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Monday 6th May 2024

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DENARAU

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Tourism Fiji, which is this week hosting us at the Fiji Tourism Exchange.

IN THE lead-up to the event, we joined a fam in the afternoon with travel operators to the newly refurbished Malamala Beach Club, where we kicked back with cocktails in the spectacular infinity pool.

We then sailed back to the mainland, just in time for the Fiji Tourism Exchange's welcome reception inside at the Sofitel Fiji Resort and Spa.

Envoyage eyes UK growth

EXCLUSIVE

ENVOYAGE has its sights set on the UK as the next major step in the brand's expansion plan.

Speaking to *Travel Daily* at Worldwide 2024 over the weekend, Flight Centre Travel Group MD - Independent & Leisure, Danielle Galloway, said that the recently launched brand plans to continue its global reach in the UK by targeting independent agencies in need of its unique value proposition.

"The sixth country that is missing is the UK, which of course we have a high level of interest to enter," Galloway revealed.

Formally introduced in Feb of this year (*TD* 27 Feb), the overarching Envoyage global brand currently includes markets in the US, Canada, South Africa, NZ, and Australia, all of which had strong representation at the inaugural Worldwide conference in Santiago.

"We're looking at what the acquisition pathway looks like... it's an obvious next step in terms of our growth strategy, and the next step forward would be into



the UK," Galloway said.

She also reiterated the strength of Envoyage lies in its growing global reach, in addition to the security and opportunities that comes with being part of FCTG.

"Being able to capitalise on our global strength sets us apart, leveraging the depth of experience across all markets.

"Our global ecosystem gives our members access to an unparalleled range of technology, product, partnerships and innovation backed by a travel business that has been leading the industry for over 40 years," Galloway concluded. *AP*

Today's issue of *TD*

Travel Daily has seven pages of the latest travel industry news including a photo page from **Brisbane Airport** and a full page from **A&K**.



LOS ANGELES

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of the IPW conference.

IPW 2024 started with many activities taking place over the weekend, including the opening ceremony at the Memorial Colosseum, where Diana Ross performed for the crowd.

A press conference at the Getty Museum was held yesterday featuring Ahmed Best, the actor behind Star Wars' Jar Jar Binx, and today is the opening of California Plaza and the media marketplace.



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Travel Daily
ON LOCATION



ECUADOR

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of HX, which is this week hosting us on a cruise around the Galapagos Islands on board *Santa Cruz II*.

TODAY is one of the most jam-packed days of activities thus far aboard HX's *Santa Cruz II*, as our voyage finishes tomorrow.

As the ship calls in Floreana Island, guests will be offered snorkelling, stand-up paddleboarding, kayaking, and glass-bottom boat rides, to name just a few of the activities.

Santa Cruz II's luckiest passengers will be able to frolic with sea lions, observe hammerhead sharks, and spot flamingos in one of the region's most prominent breeding spots.

Qantas to pay \$120 million

QANTAS has admitted to misleading its customers by selling tickets for tens of thousands of flights it had already decided to cancel.

In a deal reached with the ACCC this morning, the carrier has agreed to pay a \$120 million penalty for deploying the improper sales practice (*TD* breaking news), including \$20 million in compensation for 86,000 impacted passengers.

In a statement issued this morning, Qantas said payments to customers will range from \$225 to \$450, and that the remediation program would commence in advance of formal

Get your gift cards

NEW Abercrombie & Kent bookings deposited in May will earn agents a prepaid Visa gift card increasing with the booking value - more info on **page eight**.

approval from the Federal Court.

The remittance will be in addition to any refunds already received by passengers.

Today's development followed legal action launched by the consumer watchdog against Qantas in Oct last year (*TD* 13 Oct 2023), initially flatly denied by the carrier, which at the time claimed the ACCC was "ignoring the realities" of operating an airline in an aviation sector still recovering from the pandemic.

The ACCC said the carrier's conduct had been "egregious and unacceptable", and that the penalty agreed to will send a strong deterrence message to other companies.

"The size of this proposed penalty is an important milestone in enforcing the Australian Consumer Law," the ACCC said.

Qantas will email affected pax next month about how to lodge a claim for compensation. **AB**

Charging bookings

EVERY travel agency who registers online with Touropa will receive a wireless phone charger as part of a new incentive.

To action the limited-time offer, agents must fill in the form **HERE**, with one charger to be sent out for each store registration, while stocks last.

Agents can view the full range of Touropa products **HERE**.

The brand is represented by Evolution Travel Collective.

Rail Europe adds

PRIVATE Czech Republic rail operator RegioJet can now be ticketed by agents connected to Rail Europe's B2B platforms RailAPI, RailFlash and RailPortal.

RegioJet links major Czech cities with Central and Eastern Europe, offering day and night services and a wide range of seat classes, including low cost, business, Relax couchette and even dedicated carriages for women.



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EY/ZL pact goes live

ETIHAD Airways has switched on its new interline partnership with Rex Airlines (TD 11 Mar).

The agreement allows travellers to connect to and from Etihad's daily services to Sydney and Melbourne onto Rex flights to 22 city and regional destinations incl Adelaide, Hobart, Gold Coast, Canberra, Brisbane and more.

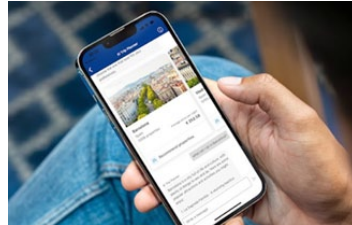
Agents can now book Rex and Etihad itineraries to and from eligible destinations on one ticket, with travellers enjoying baggage checked through to their final destination at initial check-in.



Booking.com's AI agent

BOOKING.COM has gone live with a new AI trip information service in Australia and New Zealand, which pledges to ape human advice at any point during the trip planning phase.

Following a successful trial in the United States and the UK, the OTA's AI Trip Planner (Beta) can now be accessed by



Aussie travellers, utilising large language models from OpenAI's ChatGPT API to create an intuitive conversational experience.

Among the types of enquiries Booking.com's new AI service claims to be able to field include scoping out destinations and accommodation options, providing travel inspiration based on the individual's needs, as well as creating itineraries for a particular city, country or region.

Travellers can also chat with the AI planner to refine their searches in real time, with new options surfaced in only seconds.

The emergence of more intuitive generative AI in the OTA space has spurred plenty of discussion among human travel advisors, some of whom claim the technology represents a threat to their value proposition.

"Over the past year, our AI Trip Planner has provided us with new possibilities to help customers plan and search for travel options in a very natural, human way...and we're able to start having scalable, one-to-one conversations with our customers on their terms," the OTA said. AB

For more context on the rise of AI in travel planning, see [HERE](#).

Body off ship found

THE body of a passenger who fell overboard from P&O's *Pacific Adventure* in the early hours of this morning has been recovered.

The yet-to-be-identified man fell from the vessel during an Elvis-themed voyage, with a report now being prepared for the coroner.

More details in tomorrow's *CW*.

Publicity & Communications Executive – Sydney

About Us:

At Tourism Ireland, we market the island of Ireland overseas. We take pride in connecting millions of potential visitors each year to all the island has to offer. Tourism is an industry supporting over 300,000 jobs across the island of Ireland and it thereby contributes meaningfully to economies and communities. We partner with government agencies, airlines, accommodation and attraction providers and more to grow the value of tourism, and to provide visitors with an inspiring and unique experience. Set up under the auspices of the Good Friday Agreement, Tourism Ireland plays an important role as a North South body for a key industry on the island of Ireland, serving both Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Applicants can view job profile and apply [HERE](#)

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Travel Daily

Aussies eager for Envoyage



Image credit: Jarryd Biviano

EXCLUSIVE

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's (FCTG) new independent brand, Envoyage, aims to be a home for independent advisors from every area of the travel industry, shared FCTG MD - Independent & Luxury Danielle Galloway at the group's first global conference, Worldwide, in Santiago last week.

Speaking to *Travel Daily*, Galloway explained that Envoyage, as the tagline suggests, is for every journey, with the group investing in not only the global Envoyage brand, but also in the development of its widespread travel ecosystem.

"No matter what markets you're in, no matter what your business model is, no matter what your specialisation, there is a pathway for everyone," she said.

"Having one global brand allows FCTG to centralise investment in our rapidly growing independents division, including technology, product, and innovation."

The global overarching Envoyage brand launched in Feb this year (**TD** 27 Feb), and will go live in Australia in the middle of this year, a launch that Envoyage GM AU Nick Queale said is being eagerly awaited by the local market.

"In Australia, it's about community, about bringing everyone together under one brand, giving them what we can do as a global company and giving them the vision of the home and heart of the travel entrepreneur.

"Giving them a place to be a forever home," he contended.

Additionally, Queale believes that the competitive advantage of Envoyage in Australia is the group's focus on partnering in the journey of the individual agent.

"It's your business, your way... come with us on the journey, be your business, it's your DNA", he explained.

"Then, we act together...we'll take your brand to the next level."

Pictured enjoying the conference in Chile are Envoyage's global executive team: Jason Buckley, Chantal Gouws, Anita Emilio, Danielle Galloway, Christina Pedroni, Astrid Richardson, and Nick Queale. *AP*

A magical incentive

DISNEY Destinations has partnered with United Airlines to launch a new sales incentive for Aussie travel advisors.

The top 10 selling agents will score a spot on a famil to Walt Disney World Resort in Florida and Disneyland Resort in California, where they will compete in a series of mini-challenges for the title of 'Australia's Most Magical Travel Agent'.

Advisors need to register and log any booking made between 06 May and 14 Jul 2024 for Disneyland Resort in California, Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, AULANI, a Disney Resort & Spa or a Disney Cruise Line sailing, as well as UA flight bookings to mainland USA.

Bookings must be made through an Australian wholesaler, or via a GDS to be eligible for entry - more details on the incentive **HERE**.

Aussies bullish on the US

AUSTRALIAN visitor numbers to the United States are expected to surpass 2019 levels this year, according to Brand USA outgoing CEO, Christopher Thompson, despite challenges with the cost-of-living crisis and the strong performing US dollar.

Speaking at IPW in Los Angeles, Thompson said "Long-haul visitors are expected to surpass pre-pandemic levels in 2025 and increase to 36.7 million in 2027 - 2023 numbers were driven by stronger than expected economic growth and consumer's desire to prioritise travel.

"So far, spending in the United States by international visitors is approximately \$660 million per day... India has already surpassed 2019 levels while Australia, Brazil, Canada, the UK, Germany, France and Italy are all expected to surpass those figures by 2025."

Last year, 960,000 Australians visited the United States.

Thompson called out the increase in seat capacity out of

the Asia Pacific region as part of the reason for the growth, specifically mentioning the Qantas non-stop service between Auckland and New York.

"Scheduled seat capacity from non-stop flights out of Asia-Pacific markets is significantly higher than 2023 levels, with India, Singapore, South Korea, Vietnam and NZ all poised to surpass pre-pandemic levels in 2024.

When asked whether the cost-of-living crises and the strong US dollar could dampen Aussie's desire to travel to the US, Thompson said Brand USA was seeing travellers from down under change the way they travelled rather than not travel, but that "there are still headwinds out of our control." *DF*

Taiwan open for biz

TAIWAN is still encouraging visitors after experiencing its strongest earthquake in 25 years two weeks ago, which according to local reports, killed nine people and injured around 900 others.

The magnitude 7.4 quake mainly impacted Hualien City, which is popular with international tourists due to its proximity to the scenic Taroko Gorge.

Taiwan Tourism has confirmed that the rest of the country remains unaffected and open for visitors, while MW Tours said it had seen "minimal disruptions" in tour bookings to the destination, despite initial concerns.



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Fiji's tourism recovery "ahead of schedule"

LAST night, the Fiji Tourism Exchange (FTE) kicked off with a bang, as travel operators and industry stakeholders descended upon the island to discuss future opportunities for the Pacific region and cultivate long-lasting business relationships.

During the opening ceremony at the Sofitel Fiji Resort and Spa in Denarau, Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, Viliame Gavoka, discussed the significant role of tourism in Fiji's economy.

"It's heartwarming to witness such an overwhelming turnout, with even greater enthusiasm than last year, boasting participation from over 125 buyers, 80 sellers, and representatives from 19 international media outlets - we have over 4,000 meetings scheduled," he said.

"We're building upon the success of last year, and the momentum is palpable."



Tourism Fiji CEO Brent Hill (pictured) also took to the stage, sharing news of Fiji's record year in 2023, with the visitor economy contributing more than FJD\$3.3 billion (A\$2.21 billion) in revenue - a target which was met a year ahead of schedule.

Over the next four years, the plan is to grow Fiji's visitor economy by FJD\$1 billion.

"We're optimistic about 2024 - we acknowledge, of course, the

challenges that lie ahead; we are not averse to the fact that there is intense competition and there are inflationary pressures," he said.

"That stresses for us the need to deliver that exceptional service that we're known for and to deliver that exceptional value for every dollar spent."

Hill highlighted the interesting demographic trends he has noticed over the past year, including the growth of adventure travellers & the 30-50 age bracket.

He also mentioned some shifts in travel preferences, such as a rising demand for ecotourism, adventure and sports activities, as well as wellness-focused holidays and luxury spend.

After the opening ceremony, FTE delegates enjoyed cocktails and canapes at the exclusive Waitui Beach Club at the Sofitel, featuring an infinity pool, luxurious cabanas and a lagoon pool, nestled on the beach under the palm trees. *JHM*



Window Seat

ONE town in Japan is so fed up with tourists that it has taken what some might call a rather petty approach to keeping sight-seers away.

The many travellers that come to Fujikawaguchiko to snap the perfect shot of Mount Fuji will be left disappointed when they find their view blocked by a large black screen later this month.

The town, known for having several great viewpoints of the iconic mountain, is constructing a 2.5m-high, 20m-long black mesh net at one particular photo spot that has become a little too popular.

Affectionately dubbed 'Mt. Fuji Lawson', the location (pictured) allows visitors to snap an interesting angle of Mount Fuji, as though the mountain is sitting atop a local convenience store.

Unruly tourists have attracted the disdain of locals though, with a deluge of complaints about visitors blocking the narrow sidewalk, taking photos on the busy road, or walking into private properties.

The black screen is a last resort for the town, which has already tried other methods, including signs in several languages urging visitors not to run into the road and to use the designated crosswalk, not to mention hiring a security guard as crowd control.

Several local business owners in Fujikawaguchiko have said the overcrowding has worsened in the past few months, as Japan's tourism industry experiences a post-pandemic boom.



APT unveils 2025

APT has launched its Australia 2025 program, which features two new luxury cruising experiences and a \$5 million refurbishment of its exclusive Mitchell Falls Wilderness Lodge.

Travellers can book the 11-day 'Kimberley Coastal Expedition' aboard *Seabourn Pursuit* with savings of up to \$4,600 per couple, or discounts of up to \$1,000 per couple on an eight-day Murray River voyage aboard the new *PS Australian Star*.

Also on offer are APT's 4WD outback adventures, its flagship tour in the Kimberley, and much more - see [HERE](#) for details.



Agents say G'day to Margaret



TOURISM Australia, in partnership with Jetstar, recently spoiled a group of top-selling NSW travel agents and partners with a trip to the Margaret River Region, in celebration of Jetstar's new direct Sydney to Busselton-Margaret River flight (*TD 20 Mar*).

The group experienced the region's pristine beaches, premium food and wine, the

gorgeous coastline along the Cape to Cape track, Busselton Jetty, a didgeridoo cave tour, and more.

Operating three days weekly, the five-hour non-stop service is two hours faster than the indirect route, making it easier and more convenient for travellers.

The group is pictured soaking up all of the stunning scenery of Cape Naturaliste. *JM*

SQ celebrates 40 years in Brisbane



GERT-JAN de Graaff, Brisbane Airport presented Louis Arul, Singapore Airlines with a gift from local artist Delvene Cockatoo-Collins.

OVER 110 guests and partners attended a Singapore Airlines (SQ) event at Howard Smith Wharves last week, celebrating the 40th anniversary of the carrier's flights to Brisbane.

The iconic Singapore Airlines hospitality was also on full display, with guests greeted by cabin crew with fresh purple orchids and a bespoke menu reflecting a mix of Queensland and Singaporean cuisine.

Sipping on Singapore Slings, many attendees reminisced about their memories of Singapore Airlines over the years, demonstrating the personal

connection many Queenslanders share with the airline.



JIM Fuoco, Virgin Australia; Ryan Both, Brisbane Airport; Michael Healy MP, Minister for Tourism and Sport; Louis Arul, Singapore Airlines; Oliver Philpot, Tourism and Events Queensland; and Anthony Cicuttini, Brisbane Airport.



SINGAPORE Airlines' sales and marketing Dream Team - Luke Greenslade-Horton, Marco Giarrizzo, Vanessa Beros and Greg McJarrow.



CABIN crew joined from Singapore to provide guests a warm welcome.



MICHAEL Lai, The Star Brisbane; Tas Webber, Brisbane Economic Development Agency; and Katie Mills, Tourism and Events Queensland.



FONDLY known as 'Big Top', the inaugural flight to Brisbane in 1984 was on a Boeing 747.



SMILES as big as the Story Bridge - Stan Klinakis from Pulse Travel and Greg McJarrow from Singapore Airlines.



CHEERS to 40 years in Brisbane!

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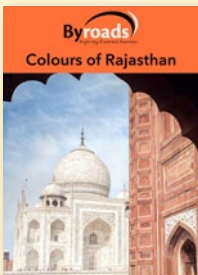
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ANZCRO - The New Zealand Book 2024/25

To celebrate its momentous 30th anniversary, the Australian and New Zealand tour operator has published a special edition of its New Zealand Book, which promises to be the most comprehensive version to date. Featuring a Maori Pounamu carving on the cover, the guide features a host of new features and updated content across 140 pages, as well as details of around 400 of ANZCRO's most popular products and suppliers.

The book is divided into regions and includes a large pullout map at the back, making it easy for travel agents to find the information they are looking for. New for 2024 is a dedication section for self-guided rail tours, including four of the operator's most popular rail packages. The New Zealand Book can be ordered via TIFs or viewed online.



Byroads Travel - Colours of Rajasthan 2025

Discover the colours of Rajasthan, one of India's least densely populated states, in Byroads Travel's latest brochure. The digital booklet details the company's 16-day 'Colours of Rajasthan - Palaces Deserts and Tales Untold' tour, departing 10 Feb 2025. The journey kicks off in the capital city of New Delhi and traverses the state's most vibrant regions, taking in age-old wonders such as the Red Fort, Jama Masjid Mosque, and Qutab Minor Sikh

Temple, to name a few. Guests will also have the opportunity to savour traditional Indian cuisine and enjoy local hospitality. The brochure dives into the finest details of the itinerary, offering a day-by-day play so that agents and their clients know exactly what to expect, along with information on pricing, accommodation, how to book, and more.



Zepplin Travel - Harbin Ice & Snow Festival 2025

Get a sneak peek at Zepplin Travel's nine-day itinerary in the picturesque northern city of Harbin, China. Departing from Brisbane in Jan next year, the tour focuses on the world-renowned Ice and Snow Festival, a winter wonderland of ice sculptures and intricate snow art. Guests will enjoy ice slides, snow mazes, cultural performances, and a horse-drawn sleigh ride, as well as an overnight stay in the fairytale village of Snow Town. Other

highlight experiences include witnessing Siberian Tigers at the Siberian Tiger Park, and a visit to the Japanese Germ Warfare Experimental Base. Zepplin Travel is offering savings of up to \$150 per person when travellers lock in their bookings before 10 May.

SYD converts trash to treasure



SYDNEY Airport is preparing to auction off more than 2,500 unclaimed lost property items to raise money for charity, with bids starting from just \$10.

The annual auction will raise funds for the Harding Miller Education Foundation, which provides four-year scholarships to high school girls with high academic potential who are experiencing disadvantage. "Our lost property auction is one of our most important charity events, and with \$1.6m raised since 2013, it's clear the public love nabbing a bargain in support of a worthy cause," said Josh Clements, Sydney Airport's GM of Corporate Affairs.

Items under the hammer include laptops, phones, jewellery, perfume, sunglasses, wine and spirits, a wedding dress, an electric scooter, a leaf blower, *Star Wars* merch, and even a framed and autographed photo of Lionel Messi - see the line-up [HERE](#).

Sydney Airport has raised over \$1.6 million for charities through its auctions since 2013. *JM*

Custodian camping

A NEW Aboriginal tourism experience, Camping with Custodians, has opened in Western Australia's Kimberley region on the Dampier Peninsula.

Owned and run by First Nations people, the new campground at Lombadina gives visitors the opportunity to learn about local culture and customs, while also enjoying activities and tours in the area, such as mud crabbing and whale watching.

"Camping with Custodians enables visitors to experience the unique Aboriginal culture in a personal, authentic setting, while creating employment and training opportunities in local Aboriginal communities," WA Tourism Minister, Rita Saffioti, said.

Seven campsites have now been opened through the Camping with Custodians initiative, which is part of the state's 'Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan 2021-2025', and is funded by the WA Government's \$20 million Aboriginal Tourism Fund.



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