

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of news including our **Business Events News** feature page, plus a full page from **A Force for Good Hub**.

Bring on Vietnam

G ADVENTURES and VietJet Air have teamed up to launch a joint incentive for the travel trade in Australia and New Zealand.

Twelve agents will have the chance to earn a spot on a fam trip to Vietnam, which is being hosted from 01-10 May 2024.

The eight agents with the most travellers booked on a G Adventures trip will be invited on the Classic Vietnam fam trip, which takes in Hanoi, Ha Long Bay, Hue, Hoi An, and Saigon.

An additional four 'wild card' spaces are also up for grabs, available to all travel agents who sell at least one G Adventures trip during the incentive period of 01-31 Jan 2024.

Cruise to boom in 2024

AUSTRALIA is sailing into a bumper cruise season in 2024, with more lines offering more local ships and sailings than ever.

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Managing Director in Australasia Joel Katz said this year is lining up to be one of the busiest for cruise tourism Down Under, with cruise brands boosting capacity in their 2024 deployments.

"We will see 81 cruise ships operating in Australian waters over the course of 2024, which is 14% more than last year," Katz explained.

"Many of these ships will be staying longer and offering more local sailings, which means Australia will welcome more than 3,700 port calls around the country - an 18% increase over last year."

Aussie travellers will have an unprecedented amount of cruising options in the year



ahead, with CLIA cruise lines set to internationally launch nine new ocean cruise ships.

"The total cruise passenger capacity in Australia this year will be up by 42% over 2023, which reflects the huge passion Australians have for cruising and the strong overseas interest in sailing down under," Katz said.

Cruising generated a record economic impact worth \$5.6b to the country's economy last financial year, Katz highlighted.

"All signs suggesting cruise tourism will continue to be enormously valuable to Australia throughout 2024 and well beyond," Katz enthused. *JM*

Q300 not cleared

AIR Traffic Control transcripts have shed some more light on the Haneda Airport collision (*TD* yesterday), indicating the Japan Airlines A350 was cleared to land, while the Q300 Coast Guard aircraft was only given permission to taxi and was not granted clear take-off approval.

However, the pilot and sole survivor of the Q300 reportedly stated that he was granted permission to enter the runway.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department has also begun its own investigation into the incident to determine whether professional negligence led to deaths and injuries.

A Force for Good

MARK your calendars - A Force For Good Hub's 2024 events are coming up in Sydney and Auckland on International Women's Day in Mar.

See the **back page** for details.

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ANA, Avianca on-time winners



ANA All Nippon Airways was the most on-time airline in Asia-Pacific last year, according to Cirium's 2023 On-Time Performance Review.

There were no Australian airlines present in the top-five Asia-Pacific carriers this year, as perhaps expected (**TD 22 Dec**), with Japan Airlines, Thai AirAsia, IndiGo, and Air New Zealand rated as the best.

The coveted position of the most on-time global carrier went to Avianca Airlines, while Delta Air Lines also won big, taking out top spot in North America, as well as taking out the Cirium Platinum Award for the third year running - a demonstration of its commitment to operational performance and minimising passenger disruption.

Azul Airlines, Qatar Airways, and Iberia joined Avianca and Delta in the top five global airlines, while Oman Air was the most on-time airline for the Middle East & Africa, and Iberia Express took out top spot in Europe.

South African airline Safair was the leading low-cost carrier in the Review, while Minneapolis-Saint Paul International was the top-

Air Malta sale

AIR Malta is offering up to 50% off flights as well as extras from 02-09 Jan, in its "new year, new sale" promotion.

The sale is available for flights until 30 Mar - for more information, **CLICK HERE**.

performing airport.

"Airline and airport winners steered through the year's operational hurdles with exceptional performance," Cirium CEO Jeremy Brown said.

"Their relentless pursuit of efficiency and punctuality is commendable as we venture into 2024, a year brimming with promise for the aviation sector," he concluded. *MS*

RSSC Upgrade sale

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) has announced its Upgrade Your Horizon offer, available on more than 400 voyages through 2026.

The offer applies across all destinations and all ships, excluding RSSC's World Cruise and Grand Voyages.

Guests can enjoy a free two-category suite upgrade and a reduced 7.5% deposit across a range of voyages - **CLICK HERE**.

Save more at SYD

SAVE 15% on parking at Sydney Airport's domestic terminal with the new year special offer.

The offer is available for the first two months of the year, and applies to all domestic parking, including Blu Emu.

Those who wish to take advantage of the offer should book by 14 Jan, and enter the parking lot by the end of Feb - use the promo code "HAPPY2024" when booking.



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Travel Daily

Travelport scores \$570m

TRAVELPORT has completed previously announced new financing with a group of its existing equity holders and lenders (**TD 05 Dec**), who have invested US\$570 million into the company.

The new financing significantly de-leverages Travelport's balance sheet, giving the software company a more robust long-term capital structure.

It positions the business to continue investing in its technology platforms and further innovate, such as accelerating new developments in Travelport+, its range of carrier NDC offerings, and its machine learning-powered search engine Content Curation Layer.

"The completion of Travelport's previously announced financing transaction represents the strong belief our investors have in our competitive position and

potential for long term growth," Chief Executive Officer Greg Webb said.

"Our new financing allows us to continue to innovate, enhance and deliver the best-in-class technology our partners have come to expect from us.

"This investment will further fuel our momentum, setting up the company for increased speed, agility and innovation in 2024," he added.

Last year saw Travelport undertake several successful strategic investments and initiatives in an effort to enhance its technology, as well as its products and services. *MS*

Dusit expands Thai

DUSIT Hotels & Resorts has expanded its operations in Thailand, opening Dusit Princess Phatthalung in the country's emerging southern destination.

The city resort, Dusit's 15th in Thailand, links business and leisure travellers with the natural, cultural, and culinary wonders of Phatthalung, which is considered a hidden-gem destination.

Dusit Phatthalung comprises 132 spacious guestrooms and suites spanning up to 79m², and is just a one-hour drive from Trang Airport.

The resort features a wide range of family friendly facilities, such as a large swimming pool, and spaces for yoga and Muay Thai.

Eve consultation out

EVE Air Mobility's eVTOL airworthiness criteria has been released for public consultation by the National Civil Aviation Agency of Brazil (ANAC).

Consultation is available until mid next month, following which ANAC will analyse the feedback, and unveil eVTOL's final certification basis.

Eve Chief Technology Officer Luiz Valentini said the publication of the criteria is an important milestone toward certification.

A promotional banner for Taiwan and EVA Air. The background is a scenic view of a harbor at sunset, with mountains in the distance and a pier with several boats in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image.

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Window Seat

AUSTRALIA will be the leading “set-jetting” destination in the world this year, drawing in travellers visiting places they have seen on the screen.

According to the BonusInsider blog, Sydney (pictured) will be the number one destination in the world for set-jetting, with the harbour city appearing in *Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga*, *The Fall Guy*, and *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes*.

Rounding out the top 10 destinations is the Gold Coast, which features in *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire*.

Also popular next year will be the United Kingdom, with London playing home to *Wonka*, *The Crown*, and *Bridgerton*, as well as the county of Surrey, which will be visited by fans of *Napoleon* and *House of the Dragon*.

Other destinations in the top 10 include Prague, Malta, Budapest, South Africa, and Wadi Rum.



WA charges ahead with EVs



THE prospect of embarking on an electric vehicle (EV) road trip around Australia is now a step closer to reality, with Western Australia’s EV charging network surpassing the halfway mark.

The milestone follows the opening last month of Hyden’s EV fast charger, the 26th site to open out of 49 planned locations across the state, allowing drivers to top up their EV in around 20 minutes.

Recent months also saw the installation of chargers at Warmun, Derby, Halls Creek, Norseman, and Hamelin Pool, while construction is underway for locations at Billabong, Minilya, Kalgoorlie, Kojonup, Brookton, Ravensthorpe, and Bunbury.

Expected to be ready mid-2024, the network will cover 7,000km north to Kununurra, along WA’s south-west coast to Esperance and east to Kalgoorlie and Eucla.

Energy Minister Reece Whitby said the network will “make it easier for EV drivers to explore our wonderful state, while reducing their travel time & range anxiety”.

First announced in 2022, the ambitious project - which will be the longest EV highway in the country - is part of the WA State Government’s \$43.5 million Electric Vehicle Fund, which aims at boosting EV uptake to support its goal of net-zero by 2050. *JM*

Aurora’s bucket list

AURORA Expeditions has released its Best Small-Ship Experiences bucket list and e-book, which delves into some of the life-changing encounters available to the line’s passengers.

Experiences detailed in the e-book include camping on the ice in Antarctica, cruising the wilds of Patagonia, marvelling at the waterfalls of Iceland, and going from reef to rainforest in Costa Rica.

Those booking before the end of Mar can also enjoy added value savings, with air credits and 20% off select voyages.

“We know travellers are increasingly wanting to embrace spontaneity in their lives, connect more with nature in an authentic way, and tick off their epic travel wish list experiences at the same time,” Chief Marketing Officer Hayley Peacock-Gower said.

New K’gari resort packages released

KINGFISHER Bay Resort on K’gari (Fraser Island) has unveiled its wellness and walking experiences for this year.

The range of self-care activities and back-to-nature experiences include self-guided walks through ancient rainforests, pristine freshwater lakes, morning meditation sessions, island day spa treatments, healthy eating menus, and eco-marine cruises.

The products include two-, three-, and four-night island experiences: the On-Foot Island Adventure package, the Wellness Island Eco Retreat package, and the ‘K’gari Wellness Event’, held from 18-22 Jan.

For more information and to book, [CLICK HERE](#).

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The Chat
with Jenny

A conversation with
Emily Kadinski

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Event costs climb

EVENTS are getting increasingly expensive to run, with new research from Eastside Rooms revealing 83% of organisers saw a rise in event costs in 2023.

The survey of 125 event professionals from around the world reflected that organisers have increased salaries and freelance/consultant fees as a result of rising costs.

The study showed that 28% of associations/not for profits increased staff salaries and another 9% increased freelance/consultant fees, while 25% of corporates boosted staff salaries and another 5% hiked up freelance/consultant fees.

Additionally, 24% of organisers said they are providing flexible working arrangements for their team.

ABEA CALLS ON EMERGING LEADERS

THE Australian Business Events Association (ABEA), in partnership with the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), has put the call out for emerging industry leaders to step into the spotlight.

The new Emerging Leaders Challenge gives upcoming business event talents the chance to present at AIME's leadership forum, 'The Business Events Proposition', which is sponsored by ABEA (**TD** 21 Dec 2023).

Emerging leaders who have been in the business events industry for 10 years or less are being asked to share their ideas on how the industry should better attract and retain talent.

The winning submission will be the "conversation starter" to kick off the forum, with the aim of provoking industry professionals to think, listen, and share ideas about the winner's topic.



The successful applicant will get to deliver a three to five minute presentation at the beginning of the forum, as well as receiving a free ticket to attend AIME, return flights to Melbourne from their city, two nights' accommodation in the Vic capital, an ICCA Skills Certified International Convention Specialist scholarship, and more.

The competition is open to ABEA members and their staff only, with applications set to

close 9am AEDT on 01 Feb.

Taking place 19-21 Feb, AIME 2024 is set to be bigger than ever, with 40% more exhibitors and 51% more hosted buyers compared to last year.

To see the full ABEA submission criteria, terms and conditions, **CLICK HERE**, and for further enquiries, contact Annabelle Robb on 02 9413 9520 or annabelle.robb@abea.org.au. *JM*

Pictured: AIME 2023.

Adelaide Oval is lit

ADELAIDE Oval has unveiled a new \$5 million LED upgrade to its tower lighting system, equipped with both white sports lighting and full colour capabilities, including flash and animation.

CEO Nick Addison said the upgrade will deliver significant benefits for patrons, the venue and the SA events calendar.

Additionally, the new lights will use around 40% less power than their predecessors, bringing Adelaide Oval closer to achieving its sustainability goals.

New hotels for China Convention Centre

TWO new hotels are set to open within the China National Convention Center complex in Beijing, offering delegates more accommodation options.

Marriott International has signed an agreement to open the 282-key The Ritz-Carlton Beijing, North (render **pictured**) in 2026, as well as the 671-key Beijing Marriott Marquis Hotel.

Guests of the upcoming hotels will have easy access to the extensive conference, event



and exhibition spaces, and will be just 20km away from Beijing Capital International Airport.

Cultural attractions such as the National Stadium will also be within walking distance.

Behind BBC Earth

AUSTRALIAN video technology and production supplier, TDC, has offered a behind-the-scenes look at the BBC Earth Experience, now open at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (**TD** 04 Sep 2023).

TDC MD Michael Hassatt explained the technical design and technologies behind the new immersive digital art installation in a behind-the-scenes video, **HERE**.

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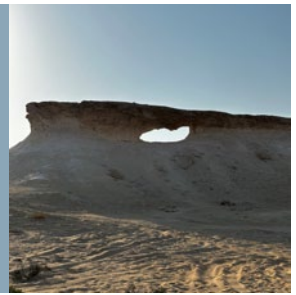
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Adding to her almost decade-long tenure at **Princess Cruises**, **Chloe Jones** has been promoted as the line's Head of Marketing, based in its Sydney office. Jones was most recently the Senior Marketing Manager, a role she held for three years, and prior to that spent two years with Mediacom as a senior executive.

Michael Fletcher is set to return to the aviation sector after a two-and-a-half year stint at Crown Towers Sydney as its Director of Sales. He will be joining **All Nippon Airways** as the carrier's Sales Manager, Australia later this month. Before his shift to the hospitality sector, Fletcher had spent eight years with Virgin Australia, and before that, clocked up an almost 14-year tenure at American Airlines, where he managed the sales operation across the trans-Tasman region.

Madeline Gerogiadis has taken on the new role of Public Relations Manager for **P&O Cruises**. The communication specialist boasts extensive experience across the travel and hospitality industries, previously working as the Communications and Social Media Executive ANZ at Accor, and prior to that, holding the post of Marketing Communications Coordinator at Art Series Hotels.

Alastair McAlpine has been appointed as the new General Manager of **Four Seasons Hotel Osaka**. Scheduled to open in 2024, the resort is the latest addition to the hotelier's Japan portfolio. McAlpine arrives from Lanai Island in Hawaii, where he held an identical role, and boasts more than 30 years of experience in the luxury hospitality sector.

To replace outgoing Turhan Ozen, **Turkish Airlines** has announced the appointment of **Ali Turk** as its new Chief Cargo Officer, effective since 01 Jan. The seasoned professional first joined the Turkish flag carrier in 2011, serving as its Head of Cargo and later Deputy General Manager of Supply Chain Management.

Stuart De San Nicolas has been appointed as the new Cluster General Manager for various **Minor Hotels'** brands across the Maldives. Boasting over 30 years of hands-on industry experience, Nicolas' resume spans across Europe, South America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. He has been assigned to take charge of the operations at Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas, Avani+ Fares Resort, and NH Collection Maldives Havodda.

La Vie Hotels and Resorts has announced key appointments ahead of several openings across the Australian and Southeast Asian market. **Issara Siripaisan** has joined as its Senior Project and Design Manager; **Jacob Batt** as the new Business Development Manager; **Justin Furkhan** promoted as the Group Manager for Business Support & Hotel Openings; **Mely Liu** taking on the role of Group Business Development Manager; and **Nicole Burg** as the Business Development Executive.

Compass revs up 15 years



COMPASS Expeditions recently celebrated the 15th anniversary of its inaugural motorcycle tour, the Patagonian Explorer.

The Melbourne-based motorcycle adventure tour company launched the trip, which remains one of its most popular offerings, in Nov 2008.

"We are thrilled to celebrate 15 years of adventure with the Patagonian Explorer, a tour that has not only become a classic but has also inspired us to innovate and create the exciting new Complete Patagonia 4WD Adventure Tour," Compass Expeditions Director & Co-Founder Jerry Cook said.

"This milestone is a testament to our dedication to providing unique trips to remote and incredible locations, and we are excited to continue pushing the boundaries of adventure travel."

Compass Expeditions will mark the milestone during its upcoming Patagonian Explorer motorcycle trip, scheduled to depart 22 Jan.

The tour operator is also set to operate its first-ever Patagonian driving tour in Nov, following the launch of its brand-new range of small-group 4WD tours last year (**TD** 24 Jul 2023) and the introduction of a new travel agent portal (**TD** 06 Oct 2023). *JM*

Pictured: A Compass Expeditions Patagonia tour group in Torres del Paine, Chile.

TS strike looming?

AIR Transat flight attendants have rejected a tentative contract deal with the Canadian carrier, due to "insufficient salary increases".

The rejection follows the approval of a strike mandate in Nov 2023, which allows the 2,100 staff members to walk off the job if a new contract cannot be agreed upon.

There are currently no strike or lockout notices issued by either party, with all Air Transat flights operating as per usual.

Negotiations have been underway since Apr last year.

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Auckland, New Zealand - 11th March 2024 - 8:00 AM- 5:30 PM