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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of travel news including a cover wrap from Tourism New Zealand, a product update from Collette, our Sustainability page, plus a full page from Silversea.

Wendy Wu Tours.

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Revenues rise for Serko

CLIMBING revenues for corporate travel and expense provider Serko has helped the ASX-listed business improve its net loss after tax result by 48%.

In the company's financial results for the 12 months to 31 Mar 2024, Serko recorded a NZ\$15.7 million loss, a significant improvement on the NZ\$30.5 million loss posted in the previous corresponding period.

Revenue for the last year surged by NZ\$22.3 million to NZ\$68.8 million, buoyed mainly by strong average revenue per booking and a sizable uptick in Aussie business travel volumes.

Online bookings grew by 19%

TNZ agent self-famil

TOURISM New Zealand has relaunched its self-famil discount program for 2024, with Australian travel agents able to design their own family program to the country.

The Explore New Zealand Self-Famil Discount Program grants access for approved applicants to nearly 230 exclusive deals from suppliers in 25 regions, including special Air New Zealand airfares.

Eligibility criteria for the program requires agents to complete 10 100% Pure New Zealand specialist program training modules and sign up to Tourism New Zealand's trade newsletter and its Facebook group, which unlocks early access to future training opportunities.

See **front page** for details.

year-on-year to 4.9 million, while completed room nights also increased by 65% to 2.5 million.

While the 12-month period showed a positive growth trajectory when compared to the previous year, the first half performed better than the second half, the latter of which was impacted by "unexpected seasonality" in average revenue for rooms and a decline in the NZD exchange rates in Europe.

Serko also pointed to its recent partnership extension with Booking.com using its Zeno platform for another five years (**TD** 30 Apr) as providing a strong foundation for future growth.

"We are executing plans with Booking.com to deliver future growth through customer acquisition and the expansion of our product offering," Serko said.

HLO share purchase

THE Alysandratos family has increased its stake in Helloworld from 13.76% to 14.88% after making an on-market purchase of 580,653 shares, according to an update posted by HLO on the ASX this afternoon.

Collette's Canada

COLLETTE is offering earlybird offers for its new Canada and Alaska tour, with departures starting in May 2025 - see the **back page** for further details.

Save with Silversea

FOR a limited time, guests can enjoy category upgrades, shipboard credit and reduced deposits when they book a Silversea voyage.

To view the full details about the incentive, see **page seven**.

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FCTG refund move

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) will soon be able to offer clients a refund from a select range of carriers within 72 hours through the company's app.

While speaking with the *The Australian* this week, the company's Global MD, Andrew Stark, said the refund service was in the works as it seeks to further enhance customer satisfaction.

Stark also noted that FCTG is using AI to better understand customer sentiment, in the hope of further elevating spend.

While AI is being viewed as a key support for agents, human customer service however will continue to be the priority.

"As the basket size gets more complex...customers still want the human validation they're making the right choice," Stark said.

Rex connects dots in PER

REX has quickly doubled down on its commitment to serving the Perth market, linking the WA capital to a second Australian city with new direct flights.

Three days after announcing the addition of a five-times weekly Melbourne-Perth service to its Boeing 737 interstate network, the carrier flagged plans to add nonstop services to Adelaide (**TD** breaking news yesterday).

Beginning from 28 Jun - the same day as Melbourne - the new Perth to Adelaide route will take off on Mon, Fri and Sun each week, with fares including checked baggage & inflight drinks.

Rex subsidiary National Jet Express will operate the Adelaide route with a 100-seat Embraer E-190 jet, however each flight will be ticketed as a Rex service.

The new route marks the 12th in Rex's growing interstate network, which now connects every Australian state capital in



addition to the Gold Coast.

National Jet Express Director, Anthony Gibara, said the new route would be well received by the more-than 630,000 travellers who flew between Adelaide and Perth last year.

"There were almost 85 cancelled flights by Virgin and Qantas carriers on this route in the first four months of 2024 and in the case of VA, its on-time arrivals and departures were terrible," Gibara said, with less than 60% of flights on the route arriving or departing as scheduled.

Gibara added that more carriers meant more competition but also meant better service and reliability for travellers. *ML*

Bonza wants time

DOCUMENTS have been filed with the Federal Court seeking a continuation for Hall Chadwick to act as administrators for failed low-cost airline Bonza.

Amid interest by parent company 777 Partners to potentially restructure and relaunch the airline (**TD** 24 May), the extension would allow a wider search to find an interested buyer or new investors for the troubled airline.

The extension would also see Bonza employees go without pay for a further two months, with a second creditors meeting now also set for 05 Aug.

All but one of Bonza's fleet of Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft have now left the country, with Hall Chadwick stating the airline's most valuable asset is its Air Operator's Certificate.

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Reservations: Seat reservations are also available for two of the most in demand panoramic trains - the Glacier and Bernina Express trains. Look for services that state "includes seat reservation for travel" on the schedule search page. Note there will be no GEX services running between 13.10 and 13.12.
Webinar: Don't forget to sign up for the upcoming **Swiss Travel System webinar** on 12 June at 11am AEST.
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Scenic ramps up rewards

SCENIC Group has relaunched its partner loyalty program, which now offers enhanced rewards on every ocean, river and land journey booking made across its portfolio of brands.

The refreshed Scenic Group Rewards program now allows agents to automatically earn points on all of Scenic's sailings and tours, as well as Emerald Cruises & Tours' extensive portfolio of itineraries.

Advisors can also earn 25% of net booking value at the time of deposit, and as part of a special launch promotion, can accrue \$100 per deposited points on any *Scenic Eclipse* booking made before 30 Jun.

The program has already attracted strong uptake since its preliminary launch on 14 Mar.

"We are delighted that travel advisors who have signed up...have already redeemed thousands of points for items



such as a large screen television, outdoor furniture, and hundreds of gift cards," the company said.

To begin redeeming rewards, members need to sign in via the new Scenic Group dashboard - they will then have a reward number automatically assigned to them in their booking profile.

Members will be allocated any pre-COVID points balance, along with points on all bookings made since Jan 2021 through to the program's launch in Mar.

The revitalised program is only accessible through the Scenic Group Booking Portal - for full instructions on how to set up a Scenic Group Rewards account, [CLICK HERE](#). JM

FCM head of sales

LINDSAY Straub has been hired by FCTG Corporate division FCM Travel as its new Global Head of Sales, based in New York City.

Joining amid a period of strong growth for the brand, Straub (**pictured**) brings more than 15 years of travel industry experience to her new role, with the past 12 spent with business travel and meetings industry news title, *The Beat*.

In her new role, Straub will work with regional sales chiefs around the world to improve customer acquisition, developing strategic solutions to boost productivity.

Straub will also work to expand the company's reach into new markets in Europe and Asia.



Virgin cracks down

VIRGIN Voyages has warned travel agents it will be working to stop deceptive sales tactics, including soliciting customers and offering misleading discounts.

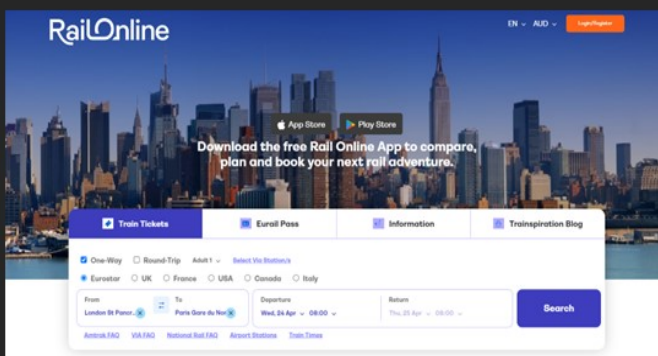
The cruise line also noted that some agents have been contacting customers in social media groups and asking them to transfer their booking from a different agent or Virgin Voyages direct to their own agency.

Virgin Voyages said it is actively monitoring these tactics and reserves the right to cancel first mate accounts.

Touropa to the ME

COACH touring brand Touropa has unveiled a collection of new holiday options in the Middle East, taking in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Bahrain and Egypt.

The range features more than 100 itineraries, with guaranteed departures based on a minimum of two travellers.



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HLO covering all bases



THE DMC division of Helloworld Travel, ATS Pacific and AOT Inbound, enjoyed a strong presence at the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) in Melbourne last week.

The group was there in both a ‘buyer’ and ‘seller’ capacity, and engaged in an “unprecedented” number of appointments with partners on both sides.

The Helloworld team also had the opportunity to network with main overseas clients during a gala dinner at Crown Towers, where a dinner was served with operatic entertainment.

“The inbound market is a hugely important one to Helloworld and we are delighted to see how positive our long-standing partners are about the future level of business and the demand they are experiencing in their countries for Australia,” HLO COO Cinzia Burnes said.

“The timing is excellent given the decline we are seeing in domestic demand.” *JM*

Pictured: (back row) Gary Paterson, Emma Robertson, Neale Herridge, Dom Atzenhoffer, Chris Forde, (front row) Vivian Shen and Kathy Georgiou.

A Big Red opportunity

BIG Red Group is encouraging Australian tourism operators to tap into the power of TikTok to reach Gen Z travellers, with new research showing that almost 90% use the platform to seek out new experiences.

According to StudentUniverse’s *The State of Student and Youth Travel in 2024* report, 89% of Gen Z respondents said they discover new travel destinations and experiences through the platform, and 40% even booked a holiday as a direct result of watching TikTok content.

“We’re currently observing a significant shift in how Gen Z travellers discover and decide on their next travel destinations, with TikTok emerging as a dominant influencer in this landscape,” said Big Red Group CEO, David Anderson.

“Tourism operators have a prime opportunity to engage Gen Z travellers on TikTok by providing

compelling content that speaks directly to their interests by showcasing their experiences.

“By leveraging TikTok’s creative potential and establishing authentic connections with this audience, tourism operators can effectively capture attention and drive bookings in an increasingly competitive market.”

The experience network has already benefited from the positive impact of TikTok, with its adventure marketplace, Adrenaline, gaining 70,000 clicks to its website following a recent campaign on the short-form video platform, which reached two million users.

Several of Big Red’s partners have also reaped the benefits, including Oz Jet Boating, whose TikTok video advertising its Taylor Swift-inspired experience garnered over 2.6 million views earlier this year, prompting a \$25,000 surge in sales. *JM*



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MSC partners up

MSC Cruises' philanthropic division, the MSC Foundation, has signed a partnership with Mission Blue to educate cruise travellers about the importance of ocean health.

An ocean literacy program will roll out on the MSC Cruises fleet and feature on board presentations and activities to emphasise the role of marine ecosystems such as mangroves, coral reefs, and kelp forests.

Furthermore, the organisations will embark on a seagrass restoration project, which will see 37,000 plants settled around the Spanish island of Formentera over the next three years.

The project aims to replenish seagrass meadows, sequester carbon and boost local fish populations.

The MSC Foundation's pact also centres around Mission Blue's declaration about its MSC Marine Reserve as a 'Hope Spot' in recognition of its regeneration work on the island and surrounding reefs.

"By joining forces with the MSC Foundation, we can now reach millions of people who are out on the ocean each year to help educate them on what is below the ship and inspire greater marine stewardship," said Mission Blue President and Co-Chair, Sylvia Earle.

ROADMAP TO AVOID OVERTOURISM

BALANCING local resources and tackling tourism density are among a collection of strategies in a new white paper designed to address overtourism.

Collated by travel thinktanks Phocuswright and Mabrian, the *Roadmap to Move Destinations Away from Overtourism* paper will be presented at an upcoming summit in Barcelona and applies a data-driven approach to cities combating tourism overcapacity.

The report focuses on seven key elements destinations can use, each coupling to one another and able to form the basis of different goals to suit each region.

Central to the paper is a point that overtourism should form part of a broader discussion on general sustainability.

Among the seven elements is an emphasis on greater distribution of visitors around a country, with



destinations urged to spread their tourism offering to wider areas.

This was based on a statistic showing 61% of travellers avoided a destination due to sustainability concerns over the past year.

Phocuswright data also showed two-thirds of travellers want the money they spend in a destination to flow to local communities and to stay within the country.

The white paper presented

theories on how a destination can better promote tourism experiences across a whole year instead of the peak summer season, as well as widen the breadth of tourism activities.

"A successful, consistent sustainable strategy involves formulating good practices but operationalising them expediently," said Phocuswright Senior Analyst, Madeline List. *ML*

'I do' zero-waste

INDONESIA'S Bawah Reserve resort has launched a zero-waste wedding service for eco-conscious couples.

The service features native floral and bridal bouquets, with menus developed using locally sourced ingredients and all leftovers composted.

Glassware from each event is also repurposed for use in the island's water system.

The resort is also powered by a renewable micro-grid.

Hydrogen study

DELTA Air Lines, Airbus and Plug Power have launched a feasibility study into the viability of using hydrogen fuelling at Hartsfield Jackson Airport in Atlanta.

The study will assess the infrastructure needed, safety and security, and operational viability of using hydrogen as a fuel source.

In turn, this newfound knowledge will be applied to airports worldwide.

Adina sustained

ADINA Hotel Geneva has joined Swiss Tourism's 'Swisstainable' sustainability program, with the property now Level II certified.

MEANWHILE, sister property Adina Apartment Hotel Perth has been awarded a Gold Waterwise Business Award from Perth's Waterwise Corporation for its efforts implementing water management actions and reducing overall water usage.



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MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.666

THE global exchange market remained relatively flat over the weekend, with the Aussie only seeing gains against the Japanese yen, which has been slumping due to massive offloads of the currency.

Meanwhile, the AUD/USD kicked off the week on a positive note, reaching around 0.6632 yesterday, with the uptick supported by the softer US dollar.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.666
UK	£0.521
NZ	\$1.082
Euro	€0.613
Japan	¥104.4
Thailand	฿24.34
China	¥4.821
South Africa	12.22
Canada	\$0.907
Crude oil	US\$82.12

Novotel's new spa

A NEW day spa has opened at Novotel Perth Murray Street, offering a "holistic and indulgent experience" to the hotel's guests, as well as the public.

With four spacious treatment rooms and a deluxe manicure and pedicure lounge, Keishi Spa is characterised by natural light and a calming palette of pink, neutral timbers and gold tone finishes.

The spa is currently offering two special opening deals, including a Wellness Getaway Package.

Eco-champs to the rescue



THE Travel Corporation and Down Under Tours Australia teamed up last week to join an annual community planting day hosted by Rainforest Rescue.

Making the most of National Volunteering Week, sustainability champions from the two brands travelled to the Daintree in Qld last weekend to help plant a total 2,400 native trees.

The event saw nearly 150 local and eco-volunteers work together in the mud, marking Rainforest

Rescue's 25th birthday.

The non-for-profit organisation collaborates with traditional landowners to purchase, protect and restore parts of the Daintree Rainforest, the oldest continuous living rainforest in the world, and the largest and most biodiverse in Australia. *JM*

A criminal whiskey

A UNIQUE new tourist attraction has opened in Belfast, offering travellers the opportunity to sip iconic Irish whisky in what was once a prison.

Following a two-year renovation and restoration of the historic venue, which served as a prison for 150 years, tickets to McConnell's Distillery and Visitor Experience are now on sale.

Guests can take a guided tour on an immersive journey through the art of brewing, distilling and maturing McConnell's signature Irish Whiskies, while also giving them the opportunity to sample the brand's iconic liquid - tickets are available **HERE** for \$48.

Air NZ's new lifeline

AIR New Zealand has established a new NZ\$250 million credit facility, which will serve as a standby liquidity resource to support the Kiwi carrier.

The committed and unsecured revolving credit facility is backed by ANZ Bank New Zealand and MUFG Bank.

Air NZ's new facility replaces the previous NZ\$400 million Crown Standby Facility, which the airline cancelled earlier this year, having never drawn from it (**TD** 25 Mar).

Window Seat

MISCHIEVOUS monkeys have been causing havoc in a popular Thai tourist town.

Having once been a drawcard for visitors, the cheeky primates are now chasing away holidaymakers.

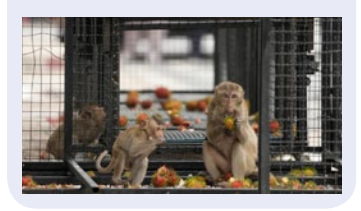
The 2,500 wild macaques running around Lopburi in central Thailand have become increasingly aggressive towards people, forcing authorities to take action.

Several videos have emerged of the monkeys snatching food from people and even causing injuries, while residents have had their homes damaged, and local shops have seen a drop in income.

In an attempt to get the situation under control, the town's authorities have set up cages on the streets containing ripe tropical fruit, in the hopes of luring and trapping and relocating the unsuspecting primates.

The monkeys are catching onto the trickery, however, with some refusing to enter the cages after witnessing their friends being caught.

If successful, the plan is to leave a modest number behind to maintain Lopburi's image as Thailand's monkey town, while the rest will "start a new life elsewhere".



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New! Collette's Canada & Alaska

Collette promises to give Aussie travellers what they love on their brand-new tour - the *Canadian Rockies and Alaska's Inside Passage*, with departure dates starting in May 2025.

With the tour beginning in Calgary, your clients can travel with style - staying at the iconic Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, travelling on board the famed Rocky Mountaineer for a two-day rail journey and embarking on a seven-night Holland America cruise.

This much-loved itinerary has been carefully curated for the Australian market by Collette's expert travel designers. This tour is tailored for the Australian traveller looking for an incredible holiday to Canada and Alaska starting with exploring the Rockies by land and rail, and then finishing with the Alaskan cruise.

As a part of the Collette experience,

the same tour manager will accompany your clients throughout your entire journey through the Canadian Rockies, as well as when travelling Alaska's Inside Passage with Holland America.

This tour, capped at a maximum of 44 pax, will ensure that your clients get the expertise, guidance, and experience that they deserve whilst exploring these breathtaking landscapes!

With the *Canadian Rockies and Alaska's Inside Passage* tour starting at \$11,599 per person, this gives your clients great value to experience this beautiful part of the world. It also gives them the choice where (and if) they wish to upgrade their cabin or rail journey.

With over 100 years of touring experience, Collette are the experts at

touring and know what their clients love in each destination.

So confident in the curation of their *Canadian Rockies and Alaska's Inside Passage* tour, Collette have already established 17 departure dates between May and September 2025, with **10 of these being guaranteed departures.**

EARLY BIRD OFFER!

Collette has launched this tour with a tempting Early Bird offer! Your clients can enjoy a \$400 per couple credit to go towards to pre-night, post-night, upgrades, pre-sold options or air purchase for any *Canadian Rockies and Alaska's Inside Passage* sold before 31 July, 2024.



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