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Vanuatu update

MANY tourism sites and facilities in Vanuatu remain operating despite earthquake damage in Port Vila, the Vanuatu Tourism Office has confirmed. Port Vila's Bauerfield Airport has been closed for 72 hours to allow for important medical flights, but has been declared safe for commercial aircraft. Air Vanuatu have also advised that domestic services have been suspended until further notice.

Recovery still patchy

INTERNATIONAL visitor figures to Australia are 21% down from pre-COVID levels, according to figures from Tourism Research Australia (TRA) released today. Those tourists would have spent an additional \$4.7 billion in the Australian economy, TRA said, sustaining 30,700 jobs. According to Australia Tourism Industry Council Chair Evan Hall, the Federal Government needs to re-invest in marketing to showcase the country. The decreased figures have had "a devastating impact" on tourism businesses in regional areas in particular.

"The Australian Government has underinvested in tourism marketing," Hall declared. "International marketing funding has declined in real terms and should have been significantly increased to recover our international visitors. "The Australian Tourism Industry Council calls on the Federal Government to reinvest an additional \$30 million into tourism marketing to win back the tourists now that the economy needs them the most." The TRA also recently found that visitor numbers from China are falling short of previous forecasts, which predicted that China would be Australia's number one source of inbound travellers by 2025. However, the latest report found that China's bounceback will not take place until 2029. *JHM*

HLO career opps

LOOKING for a career change? Travel giant Helloworld has a few new roles on offer, including Wholesale Account Manager (Vic and NSW) and Land Contractor Coordinator (Vic). Benefits include discounted travel, career progression and support, discounted health insurance, and access to an employee assistance program. Head over to the **back page** for more information.

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QR loyalty benefits

QATAR Airways Privilege Club and Marriott Bonvoy's loyalty program has just had an upgrade. Members with a Marriott Bonvoy account can now convert their Avios points into Marriott Bonvoy points, which can be used across the hotel brand's portfolio of 30 brands and 10,000 destinations. Qatar Airways Privilege Club members can also convert their Avios to Marriott Bonvoy points.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of industry news including a photo page from **Helloworld** and our **Business Events News** page, plus a full page from **Helloworld**.

SALES DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Rocky Mountaineer is seeking an experienced travel professional to join the AUNZ team as a Sales Development Manager. The successful candidate will be responsible for driving and maximizing revenue potential with the retail partners in their region. This role is open to applicants in Sydney or Melbourne.

ROCKY MOUNTAINEER

For more details and to apply please click [here](#)
Applications close 5th January, 2025.

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EY appoints local GM

ETIHAD has wasted little time reaffirming its commitment to the Australian market in the wake of its split with Virgin Australia, appointing the highly experienced Mark Mulville to the role of GM for Australia and New Zealand.

Most recently serving as Business Manager - Strategic Accounts for Corporate Travel Management, Mulville announced his return to the aviation sector on LinkedIn.

"I'm excited to be back...thank you to my team for the warm welcome and I look forward to doing big things together in 2025," he said.

Mulville's lengthy aviation resume includes a senior role at American Airlines, where he was Regional Manager Asia Pacific, Corporate & TMC Sales from 2020 to 2021, as well as being Head of Corporate & Industry Sales, Australia & New Zealand at Malaysia Airlines.

In a win for travel agents, Mulville also boasts plenty of agency experience, having previously been National Account Manager for Helloworld's TravelEdge Corporate brand, and Head of Account Management NSW/ACT for Flight Centre Travel Group's FCM Travel Australia.

The appointment does not affect Etihad's Vice President - Asia Pacific, Amer Khan, who remains in the role overseeing the broader region.

Mulville's appointment is timely,



with Etihad telling *Travel Daily* last month the carrier is ready to stand on its own two feet in Australia after VA flagged the exit of a codeshare and bilateral frequent flyer partnership from 01 Jun 2025 (*TD* 19 Nov).

Global Vice President of Sales and Distribution, Javier Alija, said Etihad will continue ongoing investment in Australia to better position the carrier as being highly competitive across loyalty, schedule, and price.

In a sign that Etihad will also look to place more of an emphasis on courting travel advisors, Javier also revealed last month it will be extending its stopover program in Abu Dhabi to travel advisors for the first time.

Javier also flagged plans to expand its reach in Australia over time, starting with double departures out of Sydney and Melbourne, followed by possible launches in other Aussie hubs. *AB*

NCL teases refresh

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has flagged a range of updated experiences aboard *Norwegian Bliss* and *Norwegian Breakaway*.

Passengers can expect to enjoy a new cinema and dining concept on *Breakaway* next year, as well as an outdoor venue on both ships called Horizon Park.

The new area will offer lawn-style games such as cornhole and giant Jenga, as well as reclining loungers for sunbathing.

Cagney's Steakhouse and Teppanyaki eateries will also be expanded, and some suites will be renovated - more info in *CW*.

TOSP targets big things in '25



TREASURES of the South Pacific (TOSP) has marked 2024 as "a milestone year", with record trade engagement and agent training.

Over the course of the year, ToSP conducted six retail travel agent events and reached more than 750 front line sellers.

Each event featured in-depth training on each destination, helping agents to recognise their key points of difference and similarities in order to recommend the perfect holiday for clients.

The success seen in 2024 was capped off earlier this month with a VIP event in Sydney (*pictured*), with more than 70 industry stakeholders invited to attend.

ToSP members include Tourism Solomons; New Caledonia Tourism; Samoa Tourism; Fiji Tourism; Palau Visitors Authority; Norfolk Island Tourism; Tahiti Tourisme; Niue Tourism; Cook Islands Tourism; and Vanuatu Tourism Office.

Treasures of the South Pacific Director, Richard Skewes, said the organisation has "bold" plans for 2025 and is confident of it being its most impactful year yet.

"Our shared attributes - such as pristine waters, white sands, and warm hospitality - are complemented by the distinct and vibrant differences that make each destination truly unique," Skewes commented.

"By investing in training programs and working closely

with travel agents, wholesalers, and industry stakeholders, we're not only ensuring the South Pacific remains top-of-mind but also helping to create exceptional travel experiences for Australian holidaymakers." *ML*

Our resolution for 2025

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QF ready for action

QANTAS said it is ready with contingencies to handle further industrial action planned by some of its engineers tomorrow.

"The airline has worked hard to put a number of contingencies in place and passengers should continue to head to the airport as planned," Qantas said.

"As always, unplanned maintenance issues, adverse weather, or other events may impact operations on the day."

The Alliance unions representing the cohort of engineers are seeking a 40% pay increase over three years, which Qantas said was "not sustainable".

Qantas said it has attempted to appease workers by offering a combination of pay increases, new career pathways, and more advanced training.

"It's disappointing to see the unions targeting people travelling to see loved ones at this time of year," Qantas said, adding that with corporate travel dialling down, it will handle Fri traffic.

Air NZ allows AirTag

TRAVELLERS flying with Air New Zealand this festive season are now able to track their baggage via AirTag in the event that it's delayed or mishandled.

The carrier has enabled Apple's Find My Share Item Location feature, which means travellers who place an AirTag or other Find My network accessory in their bag can use the Find My app to generate and share a live location link with Air New Zealand's customer service team.

By sharing a location link, the airline will be able to see not only where the bag was last scanned at the airport but also its most recent location.

Air New Zealand Chief Digital Officer Nikhil Ravishankar says the initiative builds on the airline's ongoing efforts to make travel as stress-free as possible for its customers, and provide added peace of mind these holidays.

Leaders puttin' on the Ritz



THE Luxury Travel Collection (LTC) teamed up with the Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection to bring its 'Leaders Who Lunch' event to Sydney for the first time earlier this week.

Kristian Anderson, Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection's Senior Vice President of Global Sales, and Seb Seward, GM Asia Pacific, joined an intimate group of 20 LTC leaders for a private dining experience at Aria.

Guests heard from Anderson about strategic insights into the development of the brand, which emerged 10 years ago as an extension of the Ritz-Carlton hotel brand, and launched its second yacht in Aug (**TD** 04 Sep).

"There is no better way to deeply understand a brand you are recommending to a client than to meet face-to-face with someone like Kristian Anderson, who was incredibly generous with the detailed information he was able to share with this intimate guest list," said Anna Burgdorf, LTC's General Manager of Brand.

"It's the reason we created this exclusive series - to connect leading global brands with influential, senior luxury travel advisors from our membership house," she added.

"The intimate group size is an ideal platform for two-way discussions, meaning global

leaders like Kristian can also gain insights and understanding of the requirements of the AU and NZ luxury traveller." *JM*

Pictured: Shannon Fogarty, Justine Sealey, Auriole Carrington, Alison Lord, Caroline Hitchen, Burgdorf, and Melinda Spain.

Airline NDC wrap up

GARUDA Indonesia is one of several airlines to announce new NDC deals, with Indonesia's flag carrier signing up for three of Sabre's advanced fares management solutions.

According to the airline, the tech will allow it to enhance its pricing management capabilities, streamline operations, and boost its competitive positioning.

Additionally, Cathay Pacific this week revealed it has extended its multi-source content distribution agreement with Travelport.

The companies are currently working together to integrate Cathay Pacific's NDC content in Travelport+, which is expected to launch in the coming months.

MEANWHILE, LATAM Airlines and Amadeus have also renewed their partnership, which will see the carrier's NDC-sourced content and traditionally sourced content (EDIFACT) become available through the Amadeus Travel Platform.



SANTA is commandeering the Qantas Freight fleet to make some very special deliveries this festive season, ensuring that gifts get under trees and meals get onto tables in time for Christmas.

The freighter fleet will fly around 550 extra hours across the domestic network in Nov and Dec, adding 3,000 tonnes of capacity - the equivalent of flying 12,000 fully-grown reindeer to cities and regional ports around Australia.

As well as carrying Australia Post's parcels, Australian-made gifts and international orders, Qantas Freight carries other important cargo needed to make the holidays merry, including fresh produce, a range of seafood and meat, fresh-cut flowers, and more.

"While Santa and his elves have been preparing to fly gifts for kids around the world, Qantas Freight has been busy getting our fleet of freight sleighs ready for the Christmas peak," said QF Freight Executive Manager, Igor Kwiatkowski.

"We'll be spending the next few weeks flying gifts, cards, and perishables like mangoes and prawns across the country, and the world, and we're delighted to play this important role for what is a really special time for families," he added.

Marking the occasion, one of the six Qantas Freight A321s has been gift wrapped in a new 'Santa's Freight' livery.



Helloworld ends the year with a bang

ATTENDEES at the recent Helloworld Frontliners Forum and Helloworld Business Travel Conference in Singapore enjoyed evening events including a Hello event at the new Singapore EDITION hotel, a private cocktail soiree at The Riverhouse, and a gala awards dinner.

Delegates also heard from Helloworld Travel senior management, gained insights from preferred partners, and had plenty networking opportunities.



CHEERS to Frontliners 2024!



CARA Bhugiar, HLO Lower Templestowe; Julie Pratt, NIB; and Amy Rowe, Kris Rowe, and Deana Thomas from HLO Lower Templestowe.



HLO South Melbourne team: Ty Shirreff, Fiona Coolegem, Anita McGaw, Janene Ferguson and Alex Whitehead.



JORDAN McGregor and Susan Curtin, HLO Surrey Hills; Thomas McDonald, HLO Lilydale; and Kate Richardson, HLO Surrey Hills.



AUDRIE Pretty, HLO Lilydale; Judy Quigley, Toorak Village Travel & Cruise; Natalie Daw, HLO Camberwell; and Kent Quigley, Toorak Village Travel & Cruise.



LYNDSAY Laverty and Rebecca Norberry, Mid Coast Travel & Cruise.

NATHAN Dimitrievick and Julie Woodall from My Travel Expert.



CRISTY Joslin, Albert Park Travel; Melissa Schampers Chaudhary, 303 World Travel & Cruise; and Sonika Moir, Albert Park Travel.



ALEXIS Smith, HLO Coolangatta with Rachel Henshaw, Felicity Dascombe & Chloe Dalsanto from HLO Pursers Travel Group.



MELISSA Merino, Singapore Airlines and Meg Dolan, Locale Travel Management.

NATASHA Orpwood, HLO Eatons Hill; Georgie-Lou McCracken, HLO Kardinia; and Jessica Maclannan, HLO Berri.





A shot for Brissy

BRISBANE is set to host more than 400 top immunologists, vaccine researchers, engineers, healthcare professionals, and scientists at the International Healthcare Conference on Microneedles next year.

The event will be held at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC) between 11 and 14 May, and will focus on microarray patch technology and its applications in transdermal delivery and diagnostics.

The successful bid for the conference was led by University of Queensland Associate Professor David Muller and Professor Paul Young, in partnership with BCEC, and was supported by Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ).

DCC CELEBRATES LANDMARK YEAR

DARWIN Convention Centre (DCC) achieved its highest yearly delegate contribution to the local economy in 2024.

National delegate attendance reached more than 21,000 from Jul 2023 to Jun 2024, while DCC (pictured) welcomed more than 2,000 international delegates, resulting in an estimated economic benefit of \$146 million.

DCC also welcomed its one millionth delegate through the doors since commencing operations in 2008.

“In addition to attracting business events, the Darwin Convention Centre has remained committed to engaging with our local community,” General Manager Peter Savoff said.

“Over the past 12 months, we have collaborated with organisations including YouthWorX NT and Henbury School to offer work-



study programs and career opportunities for local youth.

“We look forward to continuing these valuable programs into 2025,” he added.

Meanwhile, DCC has also partnered with Foodbank NT this holiday season, with several members of the facility’s team volunteering at the organisation

over the period.

DCC staffers assisted with the sorting and storage of food donations, with volunteers remarking how rewarding the experience was.

Team members also hosted a food drive for Foodbank, which saw them collect and contribute donations. *MS*

SIXT driving events

VEHICLE rental platform SIXT has partnered with Ticektek to drive Aussies to their next event.

Those booking with the ticketing company will also be provided with the option to book a vehicle for their trip through SIXT.

Customers will also be able to take advantage of special rates for a SIXT car rental.

The hirer’s Chief Executive Officer Matthew Beattie said SIXT is proud to partner with Ticketek to better connect customers to vehicles when and where they need it.

Sydney Showground shows off upgrades

SYDNEY Showground (pictured) and the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW (RAS) have launched their brand-new venue upgrades, opening their new accessibility and sensory facilities, which will be available for select events at the facility.

The brand-new sensory room, adult-assisted change room, and updated parent room offer enhanced comfort, accessibility, and inclusivity for



all attendees.

The facilities, located on Grand Parade, will be available for the Big Bash League at Engie Stadium, as well as the upcoming Green Day concert and the RAS’ Easter Show.

Surf’s up in PI

FUTURE surf stars are set to rock Phillip Island, with the Victorian State Government announcing the Phillip Island Pro for Mar.

Surfers will be able to book their spot in the big leagues on the world tour through a successful showing at the event, which will take place at Cape Woolamai from 17 to 22 Mar.

The event will be delivered through Visit Victoria.

TravelDaily

YEAR IN REVIEW

TAKE A LOOK BACK AT THE BIGGEST STORIES FOR THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY IN 2024.

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APPOINTMENTS

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French Polynesian domestic airline **Air Moana** has announced the appointment of **Lionel Guerin** as its new Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. With a distinguished career in aviation, Guerin brings a wealth of strategic and operational expertise, having led major airlines including Air France.

Web Travel Group will welcome **Rachel Wiseman** in Jan 2025 to the Board as an independent Non-Executive Director. Wiseman brings more than 20 years' experience leading transformation and innovation in major organisations across the tourism, technology, media and entertainment industries in Australia, the UK and New Zealand. She is currently CEO, Member Capital at NRMA and has led its strategy to diversify the business from motoring services to include tourism and transport services.

Nick Jeffrey has taken on the role of General Manager at the **Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCCEC)**, after his outstanding contributions during the past five months which he spent as acting General Manager. Jeffrey has been with GCCEC for seven years, most recently as Executive Manager of Corporate Services, and will now lead the venue into its next phase. He boasts more than 30 years' experience in the travel, hospitality and property development sectors.

Capella Hotel Group has announced a number of executive appointments across four Capella and Patina properties in Asia. **Anthony Gill** has been appointed General Manager of **Patina Maldives**; **Dennis Laubenstein** will take up the General Manager role of **Capella Taipei**; **Antonio Saponara** is the new General Manager of **Capella Bangkok**; and **Hildegard Anzenberger** will become the General Manager of **Capella Hanoi**. The company's President Cristiano Rinaldi acclaimed the appointments of the foursome, which he believes reinforces its commitment to delivering exceptional luxury experiences.

Hannah Schenk has been welcomed into **Orbit World Travel** as its new Groups & Events Team Leader. She has more than 10 years' experience in the groups & events industry, and most recently managed the Olympics account for Australian athletes and staff travelling to Paris 2024. Prior to that, she handled group logistics for events of all sizes across multiple industries, including the Global Ball for Flight Centre, which attracted 3,500 attendees.

Demeiter Vaubell has started a new position as **Six Senses Ninh Van Bay's** Director of Sales & Marketing. The long-time hotel professional most recently served as Saudi Tourism Authority's Country Manager for almost 12 months.

Lyndsey Gordon has been promoted to General Manager of **PEPR Agency**, following a one-year stint as its Associate Director.

Celebrating 70 happy years



SEVENTY years after welcoming its first guests through the turnstiles, Disneyland will mark its 70th birthday in 2025 with an extensive calendar of celebrations.

Beginning 16 May and running through the northern summer, a series of festivals and separately ticketed events will be held, themed around Walt Disney's immortal opening-day words: "To all who come to this happy place...welcome."

Disneyland will reintroduce its Paint the Night parade, featuring more than one million LED lights, with similar displays also set for California Adventure Park.

Sleeping Beauty's castle will be adorned with special decor, while characters will also be dressed in special 70th birthday outfits.

A cinematic presentation celebrating the life of Disneyland's eponymous founder will screen at the Main Street Theatre, capped by an audio-animatronic appearance by Walt Disney.

Special projections chronicling Disneyland's history will be seen throughout the precinct, with both parks to also play a newly

composed musical theme.

Mickey and Minnie Mouse are **pictured** above in Disneyland modelling their brand-new birthday costumes. *ML*

Travel Money wins

TRAVEL Money Oz has labelled 2024 a big year of digital transformation, after it was named the 'Most Innovative Travel Product' at the recent Finder Innovation Awards.

The win for the Flight Centre brand came shortly after it launched a digital version of its currency card, which it said is an Australian-first and will eliminate the need for customers to carry physical cards.

Travel Money Group GM Scott McCullough said, "2024 has been a huge year for our Travel Money team and taking out the Finder Innovation Award is the perfect way to close it out and set the tone of what's to come.

"The product that has been recognised is a world-first and basically Uber Eats for foreign cash," he added.



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In this role, you'll work closely with travel agents to grow sales, foster relationships, and deliver exceptional wholesale travel products. You'll also enjoy opportunities to host Families, attend international conferences, and represent Helloworld at industry events.

LAND CONTRACTING COORDINATOR (VIC)

As the Land Contracting Coordinator (Australia), you will assist with sourcing, negotiating, and reviewing annual contracts for the Inbound and Wholesale brands of Helloworld.

As part of a dynamic contracting team, you will work closely with accommodation, touring, car-hire providers, and regional and state tourism organisations.

You will also work closely with the Content and Inventory teams to ensure that they have the rates and availability of products bookable in our leisure booking platforms.

The coordinator also acts as a central point of contact for all departments and supplier enquiries, providing a high level of administration support year-round.

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