

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of the latest travel industry news plus a full page from **Abercrombie & Kent**.

Rand cruises back

FOLLOWING the return of its first bricks-and-mortar Cruiseabout store in five years (*TD* 02 May), Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has appointed cruise specialist Brooke Rand to the role of Head of Product.

Rand will assist Cruiseabout's partners and suppliers grow their market share in her new position, arriving from RAA Travel, where she spent four years leading the company's cruise strategy.

Following the Cruiseabout store in Perth will be retail locations in Sydney, Adelaide, & Melbourne.

Carriers fill the breach

FOLLOWING the sudden collapse of Air Vanuatu last week (*TD* 10 May), Virgin Australia has ramped up flights to the destination to fill the vacuum, as the Pacific carrier scrambles to get flights back in the air.

After a request by the Australian Government, VA has increased services between Brisbane and Vanuatu to five a week, up from twice weekly, and is seeking to increase capacity from other east coast ports.

The beefed up Brisbane flights will continue through May and Jun, with VA writing to the International Air Services Commission to increase seat capacity to enable a further seven weekly services.

Fiji Airways has also stepped up efforts to service the Pacific destination while Air Vanuatu remains grounded, upgauging services this week between Nadi

and Port Vila by swapping its ATR 72 aircraft with much larger B737 Max planes.

The move adds 110 seats per flight in each direction, with Fiji Airways confirming it is in discussions with the Vanuatu Government to explore long-term developments to plug gaps and assist stranded passengers. *AB*

Grocke to inspire

INSPIRING Vacations has appointed Josh Grocke as its new Corporate Partnerships Manager, who arrives following a six-month contract at tour operator Crooked Compass (*TD* 24 Nov 2023).

In his new position, Grocke will be charged with boosting agency engagement and the brand's broader visibility in the market.

Grocke has previously worked in senior leadership positions with Corporate Traveller, Flight Centre Business Travel, and VA.

Inspiring Vacations said one of his first orders of business is to meet with agents and industry partners as the company prepares for a special travel agent event in Brisbane on 20 Jun.

Cruising with A&K

ABERCROMBIE & Kent has launched its 2025 range of luxury expedition cruises, with voyages capped at 199 passengers.

Learn more about the range on **page six** of today's *Travel Daily*.

Bonza owes \$115m

A CREDITORS meeting held last Fri has revealed the beleaguered Aussie airline Bonza owes more than \$115 million.

Administrators Hall Chadwick confirmed the carrier has \$80m of outstanding debts with owner 777 Partners, \$10.5m in landlord fees, \$16m to 120 trade creditors, \$5.3m to employees, an ATO bill of \$2.7m, and \$4.6m to aircraft leasing business AIP Capital.

Hall Chadwick had been hopeful of extracting some assistance from either the Federal or Qld governments, however the agency said it was "unlikely" any bailouts would be forthcoming.

Despite the gloomy financial outlook, Hall Chadwick also noted there were six "very interested parties" in buying Bonza, including other airlines.

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TTF Green Summit

REGISTRATIONS are closing soon for the Tourism and Transport Forum's 2024 'Green Revolution Summit' (*TD* 09 May), which takes place this Thu 16 May at ICC Sydney.

The Forum will give attendees the chance to learn from industry leaders on how the sector is working to conserve natural resources and minimise its carbon footprint - **CLICK HERE** for details.

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Princess of Europe

PRINCESS Cruises has announced its 2026 Europe program, which will be its largest-ever deployment on the continent, featuring five ships. The cruise line's new flagship *Sun Princess* will operate re-introduced Rome round-trip itineraries for seven, 14, and 21 nights around the Mediterranean. Further highlights of the 2026 season include Princess' 'Total Solar Eclipse' cruise, as well as a return to the Danish capital Copenhagen following a six-year hiatus from the city.

Princess is set to sail a record-breaking 222 cruises from Mar through to Nov 2026, with 59 unique itineraries visiting 101 destinations across 29 countries, ranging from five to 42 nights. Call 1300 587 473 for details.

HLO is bound for Canada



HELLOWORLD has revealed its 2025 Owner Manager Conference (OMC) will take place in Vancouver in Canada's British Columbia.

Hosted in conjunction with Destination Canada, Destination British Columbia, and Destination Vancouver, the HLO event will run from 22-24 May next year.

Helloworld's Chief Executive and Managing Director, Andrew Burnes, said he was delighted to host the event in Vancouver.

"Canada is such a popular destination for Australian and New Zealand travellers and it is terrific to be heading to an international destination for OMC for the first time in a few years.

"We know our agents will thoroughly enjoy the program we are already putting together and can't wait to welcome everyone to Vancouver in 2025," he shared.

Helloworld agents are encouraged to save the date and keep an eye out for registrations, which are opening soon. *JM Pictured* as the exciting announcement was made: Burnes with Destination BC Joanne Motta, Destination Canada Julie King and HLO's Cinzia Burnes.

Azamara new CEO

TRAVEL industry veteran Dondra Ritzenthaler has taken the helm as Azamara's new Chief Executive Officer, following the departure of Carol Cabezas in Nov last year (*TD* 08 Nov 2023).

Ritzenthaler has more than four decades of experience, particularly in the cruise industry, and has become known for her passion, positivity, and dedication to travel partners.

She served as an executive with Celebrity Cruises for more than 20 years, amassing proven success in sales and well-established relationships with trade partners.

Cabezas departed Azamara late last year, having led the cruise line for six years, with Executive Chair Dan Hanrahan leading the company in the interim.

EK back to Edinburgh

EMIRATES will reinstate services between its Dubai headquarters and the Scottish capital of Edinburgh from 04 Nov, operating daily.

The upcoming route will be served by A350-900 aircraft in a three-class configuration, with 32 lie-flat seats in business, 21 in premium economy and 259 seats in economy class on offer.

QF regional savings

QANTAS has discounted 600,000 seats across 300 domestic routes.

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The promotion is available until 20 May for travel between Jun 2024 and Mar 2025.

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The Chat
with Jenny

Travel Daily
A conversation with Jill Abel

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Boost TA funding: ATEC

THE Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) is urging the Federal Government to increase Tourism Australia's budget, as businesses around the country spend more than ever to lure international visitors back.

According to the Council's recent survey, more than three quarters of export tourism businesses are spending 20% or more on marketing than they did pre-COVID, while a quarter have seen their marketing costs double compared to 2019.

Businesses said they are feeling the pressure in light of increased spending by competitor destinations, exchange rates, cost of attending trade shows, advertising costs and overall business travel expenses.

"For Australian tourism businesses in particular, the costs of marketing their product in Europe or the US have increased significantly, and this is really

showing in our ability to hold space in the international travel marketplace," ATEC Managing Director, Peter Shelley, said.

"As we move towards this year's Federal Budget, we are seeing agencies such as Tourism Australia trying to do more with much the same budget, in real terms, they've been working with for the past decade."

He pointed out that state tourism budgets, along with the Australia's collective funding pool, have shrunk, while many of our competitors have boosted their tourism marketing spend.

"Failing to invest in tourism is failing to invest in an Australian success story," Shelley argued.

"We call on the Federal Government to support tourism, to support the economy by helping tourism businesses across Australia to get back to into the market and get back to doing what they do best." JM

Accor spreads the love



ACCOR showed appreciation to its partners, clients and corporate advisors via a series of special 'thank you' events across Australia and NZ last week.

Hosted by the Accor Pacific sales teams, the events took place in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, attracting more than 550 people.

It was also an opportunity for Accor to showcase its brands, new hotels, and introduce new key executives across its sales and business events teams.

"It was a pleasure to gather so many of our valued travel

trade partners and clients, as it provided us a lovely opportunity to give our heartfelt thanks for the contribution they make to our Group," Accor Pacific Chief Operating Officer PM&E, Adrian Williams, said.

Attendees at the Sydney and Melbourne events enjoyed traditional Swiss cheeses and pancakes with Swissotel, sampled live dessert art with Pullman, took a moment of calm with Novotel, indulged in the chocolate fountain by Movenpick, and sampled local ice creams with Mantra. JM

Pictured: Accor Pacific sales teams at Swissotel Sydney.

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California dreaming

CALIFORNIA is forecasting Aussie visitors to spend \$1.3 billion dollars in the US state this year, up by 3% on 2019 levels, while 2025 volumes are expected to rise even higher.

“California tourism is back where it belongs, setting records and once again proving its ability to recover from any challenge, whether it be economic or environmental,” said Caroline Beteta, Visit California’s President and Chief Executive Officer.

The news of the state’s travel recovery, which was announced at IPW in LA last week, comes as Visit California launches its new platform ‘The Ultimate Playground’ (*TD* 05 Mar).

NSW hotel boost

HOTEL occupancy and room rates in NSW are expected to receive a boost in 2024-25, thanks to surging inbound tourism, according to a new report by CBRE.

The prediction comes after Sydney’s hotel sector surpassed pre-pandemic levels in 2023, achieving the highest occupancy of all major markets at 77% (up 20% year-on-year) and the highest average daily room rate in Australia at \$269.

The *CBRE Hotels Australia Overview and Outlook* report predicts Sydney will benefit from international arrivals to the city continuing to recover, with occupancy levels likely to be pushed even higher.

Planes dry up in Outback



THE aircraft shortage currently plaguing the aviation sector is on full display in Australia’s outback, with the number of surplus planes dwindling from 150 at the height of the pandemic to just 20.

Asia Pacific Aircraft Storage Managing Director, Tom Vincent, told *The Australian* yesterday that sluggish plane production and supply chain issues had seen airlines hold on to aircraft for longer than initially anticipated.

“Until airlines have certainty around delivery of new equipment, that is a smart move,” Vincent observed.

“There [are] significant issues with Boeing, Airbus has delivery issues and you’ve got big issues with Pratt & Whitney GTF 1100 engines,” he added.

The slower production rates of Boeing 737 Max aircraft have

already impacted fleet renewal plans and network capacity for Virgin Australia, which recently scrapped direct Adelaide to Bali services (*TD* 30 Apr).

Qantas has also felt the effects of the trend, quietly revealing delays to Project Sunrise flights earlier this year, which have been pushed back by six months due to delays in the arrival of new A350-1000ULRs (*TD* 22 Feb). *AB*

Pictured: The Asia Pacific Aircraft Storage facility in Alice Springs in 2021 versus today.

QR gets revv’d up

QATAR Airways has been named as the Official Airline Partner of MotoGP, as part of a three-year partnership with the motorcycle racing event ahead of the French Grand Prix at Le Mans.



Window Seat

AN ENTERPRISING Kiwi lawyer, who might have a little too much time on his hands, is locked in a legal battle with Jetstar after he exposed a glaring loophole in the airline’s ‘Return for Free’ promotion.

Tyrone Barugh booked a flight from Auckland to Sydney and paid \$260, with the return sector included in the deal.

However, he then cancelled the paid outbound sector but left the return leg confirmed, obtaining a credit from Jetstar instead of a refund.

Barugh then used that credit to book another flight and the free return sector, repeating the process 57 more times and therefore ending up with 58 free confirmed flights.

Making the matter more absurd, Barugh said he has no plan to even take any of the flights - he just wanted to see if his loophole idea worked.

The matter is now before the Disputes Tribunal of New Zealand, with Barugh chasing around \$4,500 in refundable taxes made up of numerous instances of the \$60 Passenger Movement Charge.

He told *News.com.au* he was enjoying the banter of the matter, considered the whole thing “a spirit of larrikinism”, and would settle for a small flight credit and a toy plane.

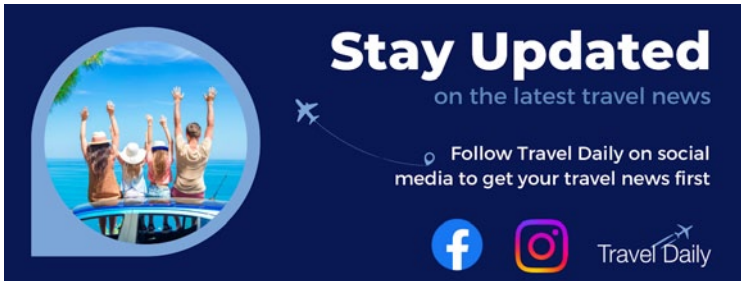
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
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THIS week's Brochures of the Week is brought to you by
DriveAway.



DriveAway - United Kingdom Road Trip Planner

Travellers can plan the road trip of a lifetime using DriveAway's new United Kingdom Road Trip Planner. From serene countryside to bustling cityscapes, the 17-page guide details itineraries covering fascinating cities, towns and villages across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Featuring accommodation options for all budgets and recommendations on what to do and see in each destination, the planner makes it easy for travellers to design the self-drive tour that suits their particular interests. There's also a section offering information on UK road rules.



BKB Holidays - Western Australia 2024/25

Discover BKB Holidays' newly released Western Australia brochure. The 72-page brochure is the ultimate guide to planning the perfect getaway in WA, featuring some of the state's top hotel, cruise, rail and tour options. The brochure is divided into different regions, including Broome and the Kimberley, the Pilbara, Coral Coast, Perth, and more. There's also a dedicated section for rail journeys and cruising in the Kimberley, as well as

self-drive itineraries ranging from eight to 16 days in length. Travellers will also find a handy map of WA within the brochure, plus information on car and campervan hire.



Renaissance Tours - A World of Travel, Jul-Dec '24

Travellers looking for a culturally-focused getaway in the second half of the year can turn to Renaissance Tours' latest brochure for inspiration. The 23-page guide highlights exciting itineraries across the world, including to New York in the US, Marseille in France, Hokkaido in Japan, and much more. Each tour is led by a dedicated guide, whose expertise and intimate knowledge of the destination is detailed in the brochure. Whether

you are an aficionado in art, opera, music, ballet, or architecture, Renaissance Tours' collection of cultural and special interest tours has something for everyone.

IHG drops footy packages



FOOTY fans will want to jump onto IHG Hotels & Resorts latest offering, with the accommodation giant launching exclusive, money-can't-buy experiences at the 2024 A-League All Stars and the Isuzu UTE A-League Men's Grand Final.

Part of IHG's three-year deal as the official accommodation partner of the Australian Professional Leagues (APL), there are four fan packages now up for grabs on the IHG One Rewards Access platform.

The bundles offer prime seats at the matches later this month, as well as rare experiences including pre-game 'Field of Play Tours' and lunch with the manager of one of the APL's top clubs, who will share what it's like to lead a top-tier football team.

The A-League packages are available for Australian IHG One Rewards members, who can use their points to bid on the experiences - learn more about the auctions **HERE**. JM

Boeing rejects threat

BOEING has refused to pay a US\$200 million ransom demand from hackers who used malicious software to steal sensitive data from the plane manufacturer in Nov 2023.

The cyber criminals walked away with 43 gigabytes of Boeing's data, which according to reports, consisted of backups from different company systems and also included configuration backups for IT management software and logs for monitoring and auditing tools.

The US Department of Justice recently unsealed an indictment against one of the hackers, Dmitry Yuryevich Khoroshev, who was accused of being the one to develop and maintain the LockBit ransomware for the attack.

Boeing said the hack affected its parts and distribution business, however it did not compromise passenger flight safety.

SYD extends media

SYDNEY Airport is set to upgrade its media estate across its terminals, car parks and external road network, after extending its partnership with out-of-home media provider JCDecaux until 2029.

The announcement coincides with the launch of SYD's new 'Brand Connect' platform.

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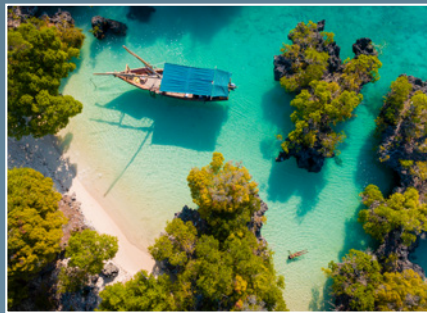
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