

Travel Daily

First with the news

Monday 8th Jan 2024



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Brazil delayed, again

THE much hyped visa needed for Aussies to enter Brazil, which was approved to launch on 10 Jan only last month (**TD** 07 Dec 2023), has been delayed once again.

The Brazilian Tourist Board said the visa will now come into force from 10 Apr to allow more time to set up the new E-visa system.

G pledges Swift rewards

EIGHT top selling travel agents from Australia and New Zealand will be invited to join G Adventures to see Taylor Swift strut her stuff in London as part of her global The Eras Tour.

Aussie and Kiwi travel sellers will join a global group of 75 advisors to see Taylor Swift's concerts in various locations around the world, as part of the operator's 'You Belong with G Experience' trade campaign.

"We want to create happiness and community for our agency partners in the same way G Adventures does for its travellers and Taylor does for her fans - it's a love story," founder Bruce Poon Tip mused.

"While I love seeing you having adventures on your own, I'm even more excited to bring our agent community together in person to share this experience.

"I have two daughters, so I've heard every album, listened to the radio so for all the Swifties out there, this is set to be the most hotly-contested travel agent experience G Adventures has ever run, like, ever," Poon Tip added.

Tickets to see the *Time's* Person of the Year in London will be awarded on the basis of cumulative sales, with the first



two winners being awarded at the end of Jan, followed by one winner for each month from Feb through to Jul.

Wild card tickets will also be announced in coming months.

For more details on the global incentive, join G Adventures' Agents of Change Facebook group via this link **HERE**. **AB**

ETC shakes hands with Island Escapes

EVOLUTION Travel Collective (ETC) has inked a new partnership with South Pacific specialist and Virtuoso preferred partner Island Escapes, a deal which will see the South Pacific destination specialist attempt to expand its trade presence in Australia.

"Whilst historically it has been small group touring that has formed the core of ETC's first five years, this partnership adds to a growing range of collectives we are now developing to diversify our overall represented product offering," Managing Director Ingrid Berthelsen said.

Learn to live in travel

TAFE NSW is challenging those working in travel to live a more adventurous life by enrolling this month and advance their future career opportunities.

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No longer a trade secret

EXCLUSIVE

HERITAGE Expeditions has earmarked an aggressive growth plan for the APAC region, the company's new Head of Global Sales Robert Halfpenny (pictured) has revealed to *Travel Daily*.

The comments arrived shortly after the highly experienced cruise executive formally started in the role late last week, a brand switch that was exclusively revealed by our sister publication *Cruise Weekly* in Nov last year (CW 17 Nov 2023).

"I'm very excited about this new role and am keen to drive more awareness with the trade here in the Australian market regarding Heritage Expeditions," he said.

"The unique remote destinations that Heritage explores are teeming with rare, almost mystical-like wildlife and isolated communities that the line explores in true expedition style," Halfpenny added.

Among the major selling points for the brand, Halfpenny enthused, is the recently refurbished 140-passenger *Heritage Adventurer*, offering guests spacious cabins, pools, a jacuzzi, Zodiacs and kayaks, to name just a few of the assets.

"[The upgrade] enables our



guests to explore these unique destinations in more comfort," Halfpenny noted.

"*Adventurer* was originally designed for 180 passengers but we will limit to a 140 maximum to retain the small ship expedition style that Heritage is famous for.

"Heritage Expeditions is a 35-year-old family-owned company...that's been a best kept secret for far too long in a world that just seems to keep becoming more and more homogenised."

One of Halfpenny's first orders of business this week is to travel to New Zealand to become even more acquainted with the Heritage product suite, including a visit to greet guests departing on Heritage's popular Antarctica Ross Sea cruise.

Another stop on the tour will include a trip to meet the head office team in Christchurch, as well as step foot aboard the line's recently renovated 18-passenger *Heritage Explorer* yacht in the Milford Sound.

Halfpenny will then return to Sydney and begin recruiting for an east coast-based sales role, with the successful candidate to assist with raising the profile of Heritage in the Australian market and grow the local sales team.

Interested parties can send their resumes to robert@heritage-expeditions.com.

Halfpenny was previously the Asia-Pacific Sales Director for Quark Expeditions since Oct 2021, with his departure seeing Tenille Hunt appointed as Quark's Regional Sales Director for the APAC region (TD 05 Jan). AB

It's a conspiracy: Albo

PRIME Minister Anthony Albanese has labelled new claims that he secretly discussed plans to block Qatar Airways with former Qantas boss Alan Joyce as "an absurd conspiracy".

The Federal Opposition has seized on diary entries from the Prime Minister that have been made public this week, which show a meeting took place with Joyce in Nov.

"The meeting with Alan Joyce has been known about since last Sep, I've answered questions in parliament where I say that, and I repeat again now, Qatar was not raised," Albanese said.

Royal plays new tune in Europe



ROYAL Caribbean International has joined forces with the Eurovision Song Contest to be the music event's official partner for 2024 and 2025.

The new collaboration will see the cruise line activate a range of experiences in Malmo, Sweden in May, including brand exposure spaces, host-city promotions and much more.

Royal's tie-up also marks the start of its European season with six ships sailing from eight cities across the continent and visiting a line-up of landmark destinations.

"The Eurovision Song Contest and Royal Caribbean share a passion for creating unforgettable experiences that unite people from all around the world," Executive Supervisor for the Eurovision Song Contest Martin Osterdahl said.

Details on how fans can get tickets to the 68th annual Eurovision Song Contest with Royal Caribbean will be revealed in the coming months. AB

Pictured: Last year's winner Loreen from Sweden after performing her hit *Tattoo*.

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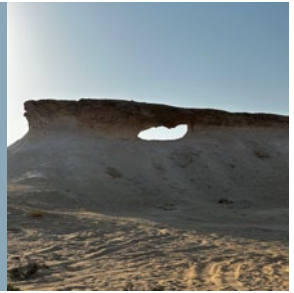
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TK locks in MEL start

CONTAINED in a recent statement to investors, Turkish Airlines has confirmed that Melbourne will be its first destination to fly to in Australia when it launches flights in Mar. The carrier was given the formal green light by Federal Transport Minister Catherine King back in Dec (**TD** 19 Dec 2023), belatedly allowing the carrier to operate 21 flights a week to Australia.

Turkish Airlines is expected to follow up Melbourne with flights between Istanbul and Sydney and Brisbane, with an eye also on other Aussie capitals.

Media reports overseas also suggest Turkish Airlines has entered into discussions with Aussie carrier Rex to forge a new partnership following its Federal Government approval to operate Australian services.

Turkish Airlines Chairman Ahmet Bolat had previously made reference to Rex's growing presence on the east coast and in Perth as attracting the Turkish carrier's attention.

Rex was contacted for comment to confirm the talks.

Turkish Airlines will initially require a stopover between Turkiye and Australia until fleet updates permit nonstop services.



FAA grounds B737 MAX-9

ANOTHER chapter in the controversy surrounding Boeing's 737 MAX planes has been added after a giant hole ripped open in the fuselage of an Alaska Airlines flight over the weekend.

The B737 MAX-9 jet managed to land safely in Portland despite the cabin depressurising due to a large rectangular hole which tore open mid-flight, a near miss that has prompted the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to ground all 171 B737 MAX-9 aircraft operating in the US so safety checks can be conducted.

"Safety will continue to drive our decision-making as we assist the NTSB's investigation into Alaska Airlines Flight 1282," the FAA said yesterday.

This morning, media reports in the United States suggested that "some" B737 MAX-9s have been allowed back into the air after undergoing thorough checks.

In Australia, Bonza has moved swiftly to hose down any speculation its fleet is in any way under a safety cloud following the Alaska Airlines incident.

"Bonza doesn't operate any of the 737 MAX-9 aircraft that have been temporarily grounded for inspection and we have received assurance from Boeing that there is no impact to our fleet," the carrier said in a statement.

Currently the Australian airline's fleet is comprised of Boeing's 737-8 MAX planes.

When contacted for comment,



Australia's Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) confirmed there are currently no Boeing 737 MAX 9s flown by any airlines in Australia, and therefore would not be commenting any further.

Meanwhile Boeing has also issued a statement indicating it will be cooperating fully with the investigation, stating that it "deeply regrets the impact this event has had on our customers and their passengers".

The 737 MAX first attracted controversy in 2019 after a malfunctioning flight control system caused two fatal air disasters in Indonesia and Ethiopia, killing all 346 people on board both flights. **AB**

Onward globe trots

THIS week marks the beginning of *Azamara Onward's* first ever World Cruise, a journey that will see the vessel embark on an 155-night itinerary.

Over the next five months, *Onward* will reach more than 40 countries in six continents with extended destination days included for 22 overnight stays and 27 late nights in port.

The 2024 World Cruise also features 11 'AzAmazing Celebrations' and three exclusive events, all designed to provide "an unparalleled and immersive experience for guests", the cruise line enthused this week.

"World cruisers will have the chance to indulge in extravagance and local entertainment during a full-day tour of the Taj Mahal and witness a unique performance in the second-largest underground cistern in Istanbul, Turkiye, among other captivating experiences."

QF hits out at Wilkie

A **QANTAS** spokesperson has told *Travel Daily* the airline strongly rejects federal member for Clark Andrew Wilkie's claims it is running a "scam" in the pricing of certain return tickets.

Qantas said sale fares are available in both directions of travel on all routes, pushing back on Wilkie's claim online around Christmas that the airline is deliberately releasing less expensive tickets for departing flights, but often only making relatively expensive options available for return flights.

"In some instances, one direction of travel will sell out prior to the return direction of travel and as with all our sales the most popular routes sell out first," the spokesperson said.

"More than 650,000 seats were available in our Boxing Day sale to more than 60 destinations across our domestic network."

Wilkie said in post on X that he would be lodging a complaint with the ACCC about the claim.

Japan crash delays



THE fallout from a deadly Japan Airlines collision in Tokyo with a cargo plane (**TD** 03 Jan) is still being felt by the local aviation sector, with one of the runways at Tokyo Haneda Airport remaining closed over the weekend and disrupting flight schedules.

"We strongly encourage customers with upcoming travel to check the latest flight status before departing for the airport," Japan Airlines urged in a recent statement to its customers.

"The most up-to-date information regarding JAL Group flight delays, cancellations, and special ticket handling can be found on the Japan Airlines app or website **HERE**."

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Beirut airport hack

LEBANON'S Beirut Int'l Airport has fallen victim to a cyberattack overnight, with the incident seeing terminal screens hijacked to instead display anti-Hezbollah messaging as the Iranian-backed militant group clashes with Israel. "Let the airport be freed from the grip of the Hezbollah statelet," one of the messages reportedly stated.

A good hill to die on

COMEDIAN and TV presenter Adam Hills has slammed a taxi driver servicing Melbourne Airport for failing to take a fare from an elderly woman with a walking frame because the requested journey was too short. Taking to social media platform X on Fri, Hills said: "F**k this s**t. Taxi drivers gotta do better. This time I took the plate and I am reporting it."

Hills, who himself lives with a physical disability, has often championed the cause of people living with disabilities, leading him to be critical of a taxi driver at Sydney Airport last year.

The entertainer said in Oct he had to withdraw cash and offer double rates for a cab after being rejected twice on the grounds the journey he wanted was too short.



Snag an evening with Ed



SINGAPORE Airlines (SIA) is offering its loyalty members the chance to attend an intimate one-night-only performance by Ed Sheeran in Singapore.

The carrier's KrisFlyer program has partnered with the British superstar's concert promoter AEG Presents Asia to offer members an early chance of buying tickets via miles redemption, with any remaining tickets to be offered to the general public from 12 Jan.

Members may redeem a pair of category 1 standing and category 2 tickets for 63,000 and 78,000 miles respectively, with each member able to score up to four tickets in both categories.

"We are pleased to offer KrisFlyer members priority access to a rare opportunity to attend Ed Sheeran's special performance in Singapore as part of our

continuous efforts to offer our members even more options and greater value," SIA's Acting Senior Vice President Marketing Planning, Dai Haoyu said.

To access the full terms and conditions, see [HERE](#). AB

Magnatech milestone

MAGNATECH, a provider of software solutions for travel management companies, has achieved a new level of data security accreditation.

The company has achieved Service Organization Control 2 (SOC 2) Type II certification, a globally recognised watermark relating to a range of responsibilities such as credit tracking, duty of care, travel documentation, as well as workflow automation.



Window Seat

THRILL seekers aboard a Warner Bros. Movie World roller coaster got a few more rushes of adrenaline than they bargained for when the ride was forced to stop on an incline for a terrifying three hours.

The popular DC Rivals HyperCoaster was shut down mid-ride when a scarf became entangled in the vehicle's wheels, posing a very real danger to the integrity of the high-speed attraction.

"The ride operator and the safety systems have done what they are trained and designed to do, and all the guests on board are safe with the ride vehicle stopped in a designated zone," a spokesperson for Movie World insisted.

The protocol called for all people aboard the ride to be fitted with harnesses and be escorted off the ride by foot, which many might point out is a fair bit scarier than riding the roller coaster at high speed.

While nobody was injured in the incident, we're certain there were some seriously scornful stares at whoever was wearing the loose fitting scarf.



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AAT sows the future's seed



AAT Kings' Down Under Tours team recently embarked on a day of volunteering, planting an impressive 4,200 trees which were all sourced from its TreadRight partner, Rainforest Rescue's nursery.

AAT shared on social media that the operator's staff joined 200 volunteers at Mossman Botanic Garden in Queensland for the environmental initiative, a site which is also surrounded by the Wet Tropics World Heritage area and was once owned by cane farmers, which is now undergoing a transformative journey through extensive planting.

AAT has also thanked those who have been involved throughout the day, priding the volunteers

as "embodying the spirit of community and environmental stewardship", while reiterating to the industry to be more engaged with "positive impact" projects in the future. *MW*

Pictured: Staff at AAT Kings, along with other volunteers, taking part in all of the action to make positive impact.

Balloon safety threat

CHINESE balloons flying over the Taiwan Strait are posing a threat to Taiwan's international aviation safety, the territory's government claims.

"We express our condemnation of the Chinese Communists' disregard for aviation safety and its disregard for the safety of passengers on cross-Taiwan Strait and international flights," the Taiwanese Government said.

Taiwan's ministry also said its analysis concluded the balloons are part of China's "grey zone" tactics against Taiwan "to use cognitive warfare to affect the morale of our people" in the lead up to federal elections on 13 Jan.

EK tucks into vegan

EMIRATES has noted a 40% customer surge in demand for plant-based meals, a trend that will see the airline introduce a range of new vegan dishes on flights and lounges later this year.

The carrier has flagged more than 300 types of vegan dishes.

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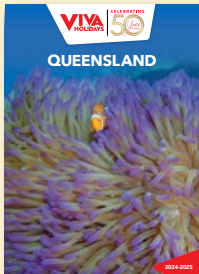


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A&K - Tailor-Made Journey 2024

For those who are looking for personalised luxury adventures, then look no further than A&K's latest release of its Tailor-Made Journey brochure for your next getaway. The "true luxury experience" offered by A&K showcases personal insights, stories and experiences sourced from a vast range of destinations across the North Africa, the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, and the Asia Pacific. Keen travellers can also learn more about A&K's upcoming tours throughout the 132-page guide. A&K understands no two travel journeys are the same, ensuring that its Tailor-Made Journeys are always entirely flexible.



Viva Holidays - Queensland 2024/25

Viva Holidays has released its 2024/25 Queensland brochure, highlighting the great range of accommodation and touring options on offer throughout the state. These range from beautiful beaches and star-gazing landscapes of the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, to the nature attractions of Whitsunday Islands and Tropical North Queensland. Travellers will find a wide range of touring available in the outback, as well as the Gulf Savannah. Newly introduced to the brochure is a two-night cruise through the picturesque Whitsundays, with travellers able to sail on board the *M.V. Whitsunday Explorer*.



Travelling Divas - Italy 2024

The boutique travel group for women, Travelling Divas, has unveiled a new departure in Italy for 2024, traversing from Verona to Venice in Sep. The fully-escorted tour includes luxurious accommodation - a three-night stay at Grand Hotel des Arts in Verona, a four-night stay at the four-star Post Hotel in San Candido and another three nights at Hotel de Len in Cortina D'Ampezzo. Travellers are also treated to daily complementary breakfasts, welcome drink and dinner in Verona, up to seven lunches and dinners throughout, and more.

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