



MTAs Margaret Rae & Rachel Cleary

## Today's issue of TD

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

## APT back to Africa

APT has announced the return of its Africa program in 2024 for the first time since before the pandemic, with four journeys ranging from 12 to 24 days.

The itineraries traverse Southern and East Africa, featuring game viewing activities in Kruger, Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater, Masai Mara and Lake Manyara.

Prices start from \$14,195ppt for the 13-day Essence of Southern Africa tour from Cape Town to Livingstone, which covers all the highlights and includes a three-night stay in Kruger National Park at Kapama River Lodge.

Travellers who book before 31 Aug can enjoy an earlybird saving of up to \$3,000 per couple - for more info, [CLICK HERE](#).

## NTIA 2023 record noms

**THIS** year's National Travel Industry Awards (NTIAs) are looking to be bigger and better than ever, if the number of nominations received so far is any indication.

There are still a few days to go before they close, but so far more than 740 nominations have been received from across the industry, showing intense interest in the Nov event set to take place at Melbourne's Crown Palladium.

This year's slightly revised process, courtesy of the NTIA Custodians (**TD 28 Jun**), gives the capacity to nominate others in their respective categories, and it appears this option has been taken up in droves, with hundreds of peer nominations received.

Nominations close at 5pm AEST this Fri 14 Jul, and those who have been nominated will be contacted by email later this month to confirm their eligibility and acceptance into the stated

category, with all successful nominees announced in mid-Aug.

AFTA CEO Dean Long said he is thrilled at the interest being shown in this year's NTIAs.

"With 1,200 travel professionals descending on Melbourne in Nov it will be our chance to celebrate and recognise the people and businesses that make our industry great," he said.

Nominations for individuals, suppliers and ATAS-accredited businesses can still be lodged until Fri at [afta.com.au](http://afta.com.au).

## Explora sails 01 Aug

MSC Group's luxury Explora Journeys brand says it now expects to take delivery of *Explora I* on 24 Jul, with her first sailing likely to take place on 01 Aug from Copenhagen.

Originally scheduled to set sail on 17 Jul, delivery of the new build was delayed following an issue with some of the materials used, which did not meet the required safety certifications.

Explora said it will provide a full refund to guests who were booked on the cancelled sailings between 17 Jul and 01 Aug, as well as a Future Journey Credit equivalent to 30% value of the original booking, which is valid for 12 months.

The cruise line is also protecting 100% of the commission payments for travel agents on the originally booked sailings, with no commission recall of monies already paid.

For more details, see today's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.

## LX reinstates South Africa codeshare

**SWISS** International Airlines will resume its codeshare partnership with fellow Star Alliance carrier South African Airways on 07 Aug.

GDS screens indicate the LX code will be placed on SAA flights from Johannesburg to Cape Town and Durban.

## Railbookers do it all

**RAILBOOKERS** helps make travel agents' life easier by taking the complexity out of independent holidays by train, offering a one-stop-shop, total flexibility, rail experts, and more.

See the **back page** for details.

## Swiss travel training

**NOW** is the last chance to register for Switzerland Tourism's training webinar tomorrow on the Swiss Travel System, which will cover public transport updates, the Swiss Travel Pass, and more.

Participants will have the chance to win a \$100 gift card, and can choose from two different time slots - 2pm or 4pm AEST.

The sessions run for 30 minutes and will be followed by a live Q&A - [CLICK HERE](#) to register.

## Rail Europe



Unlock European Trains with James Hooper

### Travelling through France during Rugby World Cup

With the Rugby World Cup coming up, it's time to finalise your clients' train journeys in France.

The TGV offers high-speed train services connecting the major cities of France at speeds over 300 km/h city centre to city centre.

As a general rule, TGV services can be booked **90 days in advance** but most high-speed lines are available into November.

TGV offers two distinct classes - Standard and First - where First Business features flexible fare rules. [Click here to learn more](#).

When travelling on a rail pass in France, [seat reservations](#) are required for all high-speed trains and trains in the Normandy region.

There are no customs procedures before boarding TGV trains. Check-in through SNCF gates by scanning your ticket in most of French stations, ticket control and passport checks will occur on board the train.

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## A&K, Crystal unify sales

A&K Travel Group says the company's revamped global structure (**TD** breaking news) will "bring its new global strategy to life", as it connects both Abercrombie & Kent and Crystal Cruises across the world.

The new 'One A&K' team is led by CEO Cristina Levis, with a Chief Sales Officer role to be filled by Marett Taylor who's been with the company since 2000, leading US sales since 2013 and supporting travel agency partners and consortia in North America.

Debra Fox's role as MD of A&K Australasia is being expanded with additional responsibilities as Executive VP of Trade Sales Asia Pacific for A&K and Crystal, while other MD roles are being filled by A&K Travel Group CFO Andrew Burrett in the UK, and Amy Weyman for A&K USA.

Levis said, "A&K Travel Group is now geared up for its next chapter of growth, with one of

the industry's finest leadership teams...A&K and Crystal are both joined at the roots by the same vision and passion, whether on vast expanses of the sea or the wildest frontiers of land".

She said the One A&K vision is "much more than a business strategy - it's the natural fusion of our shared dedication to customer-first attention to detail and unparalleled experiences".

The new structure will see Tony Archbold reporting to Fox in his current role as VP Sales Crystal APAC, while Susan Haberle has been named as VP Sales & Partnerships for A&K APAC.

"Tony and Susan will continue to work closely together with a strong focus on trade partnerships," Fox said, while Ann-Marie Chapman has been named as VP Customer Sales & Operations APAC, and Michelle Mickan as VP Marketing A&K and Crystal Australasia.

## Nexus takes off

**NEW** Western Australia-based carrier Nexus Airlines has launched, officially taking to the skies yesterday on the newly expanded Inter-Regional Flight Network (IRFN) (**TD** 18 May).

Supported by a \$4 million investment from the WA Government, the inaugural route operates between Geraldton-Karratha-Port Hedland-Broome and return, and includes the first-ever direct flight service between Karratha and Geraldton.

The route allows regional residents to fly direct between regional centres, and is also expected to encourage tourism for the Mid West, Pilbara and Kimberley regions.

"Today's first flight on the expanded Inter-Regional Flight Network by Nexus Airlines marks a historic moment for aviation in WA," the state's Transport Minister Rita Saffioti said.

Nexus has exclusive rights to operate the IRFN until Jun 2027.

## Greeks bear gifts

**RAIL** Europe has launched a Eurail Greek Islands Pass just in time for the European summer, available now via its B2B website and API.

Complementary to the Eurail Greece Pass, the new mobile pass offers travellers access to the Greek Islands via the national ferry lines of Superfast Ferries, Minoan Lines, Grimaldi Lines, and Blue Star Ferries, for four domestic travel days.

## Quincy Hotel listed

**THE** Quincy Hotel on Flinders Lane in Melbourne has been listed on the market for \$120m.

Owned by InterGlobe Enterprises, the hotel first opened in early 2021 (**TD** 14 May 2021), marking the Indian group's first foray into the Aussie market, and features 241 rooms across 29 levels, as well as the award-winning Salted Egg Restaurant and a rooftop club lounge.

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## Jayride hits \$1.5m

**JAYRIDE** has reported a record \$1.55 million in net revenue for Q4 FY2023 - a 42% increase compared to the same period last year.

The airport transfer marketplace also saw a 46% rise in passenger trips booked, with net revenue per trip growing to \$7.77 - up from \$7.57 in the prior quarter.

So far, the current Northern Hemisphere summer peak season has seen Jayride grow 104% in the European market compared to the prior quarter, while Asia numbers remained flat.

Jayride Managing Director, Rod Bishop, said FY23 is the company's "biggest year yet", with unaudited results showing 646K trips booked for the 12 months - up 84% on the prior record high of 351K in FY19, while net revenue exceeded the pre-COVID high by 55%.

Growth is expected to continue over the next 12 months, as the company focuses on key strategies to grow its net revenue per trip even further.

## Theme parks ride high

**REVENUE** generated by Ardent Leisure Group's theme park division for the second half of the 2022/23 financial year has seen a 30% increase on the previous corresponding period.

Unaudited revenue for the full year also increased by 70% on the previous 12 months to \$83.9 million - representing the highest annual revenue result since 2016.

The parent company for Dreamworld, WhiteWater World and Skypoint said that despite a slowdown in the global economy and a downturn in overseas visitor numbers likely leading to only "moderate growth" in the short-term, Ardent said it was confident of meaningful improvements in turnover and visitation as it continues important capital investments.

Encouragingly, the last 12 months has also seen the aggregate value of ticket sales reach its highest levels since

2016, as well as an EBITDA (excluding specific items) of \$4.3 million for 1H 2023, with Ardent forecasting its first positive full-year EBITDA result since FY17.

Moving forward, management will focus on upgrading guest experiences and keeping a lid on costs, with new attractions to include a new roller coaster and a revamped Kids Land site, which will replace Dreamworks-branded rides after the pair opted to end their commercial agreement.

## RSSC Euro deals

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) is offering a free suite upgrade, a discounted 7.5% deposit and US\$500 of ship credit across all 2024 Europe sailings.

Travel advisors in Australia and New Zealand can also earn \$200 David Jones gift cards for each new deposited booking made by 31 Aug - details [HERE](#).



## Window Seat

**LIFE** in plastic, it's fantastic - at least according to a Hilton hotel in Colombia, which has unveiled a limited-time Barbie-themed suite to celebrate the launch of the new *Barbie* film starring Margot Robbie.

Guests visiting Hilton Bogota Corferias until Jul 2024 can be "transported into a Barbie utopia" by booking the new suite, which is pink as can be, and features artwork of the doll, plus Barbie-inspired furnishings, amenities & more.

Fans can also indulge in several special experiences, including a glamorous, Barbie-inspired 'pinknic'.



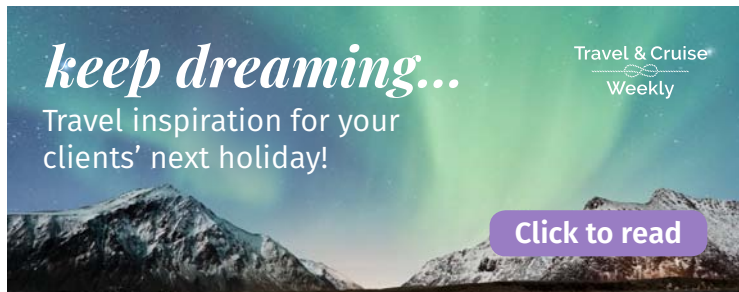
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## Rex to Antarctica?

REX Airlines has thrown its hat in the ring to be the next aerial operator for the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD), submitting a response to the department's request for information this week.

The program is the most ambitious in AAD's history, and looks at bringing together the division's highly specialised aerial operations under one operator's command.

"We believe there is no better Australian candidate than the Rex Group with its expertise in operating a fleet of 150 aircraft in every state," Rex Antarctic Project Manager Craig Martin said.

"We also have deep knowledge of special mission work, having carried out tactical flying from the Department of Defence."

## A joyous milestone for Jamison



**CANBERRA-BASED** agency and Travellers Choice member, Jamison Travel, is marking 30 years of business, with owner Michelle Everson recently hosting a special celebratory event.

More than 90 of the award-winning agency's loyal clients

gathered at Canberra's Labor Club to ring in the milestone, swapping valuable stories of their favourite travel memories.

"We've written more business this year than in 2019, so it's onwards and upwards," Everson enthused, adding that her greatest achievement was steering the agency through the many challenges that have rocked the travel industry over the past three decades.

**Pictured:** Travellers Choice national BDM Paula Moylan (far right) celebrates with the Jamison Travel team (L-R) Emma Sullivan, Emily Troube and Everson.

## Be Exceptional

A **NEW** Aussie-founded platform has launched to offer the concept of "creative travel", a new category which it proclaims as a breath of fresh air in the travel sector amid the "sameness of every other travel content".

Exceptional ALIEN provides interactive guides via an app and website, allowing travellers to experience a destination from the perspective of "inspiring and trusted global talent", including award-winning photographers, chefs, filmmakers, athletes, philanthropists and more.

"Creativity informs the most rewarding experiences travel has to offer - dining, wine, fashion, art, music, architecture, design, entertainment," the company's co-founder, Justin Drape, said.

See the website **HERE**.

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## A welcome Warn-ing



**SINGAPORE-BASED** hospitality group Ascott Australia has announced the promotion of Jennifer Warns to head up the Sales and Distribution team as its General Manager.

Warn joined Ascott's serviced apartment brand, Quest Apartment Hotels, in 2018 as Director of Sales before she was promoted to Group Head of Corporate Sales in Jan 2021.

Ascott MD David Mansfield said the decision to elevate Warn "was a simple one", given her track record in growing key corporate accounts and "inspiring record-breaking sales excellence".

## AirAsia's grand sale

**TRAVELLERS** can save up to 20% off all seats and all flights to 130 destinations across Asia, including Sydney to Kuala Lumpur from \$319, thanks to AirAsia's mid-year Grand Sale.

Additionally, pax can save on connecting flights from Kuala Lumpur to other destinations in Malaysia such as Penang.

The premium flatbeds on AirAsiaX are also on sale at 20% off, as are popular ancillary offerings including extra leg room and priority boarding.

The sale ends 16 Jul for travel between 04 Sep and 31 Mar - **CLICK HERE** for details.

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## TA celebrates 'best of the best'



**TRAVEL** Associates rolled out the purple carpet for more than 250 of its business leaders and advisors on Sat for the brand's annual Gala Awards.

Held at The Emporium Hotel in Brisbane, the glamorous luncheon celebrated the network's most successful year and the stellar performance of its expert advisors and business leaders.

Almost 30 Travel Associates Advisors received a Length of Service Award, while the Most Outstanding award went to Ian Carswell of Carswell & Turner Travel Associates in Coffs Harbour.

Other winners on the night included Jo Kennedy of Kennedy & Turner in Brisbane, who was named Top Advisor, and the recently retired Alan Reis of Reis & James in Canberra, who was bestowed with the inaugural Greg Ashmore Award for Greatness.

"We have enjoyed the strongest performance in our 25-year history, and we have all contributed to this exceptional result," GM AU & NZ Rachel Kingswell said at the event.

"Not only did Travel Associates achieve a 'personal best' but so did an incredible 85% of the people in this room," she added.

The Travel Associates leadership team are **pictured** at the Gala Awards in their finest attire.

### Hunting a holiday

**TOURISM** Whitsundays is running a Wildcard Long Weekend Competition in partnership with Bonza for Hunter region residents.

Entrants must describe their ultimate long weekends to win one of four prizes, each including return flights and accommodation - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

## AFTA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



**THIS** is the last week of NTIA nominations, and we are on track to set a new record with more than 740 nominations already submitted.

With 1,200 travel professionals descending on Melbourne in Nov, it will be our chance to celebrate and recognise the people and the businesses that make our industry so great.

In some thought-provoking research this week, AFTA sat down with research group SEC Newgate to see where the mood of the nation was at.

The research found that there are many Australians (61%) who believe the country is heading in the wrong direction, a 10% rise since Apr, reflecting an overall deterioration in the national mood.

While those in the Eastern seaboard saw dissatisfaction grow the fastest, the opposite occurred in WA who have never been happier, with 63% saying things are moving in the right direction.

Financially, 46% of Australians (up 7% since last survey) now say they are having some difficulty making ends meet or are having a lot of difficulty paying bills and covering basic expenses.

As we know women are the key decision-makers on holiday travel, though 49% reported experiencing financial difficulty.

While overall outlook for travel is strong, the consistent rate of increases and international supply of seats I think will start to see some softening of demand in some markets.

Finally, last week I had the privilege of hosting the AFTA table at the National Press Club to hear an important speech from the Minister for Indigenous Australians, Linda Burney.

As you would have seen we use this membership for numerous purposes, but fundamentally it is about building the reputation that travel agents, tour operators, wholesalers and consolidators have in our community.

From the Industry, we had representation from Flight Centre and Corporate Travel Management, as well as the Healing Foundation, Australian Indigenous Governance Institute and Air Services Australia.

### EU ATC strike?

**AIR** traffic controllers at Europe's Eurocontrol authority have threatened industrial action which could potentially disrupt tens of thousands of flights.

The union representing the workers has written to Eurocontrol warning the body that it will only give a five-day notice period of any walkout which could commence as soon as this week.

### QF Tahiti waiver

**QANTAS** has issued a new commercial and reward bookings policy for customers impacted by the cancellation of multiple Air Tahiti Nui services due to what TN describes as a "social movement" of crew being currently on strike.

The QF policy applies to customers holding 081 tickets, which can be rebooked to another TN flight within 10 days using authority 574629.

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## IATA tracks net zero progress

THE International Air Transport Association (IATA) is set to release an annual Track Zero report detailing the aviation industry's progress towards net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The report will use data from IATA's Net Zero Tracking Methodology, which individual airlines can use to benchmark their own progress towards decarbonisation.

The peak industry body will aggregate and report inputs from IATA member airlines annually in the fourth quarter of each year.

The first Net Zero report with airline-contributed data is planned for publication in Q4 2024.

## GREENLAND TOURISM OPPORTUNITY

**GREENLAND-BASED** passenger ferry service Arctic Umiag Line has formed a partnership with Hurtigruten Norway, a deal that will seek to sustainably grow tourism opportunities in the autonomous Danish territory.

The Norwegian cruise line has revealed ambitions to help the local shipping company better promote itself to the international travel market, while at the same time doing so in a way that preserves the way of life for the local community.

Arctic Umiag Line CEO, Jens-Jakob Sandgreen, said Greenland is facing an "historic shift" as new airports make the destination part of the global infrastructure.

"With less than 60,000 people spread mainly along the 3,000km west coast, this is a delicate society that needs a subtle sustainable approach to tourism



and business," he said.

"This partnership [with Hurtigruten Norway] will unlock new and remote destinations for locals and tourists, build on a strategy for sustainable tourism and renew welfare opportunities for Greenland, all while staying true to the core purpose of being a reliable alternative for local passenger transport."

For Hurtigruten, the new

collaboration represents an opportunity to promote its ethos of tourism being a "force for good" in the region, with the company to help develop "unique tourism product" to attract visitation in a manageable way.

Specific details of the sustainable tourism partnership are yet to be revealed however, with more updates due to be released by the end of Aug.

## Luft technology

**LUFTHANSA** Group has invested in new technology that will help it fly more sustainably.

The tech transmits flight path information in real time, enabling pilots to fly more efficiently, resulting in fuel savings and reduced CO<sup>2</sup> emissions.

The 'automated flight profile transmission' technology will come as standard on the 65 new Airbus A320neo/A321neo aircraft that Lufthansa Group has on order, and is preparing to take delivery of from early 2024.

## Hydrate for humanity at Oaks Hotels

**OAKS** Hotels, Resorts and Suites is encouraging guests to 'hydrate for humanity' at its properties across Australia and New Zealand.

Guests can help support Oaks Hotels' charity partner, Habitat for Humanity, by purchasing Mount Franklin water during their stay, with a dollar from the sale of each bottle donated to the charity.

The proceeds will be used by Habitat for Humanity to

provide safe, secure homes to disadvantaged people, including those impacted by natural disasters and people with disabilities.

As part of the partnership, Oaks Hotels' own employees will also have the opportunity to volunteer themselves for important projects, including renovations, landscaping, gardening, and minor repairs on Habitat for Humanity building sites.

## Urgency on the up

**A NEW** report from Meadowmere Resort in the US has found 32% more travellers recognise the need to make sustainable choices than in 2016.

Seven years ago, only 42% of respondents described themselves as a sustainable traveller, however this year that number has grown significantly to 74%, with 8% of that increase occurring in the last year alone.

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## MONEY

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

**AU\$1 = US\$0.668**

**DESPITE** a less volatile financial period over the last week, the Australian dollar has not performed well against most global currencies, dropping over two cents against the Japanese yen and losing close to two cents on the British pound.

The Aussie also conceded minor ground on the Euro, but managed to hold firm against the greenback, which will now get Aussie travellers around 67 US cents.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.668
UK	£0.519
NZ	\$1.075
Euro	€0.607
Japan	¥94.31
Thailand	฿23.44
China	¥4.829
South Africa	12.58
Canada	\$0.887
Crude oil	US\$78.47

## Crown record fine?

**CASINO** operator Crown could be forced to pay out the largest fine ever handed out to a casino globally, with the company facing close to \$500 million in penalties for failing to guard against money laundering & terrorism financing.

The financial crime watchdog AUSTRAC filed a motion in the Federal Court that the casino operator should pay the hefty fee for a whopping 546 breaches of anti-money laundering laws.

## TIME to chat in Brisbane



**THE** Travel Industry Mentor Experience's (TIME) second Brisbane networking event for the year was recently hosted by Clean Cruising at its office.

Almost 50 travel and aviation professionals were in attendance, with Snowscene's Emily Warbrick welcoming guests, and speaking about TIME's growth and traction

## AA lands Lambert

**PROMINENT** industry figure Jenny Lambert has joined the nation's new peak accommodation body Accommodation Australia (AA).

Chief Executive Michael Johnson said Lambert will be great asset for the new body, which was officially amalgamated on 01 Jul.

"Jenny has over four decades' experience in policy and advocacy, with a particular focus in the tourism and hospitality sectors," Johnson said.

Lambert was previously with the Australian Chamber - Tourism during the pandemic and convened regular meetings for the peak Tourism Restart Taskforce (**TD** 29 Apr 2020).

throughout Queensland.

The organisation now has more than 35 mentors and an alumni of 40 graduates in the state.

Guest speaker, Express Travel Group's Tom Manwaring, also addressed attendees, sharing the importance of surrounding oneself with positive influencers, as well as some of the various mentors he has had in his life.

**Pictured:** Oceania Cruises' James Sitters, Australian Federation of Travel Agents' Nina Hedges, Abercrombie & Kent's Jacqui Tufala, Manwaring, and Warbrick.

## Qld resort faces another outage

**THE** troubled Couran Cove Island Resort on the Gold Coast has regained phone and internet services after losing reception due to a "power issue".

Energy failures over the weekend are just the latest blow for the tourist site located at South Stradbroke Island, which had power, gas and water services cut off in Feb amid a body corporate dispute, and its sewerage system shut off last month, according to a report in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*.

## Mongolia floods

**MULTIPLE** locations in Ulaanbaatar, the capital city of Mongolia, are being affected by flooding, according to an update from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Smarttraveller is advising Aussies in Mongolia to avoid flood areas, monitor local media reports and follow local authorities' advice.

The overall advice for the destination remains at the lowest "exercise normal safety precautions" level.

The Chat with Jenny

Conversations with Women in Travel

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