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# UNCOVER OUR REGIONS COME AND SAY



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Watch 4 of 9 episodes in the Aussie Specialist Uncover our Regions webinar series before 31 July and tell us about your favourite Aussie holiday spot to enter to win.

Learn more

#### Wednesday 5th Jul 2023

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's

entire Independent division now

has full access to the company's

**TPConnects NDC-compatible** 

recent months (TD 24 Mar).

flight booking platform, after a

successful trial of the system over

Introduced to members at the

FCTG Independent Conference in

select group of agents on 17 Apr,

with the trial expanded a month

later to include more participants.

"We are delighted to announce

platform," said FCTG Independent

that the independent network now has full access to the

**Operations Improvement** 

Manager, Mark Horwood.

"TPConnects' platform

boasts a user-friendly interface

professionals through their daily

operations," he added, touting

its intuitive lavout. streamlined

workflows and diverse tools

A Jucy interview

CEO, Dan Alpe, is the latest

one video interview series. Alpe discusses his industry

JUCY Rentals co-founder and

industry luminary to appear in

Tourism Talent's ongoing one-on-

career, starting with founding the

business in 2001 and stresses the

importance of being an employer

over COVID, company culture and

how new crew join the business. See traveldaily.com.au/videos.

of choice and the Jucy journey

that seamlessly guides travel

Singapore, the next-generation

system was launched with a

FCTG NDC platform live

TAs Margaret Rae & Rachel Cleary

which "enable agencies to

content aggregation from

of travel-related services.

and low-cost carriers, with a

state-of-the-art online booking

engine and efficient management

achieve exceptional efficiencies".

**TPConnects** facilitates airline

traditional GDS fares. NDC-based

# New Caledonia offer

THE Travel Junction's partnership with New Caledonia Tourism and Aircalin has seen the creation of several outstanding package deals including an 11-day New Caledonia Cultural Explorer holiday priced from just \$2,949 per person incl flights - **see p8**.

"By embracing TPConnects airline content aggregation software, FCTG Independent's agents are in a strong position to take advantage of the rapidly changing airline distribution landscape," Horwood enthused. Astrid Richardson, FCTG

Independent Global Head of Operations, said investing in cutting-edge technology was key to empower the network.

"As FCTG continues to prioritise innovation, our increased investment in TPConnects stands as a testament to that commitment," she said.

"By leveraging advanced technology solutions, we are equipping our independent travel entrepreneurs with the tools they need to thrive in a dynamic marketplace, ensuring unparalleled customer experiences and fuelling business growth," Richardson added.

# Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features seven pages of the latest news including our *Luxury* feature page, plus a front cover from *Virgin Australia* and a full page from **The Travel Junction**.



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ATG CONNECT



Unique sold to Rediscover

### Amex downgrade

AMERICAN Express yesterday advised cardmembers of significant changes to Membership Rewards points redemption rates for flights on Emirates and Singapore Airlines.

Effective 03 Oct, users will require three American Express points to redeem one EK or SQ point - meaning 33% more Amex points will be required for rewards flights on either carrier.

Transfer rates to other airlines remain unchanged, with two Amex points for one under Virgin's Velocity scheme as well as for redemptions with Etihad, Cathay Pacific, Malaysia Airlines, Air NZ, Thai and Virgin Atlantic.

Amex is also adding new points redemption partners including Qatar Airways (two Amex points per Avios) and Hawaiian Airlines.

Other travel options for redeeming Amex points include Flight Centre, Luxury Escapes and Webjet gift cards as well as instore at Helloworld offices. **UNIQUE** Cruises founder and Director Walter Nand has announced the business has been sold to Rediscover Travel, part of Swish Wish group of companies led by Chris Watson.

The sale will see Nand take over as the holiday packager's General Manager, adding Rediscover will showcase its "grand plans" over the coming months.

Nand took the time to thank those who backed him during the founding of Unique.

"The future never looked brighter...Rediscover Travel is amazing and I am looking forward to working even closer with all my travel industry friends and colleagues," Nand revealed to his LinkedIn followers.

"Huge thanks and gratitude to [Unique operations coordinator] Clarke Pennington, who was invaluable to me in the early days and who set up my systems and processes. Travel Daily Learn more about Italy with Travel Daily Training Academy

Click here to discover

Rediscover Travel is a family-

owned business that also boasts

brands like Chris Watson Travel.

Vietjet doubles Oz

**VIETJET** has announced it will

close to double the frequency of

direct flights between Australia

Services will increase from 20

City-Sydney return routes, while

the Ho Chi Minh City to Brisbane

confirmed it will fly daily from Ho

Chi Minh City to Melbourne, with

the same daily frequency to kick

flights will shift to three return

From 01 Dec, Vietjet has

off in Sydney on 05 Dec.

From 15 Jul, Vietjet pax

can receive 50% discounts

on SkyBoss fares using the

"SKYBOSSPROMO50" code.

to 34 across Ho Chi Minh City-

Melbourne and Ho Chi Minh

and Vietnam from Dec.

services per week.

and Weston Cruise & Travel.



# NT Govt TMC contract awarded

**CORPORATE** Travel Management and FCM Travel are the successful tenderers for a three-year \$3 million contract for the provision of Travel Management Services to the Northern Territory Government.

The scope of services includes a provider to facilitate domestic travel bookings - won by CTM - plus a panel arrangement comprising both CTM and FCM for the booking of international air travel, charter services, car rental, accommodation, coach, rail and marine transport.

Indicative figures based on an estimated level of supply show that Corporate Travel Management will receive the lion's share of the revenue at \$2.925 million, compared to FCM with just \$75,000.

Unsuccessful tenderers included Aeronology Pty Ltd and HRS Australasia Pty Ltd.





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# **EK Aussie loyalty push**

**EMIRATES** has launched a new online shopping website in Australia, allowing members of its Skywards loyalty program to earn Miles with hundreds of brands.

More than 300 participating suppliers across fashion, beauty, home & garden, electronics, food and beverage are on board, with Skywards miles earned for every purchase, as well as a 1,000 bonus on the first transaction.

Members can earn between six and 129 Skywards miles for every \$10 spent, depending on the brand, with users required to log in before being directed to individual merchant stores to finalise purchases.

Interestingly, for some of the vendors such as Apple, the website functionality links to the US online store, with offers for iPhones in American dollars with American telco carrier options.

Emirates noted that its Skywards program has more than 30 million

members worldwide, with over 2.2 million of them based in Australia.

The carrier said Skywards members are also able to earn and spend miles with Qantas and Jetstar, as well as convert points to miles with Commbank - see skywardsmilesmall.com.

### **Rex Whyalla shot**

**REX** Airlines has hailed Armidale Airport's recent refurbishment, which established an alternative departure gate for unscreened departures of flights.

The praise was also accompanied by a slap-down of Whyalla Council, which declined to install screened and unscreened departures, leading to Rex pulling out of the hub (*TD* 22 May), with Rex this week claiming the council "foolishly wanted to curry favour with Qantas" by refusing.

# Connect with your clients and ramp up your social media content

*Travel & Cruise Weekly* have ready-made social media toolkits to inspire your clients.

CLICK HERE

# HA hospitalisations

UNEXPECTED severe

turbulence on a Hawaiian Airlines flight from Honolulu to Sydney last Fri saw three flight attendants and four passengers injured, with three people ending up in hospital, according to USA Today.

A statement from HA confirmed the A330 incident which occurred about half-way through the 11-hour sector, with the aircraft carrying 163 passengers along with 12 crew members.

Those injured were given first aid on board and then assessed on arrival in Sydney just before 8pm on Fri evening.

A spokesperson for Hawaiian said "our immediate priority is to continue to care for our passengers and crew affected by this turbulence event," thanking Sydney Airport first responders for their swift assistance.

The aircraft underwent a thorough inspection before the return flight departed for Honolulu later the same evening.

# JQ direct MEL-NAN

**Travel & Cruise** 

Weekly

JETSTAR will start direct flights between Melbourne and Fiji (Nadi) for the first time from 16 Dec, deploying its new A321neo LR aircraft on the route.

The upcoming service will aim to carry up to 72,000 customers to the South Pacific nation each year, and follows hot on the heels of the budget carrier launching direct flights from Sydney to the Cook Islands (**TD** 30 Jun).

Jetstar has seen strong demand for its new Sydney to Nadi service, noting many Melburnians were travelling to Sydney for the flights and will now be able to travel directly.

**MEANWHILE** the new A321neo LR jets will be deployed on the carrier's existing Sydney to Fiji service from 29 Oct, adding an extra 46 seats per flight, however, to support the soon-to-launch Melbourne to Fiji service, Sydney to Fiji frequencies will change to three return flights a week from 16 Dec.

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#### **TTJ WA itineraries**

THE Travel Junction (TTJ) has launched five exclusive city break and self-drive packages across the 'Dream State', as part of its latest campaign initiative with Tourism Western Australia.

Showcasing stunning locations across Perth, Ningaloo Reef, Esperence, the Margaret River region and Broome, the packages start from \$1,299 per person.

CLICK HERE to view the full itinerary details.

### Moxy Syd bookings

**THE** upcoming Moxy Sydney Airport hotel has opened reservations this week. the Marriott hotel first revealed to debut in the city back in 2021 (TD 06 May 2021).

Stays are on offer from 01 Sep, slightly later than its initial Aug launch date, and will feature "an unconventional hotel experience", such as smaller sized smart technology rooms, 24/7 dining options, flexible working and meeting spaces - all at an "attractive price point".

### View more details HERE. QF NZ Pacific sale

**QANTAS** has released sale fares to Auckland, Christchurch, Queenstown and Wellington in New Zealand, as well as India, Samoa, Tonga, Noumea, Seoul and Hong Kong.

The deal ends 10 Jul unless sold out prior, for select travel periods between now and May 2024. For more details, CLICK HERE.



KLM Royal Dutch Airlines has introduced new and improved World Business Class seats, which it will install aboard its entire Boeing 777-300 and 200 fleet over the coming year.

The new seats offer passengers more space and comfort and provide direct access to the aisle, with a lightweight sliding door that can be easily closed for more privacy when working, relaxing or sleeping.

Passengers will also be able to enjoy more personal adjustment options and user-friendly functionality, including an adjustable lower-back support and a relax setting with a subtle back-massage feature.

Additionally, the seat can be reclined to lie fully flat, forming a comfortable, 198cm-long bed.

There are multiple easy accessible charging sockets, as well as a wireless charging option, a recessed bottle holder, and a lockable compartment where passengers are able to stow their



luggage and belongings.

Based on extensive customer research, the seats are "better in terms of design, technology and sustainability features", according to KLM EVP Customer Experience Boet Kreiken.

### Jetstar seeks Korea

**THE** International Air Services Commission has received an application from Qantas seeking an additional allocation of 335 seats of passenger capacity on the Korea route a week for its low-cost carrier Jetstar.

If successful, Jetstar will operate a fourth weekly return service between Sydney and Seoul (Incheon) from 05 Feb 2024. The closing date for making an application is 17 Jul.

# Window Seat

VISITORS to Dubrovnik have been warned not to wheel their suitcases in the popular tourist town or face fines of more than A\$400, under new regulations introduced to combat noise pollution.

Suitcases must be carried, and not dragged, through the picturesque streets of the walled city which welcomes millions of arrivals each year.

Wheeled suitcases are still permitted but the wheels must not be used, with locals introducing the restrictions after years of being irritated by wheelie bags rumbling through the cobbled streets.

From Nov things will ramp up further, with bags required to be left at a designated spot outside the walls for paid delivery to accommodation.

# Summer in the NT

AUSSIE travellers are being invited to start summer early this year by planning a trip to the Northern Territory between Sep 2023 & Mar 2024, as part of a new campaign aiming to increase visitors in the off-peak season.

The Summer Done Differently campaign will run across TV, billboard, digital advertising, social media and newspapers nationwide from now until end of Nov, offering deals from Webjet, Jetstar, Virgin, Travello and more.

Find out more

AIR NEW ZEALANI

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# Don't let those getaways, getaway

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# **Cook Islands leads on tourism**



**TO MARK** Jetstar's inaugural flight from Sydney to Rarotonga last week (**TD** 30 Jun), the Cook Islands pulled out all the stops to ensure the occasion was met with the reverence it deserved.

The Pacific nation's Prime Minister Mark Brown made a personal appearance to meet the Jetstar crew and media at a special celebration event.

Brown thanked Australia and Jetstar for stepping up their commitment to the Cook Islands tourist market, conceding that in years gone by, the country has had "a very low profile" amongst Australian travellers.

"Having lived in Australia for four years, back when I was younger, even back then it was really difficult to explain to people where I was from, so I'm hopeful that with many of you that are here...will be able to influence Aussies to let them know what the Cook Islands are all about.

"Hopefully you can also tell



everyone what a cool Prime Minister the country has as well," Brown joked.

A commemorative plaque was also traded between the PM and Jetstar's Senior Manager, External Communications James Hancock (**inset**), while Jetstar pilots and crew also enjoyed the occasion with PM Brown (**pictured** top).

### **BA India call centre**

**BRITISH** Airways is set to capitalise on a surge in demand for flights to and from India, opening a new global call centre in Gurugram ahead of celebrating a century of Indian flights in 2024.

BA's latest cabins are now flying on Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore.

*keep dreaming...* Travel inspiration for your clients' next holiday!

### JetBlue adds Paris

**NEW** York-based JetBlue has expanded its presence in the transatlantic aviation market with the debut of a new nonstop service from JFK to Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport.

The carrier will operate the route on a daily basis, with Paris being the largest European market not already served by JetBlue from New York - and among the most requested destinations from JetBlue's customer base.

JetBlue also operates flights to London and is set to add Amsterdam in the coming months, with the new Paris flights operating using Airbus A321LR aircraft with 24 business and 114 economy class seats.

# Frankfurt for VIPs

**GERMANY'S** Frankfurt Airport has opened a new VIP terminal in arrivals area A, with the new 1,700m<sup>2</sup> facility offering a lounge, library, private suites, conference rooms, a gaming lounge and even a cigar lounge.

About 100 guests can be accommodated in the new €20 million terminal, which is bookable regardless of airline and flight booking class.

Frankfurt Airport VIP Services has its own dedicated security checkpoints, immigration facilities, with travellers supported by a dedicated VIP agent, the handling of all travel formalities, catering, and limousine transfers to aircraft.

### Canada visitor push

ck to read

**THE** Canadian Government overnight unveiled a major new Federal Tourism Growth Strategy which aims to "cement Canada as a top global destination".

With a tag-line *Canada 365: Welcoming the world. Every day.* key pillars of the initiative include investing in Canada's tourism assets, embracing recreation and the great outdoors, partnering to grow Indigenous tourism, attracting more international events, and improving coordination via a new federal ministerial council.

Tourism Minister Randy Boissonnault noted that "tourism powers the Canadian economy, creating good jobs in every region of the country".

He said the renewed demand for travel had created a "oncein-a-generation opportunity for Canada's visitor economy to push past reviving all the way to thriving and successfully compete on the world stage".

Full details of the new strategy are online at ised-isde.canada.ca.

# New UK Fairmont

**FAIRMONT** Hotels & Resorts has announced an agreement to redevelop the Luton Hoo Hotel under its upmarket brand, with a multimillion dollar project to update the estate on the border of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire which dates back to 1601.

The five star country house hotel is easily accessible from London or Cambridge.

SYD → SFO From 30 October, United<sup>®</sup> is offering double daily flights from Sydney to San Francisco.

UNITED AIRLINES



luxury@traveldaily.com.au Wednesday 5th Jul 2023

#### Sri Lanka free night

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K) is offering the first night free in Sri Lanka via its Tailor-Made Journeys.

The offer is valid until 30 Aug, and applies to selected departures until 28 Feb 2024. Itineraries are based on A&K's Serendipitous Sri Lanka journey, which travels for 13 days from \$8,360 per person. Sites explored on the

adventure include the capital Colombo and the Dambulla cave temple.

#### Ultimate Huka deal

**NEW** Zealand-based Huka Lodge is bringing back its popular one-night stays promo in time for winter.

The single-night stays promise an elegant retreat complete with fireside evening drinks, and a degustation dinner with premium local produce, accompanied by an impressive wine list.

Also included is a full a la carte breakfast, return airport transfers, and more.

Travellers can explore Huka's magnificent gardens, try a hit of tennis or petanque, and meander along the lawn-lined banks of the Waikato River. Rates lead in at NZ\$1,800 per suite per night.

# SILVERSEA CELEBRATES CHAMPIONS

**SILVERSEA** Cruises has re-jigged its exclusive trade recognition program to recognise and reward the top 10 agents in Australia and New Zealand.

For 2023, *Campioni di Silversea* (Italian for "Champions of Silversea") will name a top Expedition seller, top new-to-Silversea seller, most improved from last year, and seven others for general sales.

Agents who make the top 10 will receive special rewards, including a two- or three-night all-inclusive luxury getaway for the owner or manager of the winning agency, including a plus one, which will take place early in the preceding year.

Silversea will also provide an airfare contribution for the getaway, while other rewards



include a personalised glass trophy display in the winning agency's office, and a magnum (1.5L bottle) of Pommery Champagne for winning teams to share in celebration.

Silversea's Director of Sales Australia and New Zealand, Steve Richards, said the program is a way to thank trade partners for their continued support.

"These agents are our Champions, and we want to thank them above and beyond the generous commissions we offer daily," he explained.

The *Campioni di Silversea* program has been in place for over four years now - for more information, see the flyer **HERE**.

### LV by the pool

MANDARIN Oriental, Bodrum in Turkey is welcoming Louis Vuitton this summer with the opening of a pop-up store.

Louis Vuitton's concept has been inspired by the fashion company's new By The Pool collection.

After browsing the collection, hotel guests can relax on sun loungers outside the store while sipping a drink in either indoor or outdoor seating areas.

VIRTUOSO

M

# W Sydney hits top speed with Genesis Motors

W SYDNEY has announced a new partnership with Genesis Motors ahead of the hotel's official opening in Oct.

The exclusive automotive partnership will allow hotel guests to arrive, connect with, and explore Sydney in luxury by offering access to vehicles for VIP pick-ups, special guest drives, and staycation loans.

The partnership will offer guests EV options such as the Genesis Electrified GV70 and GV60 (**pictured**), while Genesis-



branded EV chargers will also be installed to encourage environmentally respectful journeys to and from the hotel.

"Both W Hotels and Genesis Motors share a commitment to igniting curiosity and reimagining luxury," W Sydney GM Craig Seaward said.

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# ACCOMMODATION

WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, Travel Daily's Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



Luton Hoo Hotel, Golf & Spa in the UK has announced its plan to undergo a multimillion dollar redevelopment over the coming year to bring the historic establishment to new levels of luxury. The property is situated on pristine land

spanning more than 11km<sup>2</sup>, providing an abundance of dining options, including the Wernher Restaurant for daily breakfast. Also on offer are spa facilities and various event spaces.



Holiday Inn & Suites Across From Universal Orlando has recently completed a multi-million-dollar renovation on all of its amenities, including the lobby. The rooms and suites have each received a new look with new built-in closets, dressers,

-inch TVs and more. Guests can now also enjoy the new paint, carpet, lighting and furnishings in the revamped meeting & event space spanning over 1,200m<sup>2</sup>



Located just 15 minutes from Phuket International Airport, Le Meridien Phuket Mai Kha Beach Resort is expected to open in Sep after a major refurbishment. The 244-key beachfront resort comprises rooms ranging from 40 to 110m<sup>2</sup>, each offering a

balcony or terrace. Other new additions include an outdoor lagoon pool, children's fun pool, a kids' club, as well as The Nook, a cafe and Ocean Kitchen for Mediterranean cuisine.

# End of a long halt

**SOUTH** African Airways has announced a new twice weekly service to Sao Paulo's Guarulhos Int'l Airport in Brazil, which will kick off on 31 Oct from Cape Town International Airport.

The airline will also resume the Johannesburg O.R. Tambo International Airport route on 06 Nov with two round trips a week.

The inaugural flight to Sao Paulo will mark the carrier's first intercontinental service since the cessation to London Heathrow in Aug 2012 (TD 06 Jun 2012).

# Vic hospo boost

AROUND 300 jobseekers have been employed by 64 Victorian accommodation providers due to the state's \$5.6m Jobs program.

More than 172 of the successful candidates in the initiative were employed as room attendants, while another 117 were recruited as food & beverage attendants.

"I thank the Victorian Govt for recognising the pressing need to close the gap between demand and supply for skilled staff in accommodation." Accommodation Australia said.

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# Brissy gets a taste of France



**TRAVEL** Associates (TA) brought the 'Flavours of France' to Brisbane at an exclusive client event last Fri, held in partnership with Regent Seven Seas Cruises.

Hosted at upmarket French restaurant C'est Bon, a group of 20 Travel Associates clients gathered in the private cellar room to indulge in a luxury luncheon.

The clients learnt about Regent's new 2025-26 voyage collection while enjoying a selection of the finest French wines and champagne, paired with decadent French cheese boards and canapes.

"We love our relationship with Regent Seven Seas Cruises and to have the opportunity to handpick the right clients to showcase this stunning new collection is an absolute pleasure for our brand," TA General Manager AU & NZ Rachel Kingswell said.

The Brissy event was the first of four to take place around Australia, with the next one being held in Sydney tomorrow, followed by the Gold Coast and Melbourne on Fri.

Pictured: Lisa Wright, Travel Associates and Elsa McLean, Regent Seven Seas Cruises.



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\*Packages based on twin share and subject to availability. Package price is based on Aircalin flights Sydney – Nouméa (NOU), Nouméa (GEA) – Isle of Pines (ILP) – Nouméa (GEA), Nouméa (NOU) – Sydney. Other Australian departure cities are available.