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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of the latest travel news including our Sustainability page, a cover wrap from Travellers Choice, plus a full page from Silversea.

New Cal evacuation

THE Australian Defence Force has been cleared to operate two repatriation flights to help tourists stranded in New Caledonia to begin their journey home.

Ongoing social unrest in the South Pacific territory has led Smartraveller to raise the national alert level to 'Reconsider your need to travel'.

DFAT is now making contact with registered Australians about how to access the flights, with Noumea's main airport still closed.

Framework for accessibility

TOURISM operators are being encouraged to adopt a universal approach to how they cater to people living with disabilities under a new framework agreed to by all state and territory tourism ministers in Melbourne yesterday.

The new 'Welcome' framework was formally launched on the sidelines of the Australian Tourism Exchange, and has been designed with social and economic benefits in mind.

Tourism ministers concurred that catering to the moral imperative of inclusivity is a crucial goal for the tourism sector, and so too is ensuring tourism companies are maximising the economic opportunities presented by the growing accessibility segment.

Key advice put forward by the Welcome framework includes being more transparent around amenities available for travellers with disabilities on company websites, such as lifts, audio services for tours, lighting for sensory needs, and accessible parking spots.

Tourism businesses are also

being called upon to embrace visitor accessibility apps to assist travellers with hearing, visual or cognitive requirements, as well as consider fast-tracking check-in or booking queues for those who can't stand for a lengthy period.

Describing a company's accessible features in detail is another key prescription, with businesses too often using generalised language like "fully accessible", which does not allow the consumer to make an informed choice.

Testament to the commercial opportunity tourism businesses can take advantage of is recent Tourism Research Australia data, which showed 21% of domestic tourism spend in the Jun 2023 quarter was outlaid by people with accessibility needs. AB

It is Choose Day

TRAVELLERS Choice is asking agency owners to consider the support and benefits they receive and to learn more about what it can offer - for more details, see today's front page.

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ON LOCATION

MELBOURNE

Today's issue is coming to you courtesy of Tourism Australia at the 44th Australian Tourism Exchange in Melbourne.

DAY two of the largest tourism trade show in Australia is under way, with media having opportunities to have short sit down interviews Visit Victoria CEO, Brendan McClements, and Tourism Australia Managing Director, Phillipa Harrison.

In the afternoon, Visit Victoria will host a special lunch where guests can learn more about the state's tourism strategy.

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One and done for United



UNITED Airlines will scrap its direct service between Brisbane and Los Angeles less than a year after the service took off for the first time (**TD** 01 Dec 2023).

In its northern winter schedule for 2024/25, BNE-LAX will be partially offset by a larger Boeing 777-300ER aircraft on the daily service to San Francisco, adding a little over 90 seats per flight.

United's exit from the route

leaves Qantas as the only year-round option for Queenslanders bound for LAX, although Delta Air Lines will begin a seasonal service from 04 Dec (**TD** 26 Feb).

Across the Tasman, United will also axe its Auckland to Los Angeles route for the summer, however a spokesperson for the airline said it will instead increase its daily San Francisco service from thrice weekly to daily for the season, which runs from 27 Oct to 27 Mar.

"United regularly adjusts its schedule for a variety of reasons, including demand and the broader needs of our network," the carrier told **Travel Daily**.

American Airlines will also enter the Brisbane market, albeit with a direct service to Dallas Fort Worth beginning from 27 Oct. **ML**

Silversea on offer

TRAVELLERS can enjoy a two-category upgrade on ocean voyages and one category on expeditions, plus reduced deposit thanks to Silversea's latest offer.

For all the details, see **page seven** of today's **Travel Daily**.

Webjet partners AK

ONLINE travel agent Webjet has relaunched its partnership with AirAsia, kicking off a major new sale running until 02 Jun 2024, including hundreds of flight options to popular cities across the AirAsia network.

Support for MH17

THE Australian Government will host a memorial service on 17 Jul 2024 at Parliament House to mark 10 years since the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17.

Next-of-kin relatives will be offered one-off grant payments of between \$700 and \$1,400 for up to four family members of those killed to attend the service, depending on their location.

Applications for funding through the grant program can be made until 03 Jun via Services Australia, which will administer \$200,000 for the program.

Globus sales perks

REWARDS including family trip invites, additional local marketing budgets, discounted rates for personal travel and cash are on offer to agents in a revamped trade loyalty program launched today by Globus Family of Brands.

The program features four tiers - Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum - with tiers assessed quarterly to allow agencies to access greater rewards multiple times each year instead of annually.

Tiers are based on sales of Globus, Cosmos coach tours and Avalon Waterways river cruises.

The company said the new structure was being introduced to thank sales partners for their ongoing dedication and support of the three brands.



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SRI LANKA

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you courtesy of Inspiring Vacations, which is hosting its first trade faml this week.

AFTER a delectable High Tea at Nuwara Eliya's Grand Hotel yesterday, today we are experiencing more of Sri Lanka's famous brew with a visit to a tea plantation and factory.

The group will later head to Kandy, known as the cultural capital of Sri Lanka, where we will explore the rich history of the UNESCO-listed city, and take part in a cooking class.

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The Chat with Jenny

Travel Daily

A conversation with Michelle Ashcroft
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ATE parties in the fast lane



DAY one of the Australian Tourism Exchange in 2024 (ATE24) concluded with a major gear change, as delegates descended on the John Cain Arena to sample many of the sporting attractions for which Melbourne has become famous.

Activations were set up around the famous sporting venue to impress the record number of international buyers attending this year's event, with guests having the chance to shoot the perfect three pointer in basketball, or throw down the cricket stumps with sporting icon Merv Hughes.

Other activities included passing the Sherrin through a target for prizes, volleying tennis balls with oversized rackets, and racing in a high-tech simulation of the Australian Grand Prix (**pictured**).

Earlier in the day, Visit Victoria



CEO, Brendan McClements, told the media he was "hugely optimistic" about the future visitor growth of the state.

McClements said Victoria has managed to grow the value of its visitor economy by \$5 billion to around \$38 billion as of Dec 2023.

"We think there's roughly [an extra] \$16 billion for Victoria available if we are able to do our job properly...our int'l air seat capacity is back above 100% on 2019 and we are also now Australia's largest hotel market - so we are very confident about future growth," he said. *AB*



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Hit the road for a million dollars

LOCAL and interstate travellers are being enticed to take a road trip across the Northern Territory with a chance to win \$1 million cash, thanks to a new incentive from Tourism NT and the Caravan Industry Association of Australia.

Inspired by the Territory's long-running Million Dollar Fish competition, the Million Dollar Road Trip offers self-drive travellers who visit the NT between May and Sep 2024 a chance to win the major prize of \$1 million cash, or runner up prizes, including \$10,000 cash plus a \$500 fuel voucher or one of 19 \$500 fuel vouchers.

To be eligible, visitors must stay at a participating caravan park in the NT, visit a local NT Visitor Information Centre, or make a purchase with a participating tourism experience or attraction in the Territory - more info can be found **HERE**.

TFE ups the rewards

TFE Hotels has revamped its eClub Member Program to offer better rewards to its customer base around the world.

The platform has transitioned from a subscription-based program to a more user-friendly membership platform, offering users a range of member-only rates, deals, and instant rewards.

Stay with MSC longer

MSC Cruises has moved to incentivise cruisers to stay in destination longer across a range of Northern Hemisphere countries this year.

The line's new 'Stay & Cruise' offer provides guests booked on seven-night sailings the option to extend trips by two or three nights before or after cruise departures.

Ten of its ships are offering the deal across ports in Athens, Venice, Rome and Miami, and also includes a half-day city excursion and private transfers.

Eco travel weariness

MORE than half of Aussies (54%) say sustainability is not a primary consideration when planning or booking a trip, according to new research from Booking.com.

The annual *Sustainable Travel Report 2024* reveals a growing sense of weariness towards green travel, with 34% of the 1,000 respondents saying they are tired of hearing about climate change all the time.

Additionally, nearly a third (30%) believe that being more sustainable in a destination that is not implementing sustainability practices itself feels pointless.

Despite these findings, 77% of Aussies confirmed that eco-friendly travel is important to them - for more sustainability news, see **page five**.

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Regional travel is at risk

THE collapse of low-cost airline Bonza will put regional connectivity at risk, according to the ACCC's latest Domestic Airline Competition report.

Considering Bonza increased its total number of domestic flights to 178 only two months before it entered administration (**TD** 01 May), the competition watchdog found domestic travellers will have significantly fewer direct options to regional ports if the airline cannot restart services.

Bonza was operating up to 30 routes from three bases on the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Melbourne, many of which were being flown exclusively.

MEANWHILE, the ACCC report revealed there were 4.9 million domestic passengers in Mar, representing 98.8% of the corresponding month prior to the pandemic in 2019.

Although Feb figures surged past pre-pandemic levels, the ACCC suggested a number of major events held during the month - such as Taylor Swift's Eras concerts in Melbourne and Sydney, and the World Wrestling

Entertainment showcase in Perth - were the major factors behind the elevated number.

The consumer watchdog's report also confirmed the average revenue per domestic passenger had decreased slightly, dipping 1.4% and 4.8% in both nominal terms (qualitative data) and real terms, respectively in Mar.

Despite the dip in travel numbers, ACCC Commissioner Anna Brakey said "after four years of instability, the domestic airline industry has returned to more typical seasonal levels that were last seen before the pandemic".

"The increase to airline seat capacity has contributed to lower airfares for consumers on domestic routes.

"We hope to see this trend continue as the airline industry returns to a more stable market," she concluded. *MW*

Win with Infinity

INFINITY Holidays is offering agents the chance to earn a spot on an "epic trip of a lifetime" later this year as part of its latest school holidays campaign.

The operator is offering deals on packages around the world, including air, accommodation and experience packages to Mauritius, and closer to home, cosy South Australian luxury breaks exploring the Barossa region.

There's also two \$700 luxury gin hampers up for grabs for agents - more details are **HERE**.

Vietjet sale fares

VIETJET has released discounted airfares ahead of the launch of its direct routes from Hanoi to Melbourne and Sydney in early Jun.

Prices start from \$165 including 20kg of checked baggage and a hot meal - the sale ends 10 Jun.

ATIA UPDATE

from Jenny Le, National Manager Events and Corporate Partners



FIRSTLY, let me introduce myself.

Xin chao ("hello" in Vietnamese!)

My name is Jenny, and I joined the team back in Mar 2022, so

this will be my third NTIAs.

For those who watched our 'how to vote' video last year, yes, I am also the proud owner of five dogs.

With this being my first **Travel Daily** column, I wish to remind readers that nominations have opened for NTIA 2024!

With 350 peer nominations already in the mix, the NTIA nominations process is your opportunity to recognise and celebrate the achievements of your team and suppliers, by putting their name forward for any of the 35 award categories.

Nominations close Fri 31 May.

As part of our commitment to the integrity of the awards, we have continued to actively

consult with the NTIA Custodians. Following their feedback, we have introduced benchmarks for selected categories and retitled some categories to better represent their business.

ATAS continues to anchor our commitment to elevating industry standards, with an increased focus on what ATAS accreditation means to the consultant or business.

No longer is it just an eligibility criterion; we want to celebrate those members who are embracing ATAS in their daily operations and marketing.

With NTIA back in Sydney on Sat 26 Oct, we promise it will be another extravagant affair as we celebrate the best of the best in the Australian travel industry.

On 25 Oct, we will also have our inaugural Beyond Borders Travel Summit and pre-NTIA Finalists event - would anyone like to hazard guesses on what we'll be doing this year?

Tickets for #BB24 are on sale now, with NTIA ticket sales to open in Jun.

Back to Baltimore

ROYAL Caribbean International and Carnival Cruise Line will both resume departures from the port of Baltimore this week following a bridge collapse in the city.

MSC kicking goals

SOCCER fans will be able to enjoy matches from the upcoming Euro 2024 tournament across the MSC Cruises fleet, with the event on from 14 Jun to 14 Jul.





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PATA inks new deal

THE Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) has announced a new partnership with the Sarawak Tourism Board (STB) to collaborate on sustainable tourism and resilience efforts in the Malaysian state.

The two organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the PATA Annual Summit in Macao, China last week.

“We are delighted to strengthen our collaboration with the Sarawak Tourism Board and look forward to the numerous activities we have planned over the next four years,” said PATA Chief Executive Officer, Noor Ahmad Hamid.

“PATA and STB have cultivated a strong relationship over the years, which heightens our excitement for this opportunity to collaborate closely on initiatives aimed at positioning Sarawak as a leading and exemplary destination in terms of sustainability,” he added.

PATA and STB will work together on several areas outlined in the MoU, including enhancing tourism resilience and sustainable tourism practices; engaging in joint advocacy and policy development activities; and introducing carbon offset projects in Sarawak.

AQUA EXPEDITIONS ELEVATES SUSTAINABILITY

IN A move to enhance its sustainability credentials, Aqua Expeditions applied to join the Science Based Targets Initiatives (SBTi), with an aim to reduce carbon emissions by at least 4.5% before 2030.

This will be done as part of SBTi’s Corporate Net-Zero Standard, which provides a framework for net-zero target setting based on climate science.

In order to reach the goals, the cruise line will undergo a series of operational changes including smart engine and anchor use, as well as more efficient itinerary planning to reduce fuel and energy consumption.

At the same time, Aqua Expeditions has also entered into a global partnership with 4Ocean, a Florida-based Certified B Corp organisation whose mission is to remove trash from the world’s oceans, rivers, and coastlines every year.



The collaboration will see Aqua retrieve at least 11,000kg of plastic from the world’s waterways over the next year, leading activations across its fleet for targeted clean-ups across all destinations.

Guests will also be given the opportunity to contribute to the cause by purchasing a bracelet made from recycled materials, each one representing two kilograms of plastic removed from the ocean.

“We are thrilled to join forces

with 4Ocean, alongside our recent commitment to SBTi,” said Francesco Galli Zugaro, Founder & CEO of Aqua Expeditions.

Zugaro said the new initiatives with SBTi and 4Ocean will allow Aqua Expeditions “to minimise our emissions and further our dedication to conserving the rich tapestry of aquatic marine life in the destinations we traverse, protecting these waterways for future generations, all while establishing new benchmarks for conscientious luxury travel”. JM

SWISS fits entire long-haul fleet with innovative, eco ‘sharkskin’ tech

SWISS International Air Lines (SWISS) has now equipped its entire fleet of Boeing 777-300ERs with CO2-reducing ‘sharkskin’ technology.

Earlier this month, the transparent AeroSHARK film, which replicates the hydrodynamic skin of a shark, was applied on the fuselage, as well as the nacelle that houses the engine, on all



12 of the airline’s flagship long-haul aircraft.

The innovative technology reduces air resistance in flight

by around 1%, resulting in lower fuel consumption.

“I am delighted that our commitment to this technology is delivering such positive results, and is enabling us at SWISS to take a further substantial step in making our flight operations more sustainable,” said Claus Bauer, SWISS’s Head of Technical Fleet Management. JM

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MONEY

WELCOME to Money, *TD's* Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US\$0.667

With little intervention from the Japanese authority to tame the plunges of its currency, currently sitting at over ¥100 per Aussie dollar, pundits say the yen may slip further.

On the other hand, the Aussie has had a real go at the US greenback, making gains of AU\$0.01 against the US dollar in the past month, while continuously building solid grounds against it.

Wholesale rates this morning.

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| US | \$0.667 |
| UK | £0.525 |
| NZ | \$1.092 |
| Euro | €0.614 |
| Japan | ¥104.22 |
| Thailand | ฿24.09 |
| China | ¥4.825 |
| South Africa | 12.12 |
| Canada | \$0.909 |
| Crude oil | US\$83.98 |

Travel Indaba a hit

TRAVEL Indaba 2024, one of the African continent's largest trade shows, wrapped up last week after attracting 7% more delegates than last year and facilitating around 24,000 meetings between exhibitors and buyers.

The three-day event, which was themed 'Unlimited Africa', featured over 1,200 exhibitors showcasing an array of African tourism products and experiences, and was preceded by a Business Opportunity Networking Day.

Inside go outside to volunteer



AHEAD of National Volunteers Week, which kicks off today, Inside Travel Group B Corp (ITG) joined forces with Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) to assist in preserving the Melaleuca wetlands on Coochiemudlo Island in Queensland.

Twenty-seven volunteers from ITG's Australia branch travelled to the island to help remove weeds, which pose a significant threat to local biodiversity.

"It was wonderful to once again partner with CVA to support their important conservation efforts to protect and restore the Melaleuca wetlands on Coochiemudlo Island," shared Tim Oakes, ITG Managing Director - Australia.

Oakes, who coordinated the initiative, said all volunteers managed to single-handedly remove an impressive 46 bags of weeds which posed great threat to local biodiversity.

"The team at CVA were incredibly accommodating and it was a fantastic opportunity for our team to tangibly put our company

mission into action by supporting this worthwhile initiative.

"As a B Corp, our core belief is that we can propel travel as a force for good in the world, and we play a role in furthering that ethos not only abroad, but on home soil as well," Oakes added.

CVA Representative Audrey Barucchi said, "weeding is a significant part of our conservation work, and despite being hard work, doing it together makes it so much more fun and meaningful.

"By preserving habitats and promoting the responsible use of resources, our conservation efforts help to safeguard the ecosystems and local biodiversity.

"But we can't do it alone, and we are calling for more local businesses and volunteers to join us on our mission to protect these invaluable wetlands."

ITG supports several sustainability projects around the world, including tree planting on the Kinabatangan River in Malaysia and carbon offsetting for all trips. *JM*

Window Seat

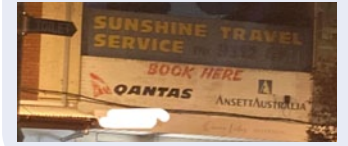
SOMETIMES maintenance can just get on top of us, but in a way, it also brings back some warm and fuzzy feels.

Sydney is packed with relics of the past, not all of them are from that long ago.

One eagle-eyed *TD* reader was out and about in Sydney's western suburbs and spotted a shop hoarding which clearly reflected a begotten era.

The shopfront, once home to a business known as Sunshine Travel Service (pictured), still features an advertising awning encouraging travellers to book flights with Ansett Australia.

For younger members of the industry, Ansett Australia went into liquidation 23 years ago, but its memory clearly lives on.



Burke on wheels

COMPASS Expeditions has launched a brand-new, 16-day Burke & Wills four-wheel drive adventure, which departs Melbourne in Jul 2025.

The itinerary follows the path that the iconic expedition took back in 1860 from the south to the north coast, taking guests "on a journey through the pages of Australian history".

Highlights include a visit to the UNESCO-listed Mungo National Park and watching the sunset over the Gulf of Carpentaria from Karumba - details [HERE](#).

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