Travel Daily First with the news

Wednesday 15th May 2024



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of the latest travel industry news including our Luxury page, a photo page from the Helloworld Owner Managers Conference, plus a full page from Inspiring Vacations.



Padman scores CT role

XCLUSIVE

FORMER Helloworld Travel senior executive David Padman has taken a new role with Connections Travel Group.

Padman (pictured) will become head of Supplier Relations for CT Connections, leading operations in Vic, NSW and SA as the group's second Regional GM alongside Craig Southee, who looks after Qld and WA for the business.

Connections Travel Group CEO, Gary Reichenberg, said the appointment of Padman as a second regional GM "reaffirms our commitment to faster, locally based decision making and provides better support both internally for employees and externally for clients".

"Leading Supplier Relations for the group also reaffirms our focus on strengthening partnerships and optimising the supply chain."

Padman stepped down as Helloworld's Group GM of



Air Tickets, Independent and Corporate Networks about 18 months ago (TD 26 Sep 2022), with his ATIA Board seat subsequently taken on by HLO Executive Director, Cinzia Burnes.

Other notches on Padman's impressive CV include a stint as an ATIA Board Member along with positions with Flight Centre, FCM Travel and Travelscene Amex.

The highly respected Padman is also currently a member of ATIA's ATAS Appeals Complaint Committee (TD 18 Jul 2023). BP

Get a \$100 gift card

AGENTS can enjoy some retail therapy courtesy of Inspiring Vacations, which is offering an easy \$100 gift card with every booking made by 31 May as part of its new incentive.

See page nine of today's Travel Daily for more information.



Position Vacant

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Silver Ray delivered

SILVERSEA has been handed the keys to its second Nova class ship, *Silver Ray*, at a handover ceremony at the Meyer Werft shipyard in the Netherlands.

Royal Caribbean Group CEO, Jason Liberty, was on hand for the occasion, taking part in traditional flag-changing and signing events.

Silver Ray will depart Lisbon on its maiden voyage on 15 Jun with her first season in the Med before crossing the Atlantic in Dec.



Passports now in the fast lane



AUSTRALIANS will soon be able to pay an additional \$100 to have their passport application processed in five days as part of a new fast-track priority service.

The new option, in effect from 01 Jul, will sit between standard processing, currently around six weeks, and the two-day urgent turnaround which comes with a \$252 surcharge on top of the \$346 base passport fee.

Government estimates show the new fast-track is expected to generate an extra \$27.4 million over five years, with this money to be reinvested into DFAT.

The new service was warmly welcomed by the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA), which continues to advocate for travel to be as easy as possible.

From 01 Jul, fees for new passports and renewals will climb by 15%, a move which will take the additional fee for urgent processing to near \$300.

ATIA Chief Executive Dean Long said he was thrilled at the government's decision to offer fast-track passport processing. "This reflects our close relationship and ongoing work with the Australian Passport Office and Government."

Long said the Budget also delivered several positive outcomes for small businesses.

"Eligible small businesses will benefit from a \$325 reduction in their electricity bills over the year," Long said.

"The \$20,000 instant asset write-off has been extended, and additional funding has been allocated to programs providing free financial and wellbeing support for small business owners.

"In terms of skills and training, the Government has partially reversed previously announced cuts to traineeship incentives.

"This reversal applies to occupations on the Priority List, so retaining Travel Consultants on this list is a significant victory for our industry." *ML*

Long is **pictured** above left with Federal Minister for Trade and Tourism, Don Farrell and ATIA Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, Ingrid Fraser.

NTIA TTV threshold

MINIMUM Total Transaction Value (TTV) criteria has been set for three of the categories to be decided at the 2024 National Travel Industry Awards on 26 Oct.

Most Outstanding Travel
Consultant Corporate and its
Leisure counterpart require TTV
values of \$2.5 million and \$1.5
million respectively, while Most
Outstanding Mobile/Home Based
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minimum TTV of \$1.25 million in
order to be considered.



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Window Seat

PEDESTRIANS in Surfers
Paradise were yesterday treated
to an unusual sight as daredevil
Jackson 'Jacko' Strong leapt
off the 242-metre high Soul
building to help promote the
Pacific Airshow Gold Coast.

Strong, who is an official ambassador for the Airshow, has completed more than 250 jumps around the world.

Yesterday's effort (pictured) also became the first legally sanctioned base jump from a building in Australia.



Explore Asia on sale

ADVENTURE travel brand Explore Worldwide has discounted most of its Asia tour range by 20% as part of a major new promotion beginning today.

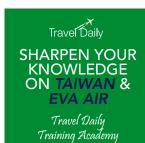
More than 70 itineraries across 25 countries including Sri Lanka, Thailand and India are available in the campaign, on sale until 30 May for departures before 31 Dec.

Explore Worldwide has reported a 51% spike in sales and demand for its Asian tours, with particular interest for Sri Lanka (+139% year-on-year), Cycle Vietnam (+74%) and Japan (+61%).

Carnival connected

CARNIVAL Corp has completed the 18-month rollout program of its high-speed Starlink wifi across its global fleet of 90 cruise ships.

The company says onboard connectivity will now rival land-based speeds and reliability, and will allow it to launch new guest services and features worldwide.





Funding local SAF future

AUSTRALIA will be better placed to becoming a leader in Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) production thanks to funding provided in the Federal Budget.

As part of the government's 'Future Made in Australia' Innovation Fund initiative, last night's Budget featured \$1.7 billion over 10 years to support commercialisation of net-zero initiatives including SAF.

An additional \$18.5 million will be spent on a certification scheme for Australia's burgeoning SAF industry and other low-carbon liquid fuels, as part of a collaborative industry relationship.

Tourism and Transport Forum CEO, Margy Osmond, said the announcements showed the government is listening to the sector's calls to develop an SAF industry and to take steps toward net-zero emissions by 2050.

"As a long-haul destination, Australia cannot afford to be left behind other developed countries which are prioritising support for SAF, like the USA, Europe, UK, Singapore, Japan and Canada," Osmond commented.

MEANWHILE, the Budget also included \$8.1 million over four years to support the Approved Destination Scheme (ADS), which has played a major role in maintaining high volume inbound visitation from China.

The ADS program was defunded and paused during the pandemic, an unfortunate consequence following a year in which 670,000 Chinese visitors spent a collective \$3.3 billion in 2019.

"ATEC has been advocating for the reinstatement and refresh of this important program since the re-establishment of visitors from China last year and we are pleased to see this funding back in the budget," said Australian Tourism Export Council Chief Executive, Peter Shelley. *ML*





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China knocked off perch

SHORT-TERM departures from Australia continue to thrive despite the cost-of-living crunch, soaring past pre-pandemic levels for the second straight month.

According to the latest Overseas Arrivals and Departures figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, total departures closed at 1,709,930 for Mar 2024, more than 25,000 higher than 2019.

New Zealand was the most popular destination for short-term trips, accounting for 16% of all returning residents, followed by Indonesia and Japan.

Total arrivals for the month amounted to 1,614,830, which marked a 20.1% jump on the corresponding period last year.

However, the biggest curiosity from the latest data was the three-place fall by China down the source market rankings, with the regular leader coming in fourth place for Mar 2024.

China's leading spot was taken

in Mar by New Zealand, which accounted for 115,270 visitors, followed by USA at 84,770 and the United Kingdom with 78,820.

Japan and India rounded out the top five, with strong growth also recorded by Germany as the only European nation to appear in the top 10 rankings. ML

Airfares still falling

INTERNATIONAL economy class airfares for the second half of 2024 are priced on average 13% lower than this time last year, according to new data from Flight Centre Travel Group.

Destinations showing the biggest decrease included Bali, New Zealand and USA, with fares to the Indonesian hotspot priced around 21% less year-on-year.

Increases in services to the USA by American carriers are also expected to force downward pressure on airfares this year.

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EK achieves bestever performance

EMIRATES has amassed a record profit of AED\$17.2 billion (A\$7.06 billion) for the 12 months ending 31 Mar 2024 - a 63% increase from the year prior.

The airline's revenue rose 13% to AED\$121.2 billion (A\$49.8b), as it continued to strengthen its global network and partnerships, as well as expand its capacity, which increased by 20% to recover to pre-pandemic levels.

Emirates Chair and Chief Executive Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum said high global demand for air transport services, as well as continued investment in the airline's products and services, helped drive the impressive figures.

"The group has once again raised the bar to deliver a new record performance, and because we were able to move quickly to deliver what customers want, we achieved tremendous results."





Today's issue of TD is coming to you courtesy of Flight Centre Travel Group, which is hosting its inaugural Luxury **Travel Collection Business** Owners Island Soiree.

AFTER waking up following an amazing launch event last night, attendees at FCTG's Luxury Travel Collection Business Owners Island Soiree are gearing up for an interesting day of conferencing.

After the owners learn more about trends in the luxury travel sector and FCTG's unique value proposition, it will be time to let their hair down for a wellearned rest in the evening.

Guests will exhibit a "touch of the tropics" for the Tropical Temptations, An Oceania Affair.



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ATIA UPDATE

from Ingrid Fraser, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy

THERE was a buzz
in the room in
Canberra last
night as the ATIA
team heard
directly from
Treasurer
Jim Chalmers
about the
Budget
measures for

the next year.

We've combed through the 7,200 pages of Budget papers so you don't have to, and in travel, the item everyone's talking about is the new fast-track system for passport applications.

From Jul, applications can be processed within five business days for a \$100 fee.

This is a great option for travellers wanting greater certainty over when they will receive their passport, but who don't need a two-day turnaround, which by Jul will cost nearly \$300.

On the small business front, eligible small businesses will receive \$325 off their electricity bills over the year; the \$20,000 instant asset write-off has been extended; and more funding

has been allocated to programs offering free financial and wellbeing support for small business owners.

In the skills and training space, the Government has partially reversed cuts previously announced in relation to traineeship incentives.

This only applies to occupations on the Priority List, so having Travel Consultants remaining on the list is a big win.

We've done a more detailed snapshot for members today so keep an eye out for that.

Last week, I had the pleasure of joining Brighton Travelworld's 55th Birthday Celebration, along with many from across the industry to congratulate them on being the longest-standing leisure agency in the same location for all that time - what an achievement.

We love celebrating the success of our members - to celebrate us back (and for a chance to win a trip to Singapore!), make sure you share a photo of you and your 2024 ATAS Certificate and tell the world what this recognition means to you and your team.

CLICK HERE for more details.

AKL pax traffic up HAL Grand Voyages

AUCKLAND Airport saw a 8% increase in total passenger volumes last month compared to Apr 2023, with 1.3 million travellers passing through the hub's terminals.

HOLLA has ope Grand V Volenda travellers passing through the itinerary

International and domestic pax levels rose by 9% and 5% respectively in Apr 2024, with demand on mainland China routes doubling compared to the same period last year.

However, total passenger volumes were down on the 1.69 million seen in Mar 2024, with Apr marking the first month of the off-peak IATA Northern Summer season.

HOLLAND America Line (HAL) has opened bookings for its 2026 Grand World Voyage aboard *Volendam*, as well as its 2026 Grand Australia and New Zealand itinerary, operated by *Zaandam*.

The global itinerary will call into 48 ports in 25 countries over 132 days, sailing round trip from Fort Lauderdale on 04 Jan 2026, while the Australia and NZ cruise will set off from San Diego on 04 Jan to visit 44 ports in 10 countries.

Guests can enjoy onboard spending credits of up to \$2,000 and various other perks when they secure their spot prior to 16 Jun 2025 - CLICK HERE for more.



Unlocking the luxury keys



THE windy conditions this morning couldn't wipe the smiles off the faces of attendees at Flight Centre Travel Group's (FCTG) Global Luxury Business Owners Sioree in Hayman Island.

Following a welcome event last night at InterContinental Hayman Island Resort, founding agency members of the exclusive invite-only Luxury Travel Collection (LTC), Travel Associates members, and a range premium suppliers are today enjoying a full day of expert insights from the FCTG executive team and several industry specialists.

The theme of the LTC event is 'Luxury Unlocked', with presentations giving guests a deeper understanding of how elements such as unique tailored experiences and personalisation can turn the key on future success in the luxury space.

Among the insights presented by FCTG Global MD - Luxury and Independent Brands, Danielle Galloway, and Travel Associates General Manager, Rachel Kingswell, is the shift in luxury spend toward younger markets.

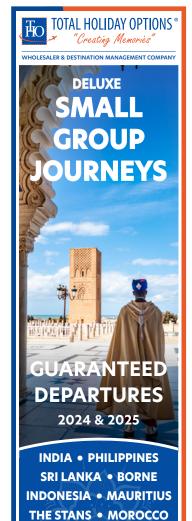
FCTG insights showed that Millennials will represent 50% of global luxury consumers by next year, fuelled by an ongoing transfer of wealth which is seeing a greater number of Gen Z and Millennials purchasing luxury travel experiences.

Close to 80% of Millennial customers also prefer to spend money on a luxury experience

than a physical product.

Business owners were also told that delivering exceptional and personalised luxury experiences are pivotal ways to drive client engagement and loyalty. AB

Pictured: Guests put their hands up for luxury.



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Wed 15th May 2024

A sparkling night for Helloworld

THE 2024 Helloworld Owner Managers Conference (OMC) dazzled with fireworks on Sydney Harbour. Held in Sydney, it was clear by the incredibly positive feedback that this OMC was one of the best yet. The theme of the conference was 'A World of Opportunity' and that message was reinforced and celebrated by delegates throughout the event.



Guests were welcomed with an exclusive event on the harbour aboard Starship Sydney that kicked off the conference with style, enjoying breathtaking harbour views and an amazing fireworks display.





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The key to luxury

LUXURY French properties. Hotel Belles Rives in Antibes and La Coquillade in Provence are among the first properties to have been awarded Michelin Keys, a new benchmark for outstanding hotel experiences.

La Coquillade Provence, a 69-room luxury resort set against Luberon's lavender fields and vineyards was bestowed with two Michelin Keys, while Hotel Belles Rives received one, which comes in addition to a Michelin Star for its restaurant, La Passagere.

The recognition is based on anonymous visits by Michelin Guide's selection team, which assesses remarkable service and distinctive character.

BEASLEY MARKS 40 YEARS OF LUXURY

LUXURY travel trailblazer and one of itravel's distinguished link affiliate agents, Nicole Beasley (pictured), has celebrated 40 years in the industry.

Renowned for her ability to craft extraordinary travel experiences, Beasley kick-started her career in 1984 as a consultant at Noosa Fair Travel, and went on to launch her own agency, Nicole Beasley Luxury Travel, in Brisbane.

Her impressive career has also included travel management roles at itravel Australia, Platinum Travel Corporation, and Australia Zoo.

"We take immense pride in Nicole's accomplishments and her significant contributions, not only to itravel but to the travel industry as a whole over the last four decades," itravel CEO, Steve



Labroski, shared.

Beasley hosted a private event at the Queensland Ballet earlier this year to celebrate the milestone, in collaboration with WCEI Queensland and Regent Seven Seas Cruises.

Guests were treated to a private rehearsal viewing, followed by an exclusive Q&A session and a decadent private dinner on the

Thomas Dixon Centre rooftop. Reflecting on her journey, Beasley said, "the past 40 years have been an incredible adventure, filled with unforgettable moments and cherished memories".

"I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have served my clients and the industry with passion and dedication." JM

A palatial makeover

PHAEA Blue Palace in Crete, a member of Small Luxury Hotels, has reopened with a fresh look and feel reflecting its commitment to luxury hospitality.

The 47 bungalows and suites have been updated with an island aesthetic, featuring earthy tones and textures, eclectic artwork, and designer furnishings.

Guests staying in the threebedroom Phaea Blue Villa can also now enjoy a private chef and private butler.

Silversea brings SALT to Alaska and introduces new champagne partnership

SILVER Nova, Silversea's newest vessel, has begun her inaugural season in Alaska, where she will connect guests to local culinary culture via the line's SALT program.

From now until Sep, Nova will operate 18 seven-day voyages, including the Vancouver to Seward (Anchorage, Alaska) itinerary from 20-27 Jun.

Shore excursions will be complemented by Silversea's award-winning culinary enrichment program, with brand-new onboard experiences



including classes that explore the best ways to prepare wild local salmon.

"We're delighted to celebrate the inauguration of SALT in Alaska," said the program's Director, Adam Sachs.

"The program will enable our guests to connect meaningfully with the region through bespoke, enriching culinary experiences," he said.

MEANWHILE, Silversea has announced Duval-Leroy as its pouring champagne of choice aboard its ultra-luxury ships.

The core values of the independent, family-operated producer of fine champagnes, which boasts six generations of expertise, align perfectly with Silversea's commitment to exceptional quality. JM



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ACCOMMODATION

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Vivid Sydney is set to begin from 24 May, and Marriott Bonvoy is preparing to curate the ultimate experience for those attending the luminous festival. Customs House Bar at Sydney Harbour Marriott Hotel at Circular Quay has collaborated with

Sydney's oldest pub and brewery to offer an exclusive Three Sheets Pale Ale called 'Let There Be Light', which uses seasonal cascade hops from Virginia, paying homage to Marriott's first hotel in 1957.



W Melbourne has reinvigorated its event areas, including its wedding space. The Flinders Lane hotel boasts six event rooms, four breakout rooms, and a total of 635m2 event space. Soon-to-be-hitched guests can now take advantage of the hotel's

all-inclusive wedding packages, which include a 'Light it Up' package featuring interactive food experiences, 'Forever After' for a seated dining experience, and more.



The Spanish-based Melia Collection has registered its first property in the Asian market with the signing of The Grand Luang Prabang, which is located on the banks of the Mekong River in Laos. The 75-room resort, which spreads over eight

buildings, will be undergo a refurbishment over the next 12 months, as it is rebranded to align with Melia. The property will remain operational throughout the renovation period.



Hilton Molino Stucky Venice has launched 24 luxurious new suites, with designs and a colour palette inspired by Venice's lagoon. The Italian resort's new offerings include four new King Molino Family Suites, nine new King Molino Executive Suites, and 11

new King Molino Family Suites. Some suites have interconnecting options offering extra accommodation for couples, friends and families.



Hotel Fairmont Le Montreux Palace in Switzerland has completed the first phase of its extensive renovation project. Sitting on the shores of Lake Geneva, the property now boasts 60 refreshed rooms and suites complete with new interiors to exude a

sense of tranquility and comfort. The rooms also now feature cuttingedge sound systems for an immersive audio experience.



NRMA adds Blue Dolphin



NRMA Parks and Resorts has bolstered its portfolio with the addition of Blue Dolphin Holiday Resort near the New South Wales coastal town of Yamba.

Set on the banks of Clarence River, the holiday park has been a popular stop on Aussie road trip itineraries for decades.

One of the biggest holiday resorts in NSW, Blue Dolphin offers a range of accommodation options, including waterfront and poolside vistas, cabins, and caravan and camping sites.

It's also pet-friendly, and promises to keep the kids entertained with pools, a lazy river and kids' waterpark, a climbing wall, putt-putt golf, pump track and jumping pillow.

There's also a games room, a swim-up pool bar, a snooker hall, and an undercover barbecue area, as well as hire equipment such as pedal-karts, kayaks, and stand-up paddleboards.

"Many of us who have enjoyed holidays on the New South Wales north coast or who have been on

road trips over generations will be familiar with the friendly Blue Dolphin sign in the waterfront centre of Yamba." NRMA Parks and Resorts Chief Executive Officer Paul Davies said.

"At NRMA we're pleased to have wonderful holiday options in Yamba covered for our members and guests, both at the Blue Dolphin and the premium Angourie Resort."

Thanks to its central location, guests staying at the resort will enjoy easy access to the region's beaches, as well as the town centre, where they can enjoy shopping, play ten-pin bowling, check out the latest flicks at the cinema, peruse the monthly markets, and even hire a boat to take out on the river.

Guests can also explore Yuragir National Park, which lies at the southern end of Yamba.

Blue Dolphin marks NRMA's second acquisition in Yamba, after it purchased Angourie Resort towards the end of last year (TD 17 Nov 2023). JM

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