

ATAS triples its solve rate

EXCLUSIVE

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) has revealed that over the past six months, its ATAS scheme has seen 76 accredited travel businesses call on its compliance team for support to resolve customer disputes - representing a tripling of the rate of grievances resolved compared to the previous year.

For the year to date, ATAS accredited businesses have contacted the ATAS compliance

team 25 more times than the entirety of 2022, with requests last year totalling just 51.

AFTA has also secured several new testimonials for its ATAS initiative, including Gianni Vitellone from Pronto Travel, who said: “[ATAS] support with queries and any potential dispute resolution absolutely justifies our continual renewal of our accreditation year-on-year.”

Christian Blondeau from France at Leisure also labelled ATAS “invaluable”, while Kings Tours & Travel’s Jennifer Franceschi said an “unwavering commitment” to members set ATAS apart from other accreditation schemes.

FC enlists CLIA help

FLIGHT Centre has signed an agreement with Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), allowing its leisure consultants to access the cruise body’s expert industry training program.

CLIA Managing Director Australasia, Joel Katz, said the FCTG agreement would add more than 3,000 travel consultants to its global cruise community, while FCTG Leisure CEO, James Kavanagh, said the deal would help grow its market share in the Australasian cruise sector.

JQ halts DRW-DPS

JETSTAR has ceased selling tickets between Darwin and Bali for at least a month while planned runway renovations and repairs continue at the Darwin International Airport.

The carrier said it has stopped selling direct flights scheduled from 09 Oct to 08 Nov due to work being done by the Department of Defence.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including our **Sustainability** page plus full pages from:

- Virtuoso
- Collette

It's our birthday!

TODAY marks exactly 29 years since *Travel Daily* founder Mike Heard published the first issue (by fax) of what has become Australasia’s leading travel industry news source.

The **TD** team will be raising a glass to our legions of dedicated readers, and would very much like to thank you for your ongoing support and encouragement.

Luxury career?

TRAVEL advisors considering expanding their expertise into the luxury travel sector are being invited to participate in the recently launched Virtuoso Advisor Recruitment Program.

Virtuoso says its premium offering provides the ideal way to build and maintain relationships with high-value clients - for more details see **page eight**.

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Collette growth

COLLETTE has expanded its range of tours in North America, reflecting its century-long experience in the destination.

More than 45 trips are on offer in the US and Canada, with new additions including small group Explorations tours covering Montana Big Sky Country and Alaska's Northern Lights.

They complement long-time favourites America's Music Cities, National Parks of America and the top-selling The Best of Eastern Canada and Maritimes Coastal Wonders.

Collette Head of Sales, David Farrar, said the North American range was "consistently a hit with travellers", while the operator is also showcasing its array of advantages for the trade on page nine of today's *Travel Daily*.

Link adds Complex Travel

ADELAIDE-BASED Complex Travel has joined the Link Travel Group effective 01 Jul, with the move expanding Link's presence in both South Australia and Western Australia.

MD Mark Trim said he was attracted to the "philosophy, investment and commitment to the industry" of the invitation-only group founded just over 12 months ago by Spencer Travel, Goldman Group and Flight Centre Travel Group (TD 05 May 2022).

Trim, who's pictured at right with Link GM Scott Darlow and Complex Travel Group CEO Anthony Riemann, added that "Link offers an established, long-term vision that is clear and focused - plus access to technology that makes for an exciting future".

"We are delighted to have been



invited to join Link and be part of a select group of industry heavyweights that share the same goals and principles that we do," Trim added.

Complex Travel Group's brands include RoundAbout Travel, QFlyer, Flatbeds and YPremium, with the former HLO member agency focusing on RTW and premium flights, top tier frequency flyer clientele and recently adding luxury cruises and tours.

TravelLeague tickets on sale soon

THIS year's Christmas TravelLeague festive celebration in Melbourne will take place on Wed 13 Dec, with bookings expected to open shortly.

The event is once again being held at the Crown Palladium Ballroom in Southbank from 1pm, followed by an after-party with live music.

Sponsorship opportunities are also now available; details via info@christmastraveleague.com.

Jones joins Agilis

AVIATION expert Carl Jones has been appointed as Group Head of Aviation Development at Agilis Airports, the operator of Coffs Harbour and Sunshine Coast Airports.

Wendy Wu Tours

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Rail Europe

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- ◆ **Did you know:** On some lines, ICE Sprinter trains offer virtually non-stop connections between major German cities. The Berlin ↔ Frankfurt, Hamburg ↔ Koeln and Hamburg ↔ Frankfurt ICE Sprinter can cut your journey time by up to one hour.
- ◆ **Expert Tip:** Always check system connectivity before booking to ensure the rail operator isn't undergoing system maintenance: <https://agent.raileurope.com/health-center>.

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APT adds ship in Portugal

EXCLUSIVE

APT Travel Group is set to add a new river ship to its fleet, designed with the preferences of Australian & Kiwi guests in mind.

The newly-unveiled *MS Estrela* will sail Portugal's Douro River across both the APT and Travelmarvel brands from Jun 2024, with capacity for 120 guests and a sun deck with outdoor bar, a golf putting green, a large pool, and balcony suites with electric slide down windows.

Also on board for guests will be a restaurant serving up a range of Portuguese, Mediterranean and international flavours, while each stateroom and suite will offer personal climate control, flatscreen TVs and free wi-fi.

Maiden *MS Estrela* itineraries for APT include the 14-day Douro Delights sailing from Lisbon to Madrid, as well as Travelmarvel Douro Discovery voyages, taking passengers on eight-day river

adventures from Porto return.

APT's CEO David Cox said the company's many years of experience operating cruises in Portugal will see the debut of *MS Estrela* focus on features and experiences guests love.

"When she glides into Portugal next year, we will see a glorious ship designed with a nod to the landscapes of the Douro Valley and a contemporary Southern European ambience," he said.

ATG also operates three Travelmarvel ships (*Polaris*, *Vega* and *Capella*) on the Rhine, Main and Danube Rivers - more on *Estrela* in today's **Cruise Weekly**.

Batik to Central Asia

BATIK Air Malaysia has announced the expansion of its network to Central Asia, with plans to operate twice weekly A330-300 flights from Kuala Lumpur to Istanbul and Tashkent.

Citilink back to PER

INDONESIAN low-cost carrier Citilink is set to resume its non-stop flights between Perth and Bali later this month.

Daily A320 services are set to recommence on 19 Jul for the first time since the route's suspension in 2020, with twice weekly flights from the WA capital to Jakarta also set to resume effective 29 Jul.

France tourist attack

THE Chinese Government has lodged an official complaint with authorities in France after a coach carrying a group of Chinese tourists was caught up in rioting in Marseille last week.

A spokesperson for the Consular Affairs Office of China said the windows of the bus were smashed and several passengers sustained minor injuries.

Current official warnings urge Chinese citizens in France to "be more vigilant and cautious".

SIA self servicing

SINGAPORE Airlines has updated its schedule change handling guideline, with the aim of better enabling travel agents to self-service impacted tickets.

SIA tickets which are subject to an involuntary schedule change of 15 minutes or more, due to network changes, aircraft downgauges or natural disasters/wars/political crises, will have change fees waived.

Agents can rebook affected sectors up to seven days before or after the existing travel date in the same or next lowest booking class using a waiver code in the format of SC YYXXXX/DDMMYY where YYXXXX is the flight number of the impacted service.

Refunds will also be offered on eligible sectors where pax decline alternative options.

SIA noted that the correct procedures must be followed and appropriate eligibility guidelines complied with in order to avoid an ADM.

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*New members only who join by 7/8/23 & fly on eligible flights within 30 days. Virgin Australia Business Flyer T&Cs apply.

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Go Insurance, ISIC link up

TRAVEL insurance provider Go Insurance has teamed up with ISIC (International Student Identity Card) Australia, to empower students to travel with confidence and peace of mind.

Through the new deal, ISIC members will gain access to a range of specialised insurance plans and coverage benefits from Go Insurance, while students with an ISIC card will enjoy discounted travel insurance rates.

Go Insurance CEO Mark Fuller said he was “thrilled” to announce the partnership, which he believes will enable the company to “reach a broader audience of students”.

“We are committed to being their trusted companion throughout their adventures, offering support and peace of mind in an ever-evolving world,” he added.

ISIC Australia Managing Director Jodie Kilian also

expressed her excitement about the collaboration, which she said “aligns perfectly with our mission to provide valuable resources and opportunities to student travellers”.

ISIC Australia will draw on its network of partners, including universities, colleges, and educational institutions nationwide, to promote the collaboration.

Double the QF pts!

TRAVELLERS can earn double Qantas Points when they book a cruise with Avalon Waterways before 31 Jul.

The promotion applies to all 2023 and 2024 departures, with itineraries spanning Europe, Asia, South America and Egypt.

Qantas Frequent Flyer members will be able to score four Qantas Points per dollar - up from the usual two points.

Airnorth promotion

AIRNORTH has announced the launch of its 45 Laps Around the Sun sale today, offering travellers airfares from \$174.

The promotion applies to all major destinations in the Airnorth network and will conclude on 10 Jul, with travel periods on offer from 28 Jul to 11 Dec and 05 Sep to 11 Dec - more details [HERE](#).

Cunard sports/well

CUNARD Line has revealed the “once-in-a-lifetime” sports experiences for its Sporting Greats & Wellness Voyage.

Cruisers will be able to have a yarn at the pub with Australian former cricket player Brett Lee and learn how to golf from LPGA professional Karrie Webb.

Departing Sydney on 13 Feb aboard *Queen Elizabeth*, other sports legends on board will be former AFL player Adam Goodes, sports journalist Mark Beretta, and more - read today's **CW**.

Swan 2024 program

SWAN Hellenic has unveiled its 2024 cultural expedition cruises, with travellers able to choose from eight- to 21-day worldwide sailings, including Celtic discovery voyages of Cornwall, Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

The worldwide sailings will be operated by *SH Vega*, and her slightly larger sister ship *SH Diana*, and accompanied by seasoned guides and renowned experts, scientists and explorers - see the full list of itineraries available [HERE](#).

Interestingly, Swan Hellenic's 2024 program does not feature any sailings for *SH Minerva*, which has been out of service since completing the 2021/22 Antarctica season.

The cruise line is still reportedly awaiting approval of its application to take ownership of the vessel from GTLK Europe, which is a Russian-owned leasing company that has been hit with a raft of European Union sanctions.



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Window Seat

RECENTLY there has been some banter between tech giants Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk about a potential “cage fight” - and now it appears that Italian Tourism may want in on the action.

A proposal from an Italian Government official has suggested the battle could take place in Rome’s famed Colosseum, according to the perhaps somewhat sensational *TMZ Sports*.

TMZ cites “sources with direct knowledge” suggesting it could be “the biggest fight in the history of the world in the most fabled fight theatre in history”.

However an update to the story from Italy’s Ministry of Culture denies any formal contact, adding that “even if the news appears tasty it is unfounded”.

If the tech titans wanted to perform in the Colosseum “they would have to make a non-violent challenge”, a formal statement added.

CZ to Christchurch

CHINA Southern Airlines will commence non-stop flights between Christchurch and Guangzhou effective 10 Nov.

The move was revealed last week during a meeting in Beijing with NZ PM Chris Hipkins.

Rex cops ASX ticket

REX Airlines has defended its regime of continuous disclosure to investors, after the Australian Securities Exchange raised concerns about the company’s recent massive profit downgrade (**TD** 20 Jun), which forecast a \$35 million operational loss for FY23.

The ASX asked when Rex first became aware of the potential loss, with the carrier stating that having previously expected a break-even as recently as late Feb, its first loss indication was when its draft May revenue data became available in early Jun.

A draft announcement on 13 Jun required review and confirmation by Rex Executive Chairman, Lim Kim Hai, with the company saying it initially lodged its notice on 16 Jun but it was “held by ASX as additional clarification was required”.

The exchange enforced a trading halt on Mon 19 Jun, and further back and forth ensued, with Rex saying it “immediately conducted a forecast to quantify the expected operational loss at the request of ASX”.

Aussie tourist boost

THE Federal Government is tipped to relax tourist visa costs and paperwork for incoming Indonesian travellers.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo has previously argued that Australia has unfair entry regulations in place on his citizens, with a loosening expected to grow visitation.

AFTA UPDATE

Richard Taylor, Director of Membership Experience



IT’S that time again! Nominations for this year’s National Travel Industry Awards are now open, and you can submit yours online **HERE**. Last year I was privileged to be asked to judge several of the categories, and it will be something I’ll always treasure.

Perhaps the most enjoyable element was meeting the finalists in some of the individual categories, and while the words ‘humbled’ and ‘honoured’ are often overused these days they sincerely represent the feelings we experienced listening to 2022’s crop of finalists.

The stories we heard of the exceptional lengths people had gone to for their leisure and corporate clients during difficult periods were astonishing, not least because they represented the tales of thousands of others across the travel industry.

It’s for reasons like this why being a nominated for an award, let alone being chosen as a finalist or winner, is something so special.

We may have returned to something resembling ‘normal’ in 2023 and all be exceptionally busy, but let us not forget that stopping for a moment

to nominate people who’ve impressed us in our working world is a magical thing. I hope we can reach record levels of nominations this year, because nominations put smiles on faces.

Aside from the all-important finalists and judges there are countless people that make up a successful NTIA ‘night of nights’ for the travel industry, and this year that number has risen by seven.

For 2023 we’ve engaged the services of several volunteer ‘Custodians’ that have represented various areas of our industry, who’ve been able to offer invaluable feedback on everything from which categories to include through to how loud the music should be when winners are making their way to the stage!

It’s invaluable feedback and will make this year’s NTIAs better than ever.

The awards simply couldn’t happen without the input of others, and everything stems from those nominations.

I will be checking to make sure you’ve done yours, as I’m sure will the people you work alongside who will rightfully be expecting a nomination from you.

In order to avoid any unpleasantness, please visit **the nomination page** ASAP.

Freak BKK accident

A SERIOUSLY injured traveller who became trapped in a moving walkway at Bangkok’s Don Mueang International Airport has had her leg amputated.

Investigations have been launched into the tragic incident involving a 57-year-old woman who was heading for the gate to board a domestic flight.

DCL inks Traveltek

TRAVELTEK has launched a global technology and distribution partnership with Disney Cruise Line (DCL).

The company’s API can now be packaged with hotel and air to provide unique experiences for travellers, while DCL is also available to book with iSell in its travel advisor desktop app.

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Korean Air SAF

KOREAN Air is gearing up to operate test flights using sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), after signing an agreement with Korean energy and chemical company, GS Caltex.

The test flights will take place during the second half of 2023, on select international routes departing Seoul Incheon.

The Korean Govt will then use the results to establish SAF quality standards and implementation guidelines for domestic use.

“The cooperative effort with GS Caltex will vitalise the Korean domestic SAF market, and will serve as steppingstones for the Korean government’s decarbonisation policies,” the airline’s SVP Procurement Seong Bae Cho said.

EXPLORE FOUNDATION GIVES BACK

EXPLORE Worldwide has launched a new foundation that aims to positively impact the communities it visits by supporting projects that improve poverty, access to education & healthcare, and conservation.

A registered charity, Explore Foundation, kicks off with two projects that the operator has worked with for several years - Lone Buffalo in Laos, and One Bike in Tanzania.

The Laos initiative encourages secondary school students to reach their full academic potential by giving them access to learning opportunities, while the Tanzania project uses bicycles to empower the local community through environmental awareness.

To celebrate the launch of the Foundation, Explore will match all One Bike donations in Jul up to the value of 25 brand-new bikes.



Explore Managing Director Michael Edwards said the launch of the Foundation “is probably one of the single things that we’re most proud of in our 41-year history”.

“This is the very exciting next step in our sustainability strategy, and it’s going to be absolutely core to what we do in the future.”

A recent survey conducted by

the adventure tour operator, which included more than 1,000 Aussie international holiday travellers, found that financial constraints are the biggest barrier when it comes to travellers giving back to the communities they visit (37%), as well as lack of knowledge (30%).

To find out more about the Explore Foundation, [CLICK HERE](#).

PARKROYAL eco

PARKROYAL COLLECTION Hotels & Resorts is tapping into the wellness tourism trend with its new eco-wellness program, which aims to promote mental wellbeing and sustainability.

The new offering includes “conscious dining” experiences with dishes sourced from local fresh produce; a Sleep Ritual service using natural aromatic herbs harvested from the property’s Urban Farm; sound design & public art showcases; plus spa and wellness activities.

Bundy Rum achieves eco certification

THE Bundaberg Rum Visitor Experience has become the first tourism operator to achieve a global standard sustainability certification for tourism through Ecotourism Australia’s new Sustainable Tourism Certification.

Following an independent audit, the Bundaberg operator was found to meet international best practice sustainability standards.

Ecotourism Australia chief Elissa Keenan said the organisation’s achievement proves that all tourism businesses, not just nature tourism experiences, “can implement and be recognised for their sustainability”.

The Bundaberg Rum Visitor Experience recently installed a new solar panel system, and is targeting net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

UK rail emits less

WITH rail travel growing in popularity in Europe and certain flights being replaced with train routes (*TD* 14 Dec 2022), a new calculator from Thrust Carbon has found that rail journeys emit 13 times less carbon than the equivalent flight.

This measurement, which was found by using seven sets of data, is around half the previous estimation.

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MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.667

THE Australian dollar continues to maintain the momentum from the past week, scoring 0.03 cents against the Japanese yen and 0.05 cents against the South African rand, while remaining flat against the USD.

However, the momentum may flatten after a decision from the Reserve Bank of Australia today, with the financial market expecting the interest rate to be hiked once again.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.667
UK	£0.526
NZ	\$1.084
Euro	€0.611
Japan	¥96.48
Thailand	฿23.37
China	¥4.830
South Africa	12.51
Canada	\$0.884
Crude oil	US\$72.26

Nancy looks for cook

WESTERN Sydney International Airport (WSI) is searching for an airline catering partner to establish a facility at the hub.

The site will have direct airside access and will cater for in-flight meals, airport lounges, cafes, as well as local events.

WSI CEO Simon Hickey enthused that it "is a once in a generation chance to establish a catering unit", as the hub is predicted to be serving 10 million passengers per year once it opens in 2026.

The available site spans over 6,600m² and will be jointed with the hub's business precinct.

Jet Express takes off from Brissy



REX Airlines' charter business, National Jet Express (NJE), has taken off from its new Brisbane base this week, signalling its expansion into the Queensland charter and mining market.

Flight NC344 departed Brisbane yesterday to the coal mining town of Moranbah, following NJE's contract win to provide air services for BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA).

NJE Managing Director Chris Hine said the flight marks a "significant milestone" for the carrier, which is "now truly open for business in Queensland".

Trip's Family rewards

TRIP.COM has announced a new US\$137 million childcare benefit to support its employees in growing their families, in the wake of a declining Chinese population.

The China-based OTA will provide an annual bonus of US\$1,378 to its employees who have been with the firm for three or more years, for each newborn child until the kid turns five.

The fast and fuel-efficient Dash 8-Q400NG 'Next Generation' aircraft will operate the contract.

"NJE looks forward to extending the Rex Group's renowned service reliability delivered with country hospitality to Queensland," he enthused.

Bonjour Lyon QR

THE inaugural Qatar Airways' (QR) to Lyon in France has touched down, making the start of four-times weekly services from Doha.

The Middle Eastern carrier's Lyon-Doha route was first announced in Apr (*TD* 26 Apr), and will operate every Mon, Wed, Fri and Sun.

Highlights of India

PANDAW has announced a 15-night new river and land tour in India, which includes a seven-night expedition along the Lower Ganges in West Bengal plus a guided tour of the Taj Mahal.

The new itinerary is priced from \$9,840.80 pp - [CLICK HERE](#).

New West Sicily tour

TOURISSIMO has unveiled a new Sicily cycling, wine, food, and history tour.

The eight-day excursion starts at \$5,795 per person, including guides, accommodation in four-star hotels, most meals, wine tasting, cooking demonstrations, all activities, and bicycle rental.

"We'll steep ourselves in the sights, scents, and flavours of the western part of Sicily, an area less exploited by tourists," Tourissimo founder Beppe Salerno said.

The Chat with Jenny



Conversations with Women in Travel

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NTIA Awards — Vote for your Collette BDM — Category 8
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<https://afta.com.au/Events/National-Travel-Industry-Awards/Nominations>