Expeditions under which it will locally represent the operator’s new range of global 4WD tours.

ETC MD Ingrid Berthelsen said Compass Expeditions is a perfect fit for the business, having long been known as a global leader for motorcycle tours.

“Now this highly experienced operator will really take your clients off the beaten track with their new range of 4WD tours in vehicles that can be either self-guide or guide-driven,” she said.

The new range will be live online later this month with more details to follow including a printed brochure for agents.

ETC’s new appointment for Compass follows the representation specialist’s recent addition of another National Business Development Manager to the team - more details on info@evolutiontc.com.au.



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- Save you time – you will see which hotels are significantly cheaper than public rates, so you don’t have to do the research!
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Access Trade Deals with Stuba - it could make a world of difference to you and your customers!

Stuba. Curated hotels for travel agents.





Bicton takes reins



BICTON Travel has confirmed that effective from today its new acquisition, Claremont Cruise & Travel Centre (**TD** 19 Apr), comes under new ownership.

Cruise Master Consultant and top Club Med seller Gemma Smith, **pictured** with Bicton's Phil Smethurst, has been appointed as Branch Manager, leading the established Claremont team.

Claremont Cruise & Travel will operate under its existing branding, with former owner Lyn Murphy also continuing to consult within the agency.

Trip, TNZ partner

TOURISM New Zealand (TNZ) has linked up with Chinese travel giant Trip.com to market New Zealand as a key tourism destination in Asia Pacific.

A new Memorandum of Understanding will see the two parties collaborate on a series of joint marketing campaigns to entice travellers from Asia Pacific to New Zealand.

Targeted markets include the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Australia, with TNZ Chief Executive Rene de Monchy saying the pact aims to provide travellers with "more convenient booking methods, personalised itinerary planning and comprehensive service support".

Data from Trip's platforms show a rising interest in Asia Pacific travel, with flight searches and bookings for New Zealand surging more than fivefold year-on-year.

The Skal breakfast club



THE Skal Club of Melbourne recently braved the winter chill to catch the sunrise during a rooftop breakfast event at the new Le Meridien hotel in Melbourne, in celebration of the Winter Solstice and End of Financial Year.

The networking event took place at the hotel's pool deck at Le Splash on Level 5, where speeches were made, new members were inducted and site inspections were conducted.

The new Le Meridien will host the 108th Skal Australia National Assembly on 25-27 Aug, with Skal Members from around Australia and Oceania gathering for three days of conferencing organised by the Skal Club of Melbourne.

Industry colleagues who are non-Skal members are invited to attend the Expo, Cocktail Reception and Black Tie Ball events - **CLICK HERE** for details.

Pictured above are Tenille Hunt, Quark Expeditions; Ingrid Berthelsen, Evolution Travel Collective; Michele Duncan, Virtuoso; and Julie-Ann Silvey, Chelsea Cruise & Travel.

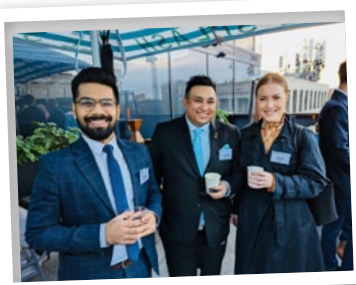
Destination WEBINARS

WATCH & WIN! Austria Mini-Series



- Part 1: Vienna's Historic Centre
- Part 2: Contemporary Vienna
- Part 3: Rivers, Lakes & Mountains
- Part 4: The Austrian Alps

Final call! Closing Friday 7th July!



Pictured above: Sanket Chheda, Stamford Plaza Melbourne; Saif Ian Rashid, Stamford Hotels and Resorts; and Sarah Quinn from Visit Victoria.

RwandAir to CDG

RWANDAIR has launched new non-stop flights from Kigali to Paris, which is the fast-growing airline's 25th destination.

Services are operating thrice weekly linking France to the heart of Africa for the first time.

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Find out more

A mega-good time in the US



BRAND USA and Hawaiian Airlines have come together to host 50 travel agents from Australia and New Zealand on a mega famil showcasing some of the most iconic destinations, as well as less-familiar cities, in the United States.

The agents were split up into groups to embark on five of Brand USA's itineraries across 11 states, taking in Washington and Oregon; Nevada and Utah; New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts; California and Nevada; and Texas and Hawaii.

The action-packed trip concluded in a gathering of all participants in O'ahu, Hawaii, where agents shared their unique stories across their chosen itineraries before a surprise visit by Mickey and Minnie Mouse (**pictured**) and a traditional Hawaiian celebration at Aulani, Disney Resort and Spa.

Brand USA VP Jackie Ennis noted the event aimed to give "agents the confidence to better sell the destination" by experiencing the itineraries first-hand.

Intrepid quarry

INTREPID Travel has become the first tour operator to visit a new section of the Quarry Trail in the Andes Mountains.

Never-before-seen by travellers, Intrepid has developed a new section of the trail, through a collaboration with a local Peruvian community.

Featured on a range of Intrepid Peru itineraries for next year, the four-day Quarry Trail experience will now begin with a 15-minute climb to Qory Sonq'o hill, where travellers can take in views of three valleys.

Kids on us at Zula

ZULAL Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som is inviting under-16s to join their parents on a health and wellness journey in the Middle East, with a range of retreats tailored to specific age groups.

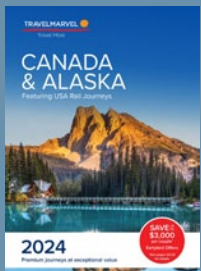
Any two adults booking until the end of next month are offered an additional complimentary room for two children under 16 - for more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

BROCHURES

WELCOME to Brochures of the Week, *Travel Daily's* Monday feature. If your firm is releasing a new brochure you'd like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description summarising its features and itineraries, including a PDF of the front cover, and contact details to brochures@traveldaily.com.au.



BKB Holidays - NT & SA 2023-2024
BKB Holidays has launched its new 2023/24 Northern Territory and South Australia brochure. The brochure has received a refreshed look and features the immersive sound and light installation Light-Towers Experience at Kings Canyon Resort, Discovery Hahndorf Resort in South Australia and a variety of tours in both the Northern Territory and Kangaroo Island, with an abundance of selections of self-driving tours and vehicle hire options available on the booklet. Order your copy through TIFS or WA agents contact fionaa@bkbholidays.com.



Travelmarvel - Canada and Alaska 2024
To better showcase the Canadian lodge experiences, Northern Lights, rail journeys, the chance to spot Polar Bears and Beluga Whales and more, Travelmarvel has gone to press with its new Canada and Alaska featuring USA 2024 brochure. Adding three new Great Rail Journeys in the USA, the 92-page guide uncovers itineraries in Canada and Alaska, ranging from a fortnight to 23 days. The popular Reflections of the Rockies & Alaska Cruises itinerary is available from \$10,595ppts, traversing between various cities in Canada and Alaska aboard a Holland America Line cruise.

Fukuoka gets Ritzy

THE Ritz-Carlton has debuted in Fukuoka, weaving together tradition and modernity in southern Japan.

The new hotel brings Ritz-Carlton's signature luxury to Kyushu, situated within the main tower of Fukuoka Daimyo Garden City, one of the tallest buildings on the island.

Just 15 minutes from the airport, Ritz-Carlton, Fukuoka is adjacent to Tenjin, the trendy heart of the city, a tech hub filled with shops, bars, cafes, and nightlife.

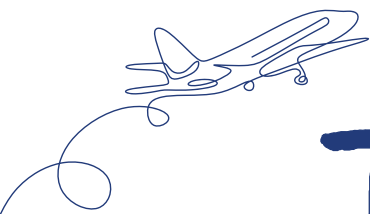
Kelsian upgrade

KELSIAN Group, the parent company of Sealink Travel, today announced the promotion of CEO Clint Feuerherdt to the role of Managing Director.

The move means Feuerherdt will sit on the Kelsian Board, with his key employment terms remaining unchanged.

He's been Kelsian CEO since the company acquired bus operator Transit Systems Group for \$635 million (**TD** 07 Oct 2019).

Feuerherdt was formerly CEO of Transit Systems, and holds almost 6 million KLS shares worth \$44m.



Top reasons why

AGENTS ARE LOVING THE APT TRAVEL GROUP'S VIP PROGRAM!

APT Travel Group's recently revamped VIP Agents Reward program is earning a terrific reputation for supporting and rewarding travel agent partners. With the first half of the year almost wrapped up, the program has issued over \$500,000 in rewards so far!

Here are the top things agents are loving about it...

100+ FAMIL PLACES

The APT Travel Group is offering a bumper year of no less than 100 famil places for agents, from cruising the Mekong and Europe's rivers to exploring Canada and Alaska... 2023 is the year for agent familis with ATG.



BANNERS

Diamond and Platinum agencies can order branded APT and Travelmarvel banners or posters with their own call to action to promote their status as a Specialist Agency.



REWARDS

APT Travel Group issued over \$500,000 in rewards to travel agents in the first six months of 2023. This includes the popular Consultant Rewards program, with the highest total reward for a single participating agent being \$700.

REWARDS PAID ON DEPOSIT

APT Travel Group VIP agents receive their rewards after the guest has paid their deposit. This is unlike most company reward schemes, which typically make payments after the travel departure.



PRIZES

APT Travel Group offers a range of incredible prize draws throughout the year. In June 2023, one lucky agent won an APT cruise valued at \$14,995. This was a truly mega reward!

PARTNERSHIP FUNDING

Progress through the VIP tiers and earn higher rewards in partnership funds. So far this year some agencies have already moved from Silver to Gold to Platinum status.

PRIORITY RESERVATIONS

Diamond VIP tier agencies enjoy a priority reservations team, assuring speedy service for agents and clients alike.

MORE TREATS FOR AGENTS

The APT Travel Group also offers VIP partners generous discounted rates for travel so agents can experience the product firsthand AND get a holiday - all for a fraction of the cost.

FOR MORE DETAILS ON THE APT TRAVEL GROUP'S REWARD PROGRAM LOOK HERE.

Agents can reach out to their APT Travel Group Business Development Manager to find out their VIP status or call Inside Sales on 1300 668 298.

