

travelBulletin

NOVEMBER 2021



Own A Key Piece Of The Next Big Tourism Destination

**Become An Operator For The Next Big
Tourism Destination Down Under.
See over for more information.**

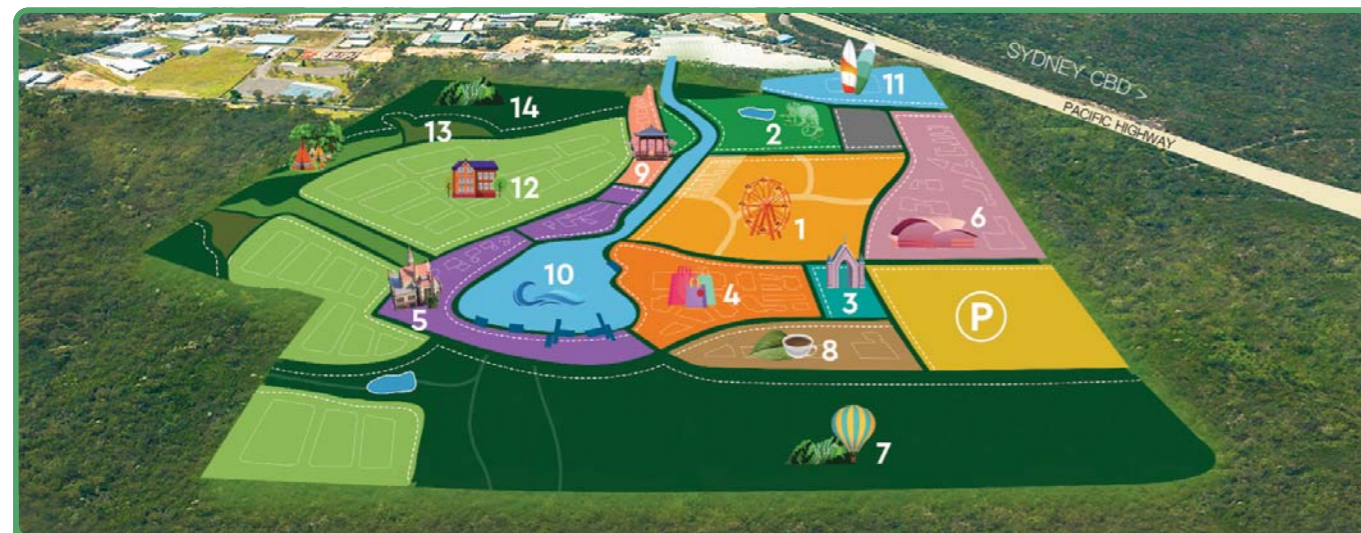


travelBulletin

NOVEMBER 2021

Calling All Tourism Operators To Be Part Of Australia's Newest Tourism Resort And Entertainment Hub

Situated on NSW's Central Coast, the redevelopment of the Old Sydney Town Tourism Precinct will create Australia's newest comprehensive multicultural tourism destination.



- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Theme Park Super Lot | 6 Cultural Industry Quarter and Museums | 11 Wave Park |
| 2 The Australian Reptile Park | 7 Eco Adventure Zones | 12 Potential Residential Development |
| 3 Community Outdoor Spaces | 8 Botanical Gardens and Cafes | 13 Eco Leisure Tourism Area |
| 4 Destination Shopping Outlets | 9 Global Immersive Short Stay District | 14 Eco Conservation Area |
| 5 Theme Hotel and Function Centres | 10 Water Shows and Recreation Area | |

Discover why the Old Sydney Town Tourism Precinct is such a good opportunity for tourism operators:



+1.5 Million Tourists
The project will leverage its established location, extending visitation in excess of one and a half million visitors per year.



All-In-One Entertainment
The redevelopment of Old Sydney Town presents a convergence of cultural recreation, entertainment and diversity.



Tailored Options
This project provides diversified options, tailoring the level of opportunity for those who choose to be a part of the development.



Multi-Faceted Tourism
Masterplan consisting of fourteen distinct tourism elements to cover all facets of recreation, education, relaxation and culture.

Contact WCTV To Express Your Interest
In Becoming A Part Of Australia's Next
Big Tourism Opportunity

Contact
Email business@wctv.com.au
Phone 1800 954 226

In it for the **LONG** haul

EXCLUSIVE
first interview
with AFTA's
new CEO



**NORTHERN
EUROPE
& QATAR**



ANTARCTICA

An exploration of the frozen continent with Australian Geographic and Hurtigruten Expeditions.



Antarctica & Falklands Expedition

21 November 2022

Hosted by David Haslingden, owner of Australian Geographic

The sustainable choice

World's first hybrid-powered ships and lowest CO₂ footprint of all expedition voyages to region

Additional inclusions and exclusives

16 days cruise | From only **\$12,317***

Book now



The white continent

Australian Geographic and Hurtigruten Expeditions have partnered to offer guests this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. As a travel experience, nothing compares to Antarctica. Here, the elements rule and exploring this vast, white continent will seem daring and extreme to many. And that's exactly why guests will want to go.

Active exploration

Guests won't simply wave at Antarctica from the ship as they sail past it. Instead, they'll join our experienced Expedition Team to go on landings ashore, on small boat cruises in the area, and on optional activities like kayaking, snowshoeing and maybe even camping.

Knowledge and wildlife

Our Expedition Team will be there to guide and enhance everything guests see and experience, sharing their insights on geology, climate change, polar history, and the unique wildlife of whales, seals, seabirds and penguins. Antarctica awaits.

COVER STORY

14 In it for the long haul
Only a few weeks into his new role as CEO of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents, Dean Long is relishing the challenge before him. travelBulletin's Bruce Piper sits down with Dean for his first official interview.

MONTHLY

- 02** State of the industry
- 06** Issues and trends
- 20** Cruise
- 32** Last word

COLUMNS

- 02** From the publisher
- 06** AFTA View
- 10** CATO View
- 23** CLIA View

FEATURES

- 24** Northern Europe
Celebrity Cruises is enticing Aussies to explore Northern Europe in 2022, asking "Isn't it time?"
- 28** Qatar
As the world re-emerges to tourism, Qatar Airways has partnered with Discover Qatar to offer a new range of stopover packages. Myles Stedman explains.

This month's contributors

Dean Long, Brett Jardine, Joel Katz



Image bottom left: *Celebrity Apex* offers luxury at sea ©Celebrity Cruises

Image bottom right: Qatar is the ultimate stopover destination ©Qatar Tourism

travelBulletin

Circulation
travelBulletin has an average readership of

12,700

Google Analytics
Google Analytics data Aug 2020 - Dec 2020

EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief and Publisher – Bruce Piper

Editorial and Production Manager – Anna Piper
Ph: 1300 799 220 or 02 8007 6760
anna.piper@traveldaily.com.au

Editorial team – Myles Stedman, Adam Bishop, Bruce Piper

ADVERTISING

National Sales Manager

Lisa Maroun
Ph: 0405 132 575 or 02 8007 6760
lisa.maroun@travelbulletin.com.au

ART

Design – Sarah Beyer, Anna Piper, Emily Nunell

Publishing Director – Jenny Piper

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia
Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760)

www.travelbulletin.com.au
travelBulletin is part of the Business Publishing Group family of publications

From the publisher

Bruce Piper



THIS month marks a major turning point for the Australian travel sector, with some of the country's international borders opening - at least for aviation - more than 18 months after they were slammed shut in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

And with the complications of travel in this new environment, it looks like there will be plenty of opportunity for players in the travel ecosystem to add value to the passenger journey.

Travel agents will be able to become "advisors" in the true sense of the word - and the advice provided will, for many travellers, become something they are willing to pay for.

Similarly Australian-based tour operators must surely benefit from the reassurance that being just a local phone call away will provide to prospective passengers as they timidly re-emerge into the world.

Certainly the globe has been shaken, but this shift will, in my estimation, create plenty of opportunity for those who are willing to accept that things are no longer what they were before.

In the end the key metric for anyone in travel and tourism is passenger numbers. If the number of people who are travelling is increasing, then we are in a growing market, and

that creates opportunity for all.

However the excitement around border reopenings must surely put our industry lobby groups in somewhat of a bind. On the one hand they naturally want to celebrate the removal of restrictions (apart from the government's inexcusable, non-scientific and seemingly bloody-minded continuation of the ban on cruising) - but on the other they are continuing to push for Government support.

Yes, it's absolutely true that cashflow won't return until large numbers return to travel, and it's also true that some of the current frenzied activity revolves around credit redemptions, so does not help the bottom line.

But am I perhaps pointing out the bleeding obvious when I say that in my opinion, with positive stories about a travel boom now abounding, a further round of the COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support Program has a snowball's chance in hell of getting up politically?

My suggestion to CATO, AFTA, ATEC and anyone else who will listen, is to pivot their requests for support to focus on helping businesses tool up for the demand, perhaps for digital initiatives, training, and developing new systems.

Just my 2c worth.

on by Intrepid Chief Sales Officer, Brett Mitchell.

The "hybrid hotel" concept envisioned by the group will offer flexible options including private suites and shared rooms, with "exciting communal areas and unique cultural and dining offerings". With three "Drifter - an Intrepid Hotel" properties in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch to open next year, the plan is to expand globally to a \$500 million portfolio of hostels, newbuilds, and repositioned hotels and commercial sites.

IATA to offer daily remittance option

THE International Air Transport Association has supported an initiative to facilitate the ongoing trading of travel agents hit hard by COVID-19, allowing those who are unable to meet the requirements IATA's Annual Financial Review to be placed onto daily BSP remittances.

Subject to final approval at this month's Passenger Agency Conference, the move is a new option for those who choose not to provide financial security.

IATA South West Pacific Area Manager, Matteo Zanmarini, told *travelBulletin* the change was in addition to other measures including allowing certified, rather than audited accounts to be submitted, and extending the financial statement deadline.

Despite the impacts of the pandemic, IATA has only seen 18 locations in Australia relinquish their accreditation over the last 18 months.

“This would not have been possible without the strong relationship that has been established for many years between IATA, the airlines and the Australian Federation of Travel Agents”

Matteo Zanmarini, IATA Area Manager, South West Pacific

MEET SOME FUTURE LEADERS



THE Association of Australian Convention Bureaux has named the winners of its 2021/22 Staff Scholarship program, each of whom will receive \$3,300 to help undertake a proposed research project which aims to support building confidence within Australia's business events marketplace.

The winners (pictured) included Isabella Fiore, Business Development Coordinator at Business Events Perth who will look at sustainably conscious delegates, along with Business Events Geelong's Claudia Baranski, Business Development Manager, and Dana Broekhuizen, Sales & Marketing Executive who will jointly conduct global market research to map out a roadmap for the sector's recovery.

However some have transitioned to GoLite accreditation, while two Australian companies have joined the GoGlobal model.

"This would not have been possible without the strong relationship that has been established for many years between IATA, the airlines and the Australian Federation of Travel Agents," Zanmarini said.

\$90m Trivago fine?

EXPEDIA-OWNED Trivago is facing a potential fine of \$90 million, with the penalty sought by the Australian

Competition and Consumer Commission over claims the meta-search site misled consumers both online and in TV commercials.

The Federal Court has already found Trivago guilty of contravening consumer laws, with the ACCC now seeking orders for declarations, injunctions, penalties and costs.

If successful, the penalty would be the largest fine for breaches of consumer law ever imposed in Australia, with the judge

Continues over page

IN BRIEF

Intrepid moves into hotels

INTREPID Travel last month launched a new dedicated accommodation division, alongside a partnership with Drifter Hospitality Group, an accommodation venture being backed by corporate financier Barrenjoey Capital Partners. With an initial \$75 million war chest, the group plans to "acquire and reposition hotels across Australia and New

Zealand" with a target of 15 properties by 2025. Intrepid CEO James Thornton said there were significant opportunities in hospitality as a result of disruption wrought by COVID-19, saying the group is hoping to drive "outsized investment returns" by taking on under-performing hotels in prime locations.

Intrepid's new hospitality operation is being headed up by its Asia-Pacific MD Sarah Clark, whose current responsibilities will be taken

Continues from previous page

finding Trivago actually gave more prominence to accommodation providers which paid a higher cost-per-click, despite claiming to be an impartial comparison site.

TRAVLR takes equity

THE TRAVLR travel media venture founded by The Bali Bible's Simon te Hennepe has successfully secured \$6.7 million in funding to further expand its operations, with rich listers Antony Catalano, Matt Berriman, Tony Gandel and Alex Waislitz backing the round.

The deal was announced alongside the launch of Discover Beyond, a new portal backed by BBC Global News, offering the ability to book experiences, flights and hotels inspired by BBC travel content. TRAVLR has similar arrangements with Network 10 in Australia and Stuff in New Zealand,

with the company's business model providing a revenue stream for media businesses which were heavily dependent on travel advertising in the pre-pandemic environment.

Te Hennepe last year made an unsuccessful bid for election to the Board of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents.

Lufthansa, Singapore Airlines plot alliance

SINGAPORE Airlines and Lufthansa have lodged an application for a significant expansion of their existing collaboration on flights between Asia and Europe, seeking immunity from anti-competition laws to coordinate pricing, sales, marketing and inventory management on the routes.

In 2016 the current pact was ratified, but at the time only covered flights from Singapore Home Markets

“ [The proposed Joint Venture] will assist to ensure that consumers gain access to the widest network of travel options as soon as is allowable ”

Singapore Airlines/ Lufthansa ACCC application

(Singapore, Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia) and Lufthansa Home Markets (Germany, Austria, Belgium and Switzerland). The new iteration proposes the addition of three additional unnamed countries at the Singapore Airlines end of the deal, as well as much of Europe including the UK, France, Spain, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, Serbia, Portugal, Greece and the Netherlands.

Authorisation is sought for a five year period, with the proposal also seeking to continue to share revenue on a range of non-stop routes between Singapore and ports in Germany.

The carriers said the proposed conduct would aid the industry's recovery from COVID-19. "It will assist to ensure that consumers gain access to the widest network of travel options as soon as is allowable," the submission noted, with a draft determination expected before 10 December.

DATA ROOM

MAIN DOMESTIC ROUTES

Top 10 domestic city pairs, August 2021

City pair	Passengers YE Aug 20 (000)	Passengers YE Aug 21 (000)	% change
Brisbane-Cairns	858.7	954.9	+11.2
Brisbane-Townsville	661.7	653.7	-1.2
Brisbane-Mackay	522.2	499.1	-4.4
Karratha-Perth	314.0	385.1	+22.7
Broome-Perth	215.4	352.9	+63.8
Brisbane-Rockhampton	343.3	337.8	-1.6
Perth-Port Hedland	258.9	302.7	+16.9
Newman-Perth	218.6	275.5	+26.0
Brisbane-Darwin	203.8	251.3	+23.3
Kalgoorlie-Perth	183.1	228.9	+25.0
ALL CITY PAIRS	35,903.2	22,308.1	-37.9

Source: BITRE

VISITOR ARRIVALS

Top 10 destinations, August 2021

Country of residence	Aug 2019	Aug 2020	Aug 2021	change - original Jul 21/ Aug 21
New Zealand	124,710	370	1,050	-12,140
Vanuatu	1,630	10	770	+460
UK	36,130	310	540	-200
USA	51,980	450	400	+370
India	33,310	220	400	+10
Singapore	44,210	130	350	+40
China	128,280	160	260	+10
Afghanistan	200	0	230	+220
Philippines	13,590	70	210	-60
Solomon Islands	480	10	200	+170
All visitors arrivals	789,200	3,030	6,240	-12,510

Source: ABS

RESIDENT RETURNS

Top 10 destinations, August 2021

Country of stay	Aug 2019	Aug 2020	Aug 2021	change - original Jul 21/ Aug 21
New Zealand	112,640	900	4,270	-31,720
Japan	17,580	200	1,190	+990
USA	84,600	1,060	600	+80
UK	72,550	850	560	-10
India	18,750	260	420	-100
PNG	6,970	310	300	+60
China	35,590	500	250	-50
Canada	18,620	180	160	+70
Singapore	29,670	220	150	-50
Pakistan	2,190	60	130	+30
All resident returns	930,970	8,070	10,310	-31,490

Source: ABS

DOMESTIC AIR MARKET

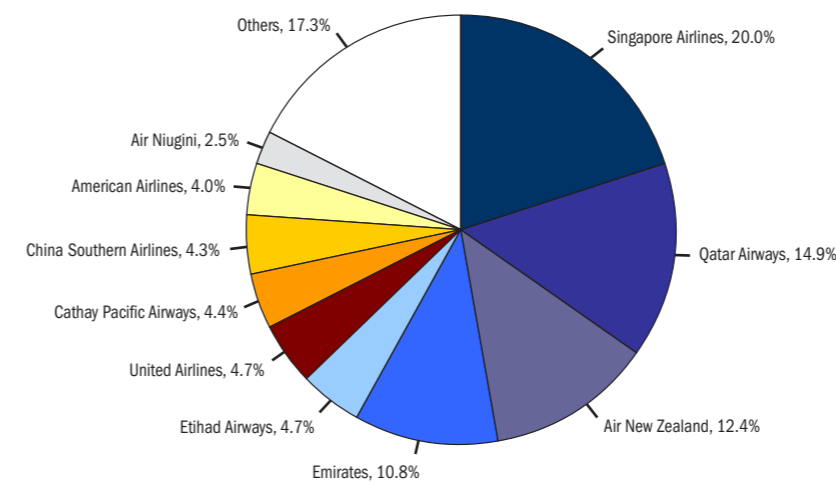
August 2021

	Aug 20	Aug 21	Growth %	Year end Aug 20	Year end Aug 21	Growth %
Total pax carried	0.58m	0.73m	+25.8	35.90m	22.31m	-37.9
Revenue pax km (RPK)	0.65bn	0.90bn	+39.3	41.58bn	25.93bn	-37.6
Available seat kms (ASK)	1.26bn	1.98bn	+57.9	53.81bn	41.37bn	-23.1
Load factor (%)	51.7	45.6	-6.1*	77.3	62.7	-14.6*
Aircraft trips (000)	14.3	19.3	+35.3	411.6	343.8	-16.5

Source: BITRE

INTERNATIONAL AIR MARKET SHARE

Share of passengers carried – August 2021



Source: BITRE

INTERNATIONAL AIR ROUTES

Top 10 city pairs, year end August 2021

City pair	Passengers YE Aug 20	Passengers YE Aug 21	% of total	% change 21/20
Auckland-Sydney	932,101	126,896	10.7	-86.4
Auckland-Brisbane	539,953	102,478	8.6	-81.0
Auckland-Melbourne	733,957	92,578	7.8	-87.4
Los Angeles-Sydney	508,175	41,597	3.5	-91.8
Singapore-Sydney	860,028	40,093	3.4	-95.3
Auckland-Gold Coast	185,416	39,613	3.3	-78.6
Doha-Sydney	342,959	35,065	3.0	-89.8
Auckland-Perth	115,498	30,173	2.5	-73.9
Singapore-Brisbane	528,445	27,752	2.3	-94.7
Singapore-Perth	662,150	26,833	2.3	-95.9
Top 10 City Pairs	5,408,682	563,078	47.4	-89.6
Other City Pairs	18,164,947	625,010	52.6	-96.6
ALL CITY PAIRS	23,573,629	1,188,088	100.0	-95.0

Source: BITRE

Travel Daily HEADLINES

- 01 Oct** International borders to reopen in Nov
- 01 Oct** FCTG to challenge closures
- 05 Oct** QF, EK extend partnership
- 08 Oct** ACCC ticks student travel
- 10 Oct** Fiji to open for Australians from 11 Nov
- 11 Oct** Arrival caps to be scrapped
- 12 Oct** Airline's Bonza launch!
- 13 Oct** Malaysia drops its borders
- 15 Oct** Qantas sells Mascot landholding
- 15 Oct** NSW drops quarantine and caps

- 18 Oct** Vaccine certificate update
- 19 Oct** Thai Airways announce SYD-HKT
- 20 Oct** TG to halve Australian staff
- 21 Oct** Qantas gives vax guidance
- 22 Oct** VIC - no quarantine for fully vaxxed
- 22 Oct** QF international is back
- 25 Oct** Intrepid plots joint venture with Drifter
- 26 Oct** Singapore announce vaccinated travel lane
- 27 Oct** SQ and LH seek expanded pact
- 28 Oct** "Do not travel" removed

BONZA SET FOR TAKE-OFF

AUSTRALIA'S aviation sector is about to see another competitor land on its turf, with independent low-cost airline Bonza announcing its intention to launch early next year.

Using Boeing 737-8 aircraft, Bonza said it would target regional routes instead of the more competitive big city destinations, identifying 45 inland airports that were potentially able to accommodate a new carrier.

Of the 15 largest domestic aviation markets in the world, Australia is the only country without an independent low-cost airline, Bonza said, adding that its mission would be to provide Aussies with more choice and lower fares.

Bonza was founded by experienced airline executive Tim Jordan and backed by US investment firm 777 Partners, with the business confident of finding cut through in an already highly competitive domestic market.

"Bonza will deliver enormous benefits to all Australians, but particularly to regional communities by providing new routes and greater travel opportunities," Jordan said.

"Bonza will also play a leading role in Australia's post-pandemic economic recovery – creating jobs, stimulating travel and consumer spending and helping regional communities," he added.

The airline has wasted no time with recruitment, already landing several senior leaders, with Peter McNally joining as Chief Operating Officer, Carly Povey as Chief Commercial Officer and Lidia Valenzuela as Chief Financial Officer.

The carrier's launch is still subject to necessary regulatory approvals.



Bonza Founder, Tim Jordan



AFTA VIEW

Dean Long, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Federation of Travel Agents

IT HAS been a busy first three weeks as the CEO AFTA. During this time, it has been great to reconnect with many of you, albeit virtually and importantly seeing governments make decisions to allow us to reopen and sell travel. For many the news of reopening is welcome but now we face the prospect of rebuilding your businesses to meet the new challenges of travel in a COVID-19 world.

During the last 24 months, the unity that the travel sector has demonstrated in its advocacy to Government to ensure our sector was recognised, has been incredible to watch. This success is the envy of the entire tourism industry and while not everyone has been granted the support they believed was owed to them, it is a huge step in the right direction and one we must build on.

During my previous four years at AFTA as the Head of Public Policy and Strategic Partnerships, I was part of the team meeting with members over practicalities on how we shaped our future as a sector. I loved my time in that role and enjoyed being part of the team shaping how deregulation would play out and the development of initiatives including the AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme.

Now that I am back, I am so proud to be working with a dedicated team and Board of Directors, focused on ensuring we have a clean and clear bridge to recovery and a strong and prosperous future. There is no doubt we have challenges ahead, but the AFTA team and Board are clear on our path forward. The immediate priority is optimising the ongoing support so that our members can keep providing the essential support that travelling Australians need.

It is also important that we acknowledge the tremendous support of AFTA Chair Tom Manwaring and the Board who, day after day, week after week, have volunteered time to beat the drum about the need for support, and raise awareness around the value of a travel professional. Specifically, I would like to acknowledge Tom in his commitment and contribution as Chair and especially during his recent stint as Executive Chair. He deserves recognition for his unpaid and significant effort in advocacy.

BECOME A PART OF THE BEST GIFT SHOP IN THE WORLD.

Join our campaign to get Aussies to give the gift of travel this holiday season. Download the toolkit and help us put Australia under the tree.

DOWNLOAD NOW

HOLIDAY *here* THIS YEAR



Mike Ball Dive Expeditions,
Bougainville Reef, QLD

TOURISM AUSTRALIA



QANTAS RENEWS EMIRATES DEAL

LABELLED by Qantas as “seismic” when it first signed a joint-venture partnership with Emirates in 2013, the two carriers last month decided to extend the agreement for another five years – testament to the benefits of the tie-up provided to both carriers.

Qantas and Emirates have

existing approvals from regulators to operate a joint business until March 2023, with the extension now seeking re-authorisation from regulators, including the ACCC, to continue the core elements of the partnership which encompasses coordination of pricing, schedules, sales and tourism marketing on approved routes until 2028.

“The premise of our partnership with Emirates has always been that no airline can fly everywhere but combined we can fly to most of the places our joint customers want to travel to,” Qantas CEO Alan Joyce said.

The latest deal includes an option to renew for another five years beyond 2028.



“
...no airline can fly everywhere but combined we can fly to most of the places our joint customers want to travel to
”

Alan Joyce, CEO, Qantas

Multi-outlet agencies receive boost

THE ongoing sticking point over government support for travel companies with multiple retail outlets received some relief last month, with news of a one-off \$10,000 payment from the Federal Government for each shopfront location.

The latest support package is in addition to the \$258 million Consumer Travel Support Program and JobKeeper, however the criteria to access the new funding stipulates those applicants must have already received grants under Round one or two of the

“
...the criteria to access the new funding stipulates applicants must have already received grants under Round one or two... potentially ruling out a number of travel agencies
”

Consumer Travel Support Program, potentially ruling out a number of travel agencies.

Outlets must also prove they are continuing to operate at the time of the grant application.

“When Australians can travel again our travel agents will be busy people, and our Government is supporting them to be prepared to meet that demand,” Federal Tourism Minister Dan Tehan said upon the release of the announcement.

Applications for the latest funding closes on 03 November.

THE DISUNITED STATES OF AUSTRALIA

THE COVID-19 pandemic has exposed significant flaws in Australia’s model of “competitive federalism”, with differing state-by-state approaches causing major complications for the entire economy - and in particular the travel and tourism sectors.

While most of the country has exercised a highly risk-averse approach to COVID-19, NSW has been a virtual outlier in its attempt to walk the fine line between upholding important health imperatives and getting its economy going again.

This disparity was evident last month when newly installed NSW Premier Dominic Perrottet proudly declared that NSW residents would “be travelling to Bali before Broome”, a not-so-subtle jibe at Western Australia’s fortress-like border stance.

But the message was clear nonetheless, once NSW hits 80% of its adult population fully vaccinated, the state is ready to throw open its borders.

In line with the Federal Government’s four-stage plan to normality, NSW’s speedy vaccination rate meant that it could announce the removal of quarantine requirements and caps for overseas arrivals and allow its fully vaccinated residents to finally make an overseas trip from 01 November.

But in a telling moment that Australia has been a patchwork quilt on the issue of travel freedoms, Perrottet’s announcement that all arrivals are welcome to visit was quickly qualified by Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who stated that while he supported NSW’s impetus to get travel going again, the border would not be open to everyone straight away.

“
...in a telling moment... Perrottet’s announcement that all arrivals are welcome to visit was quickly qualified by Prime Minister Scott Morrison
”



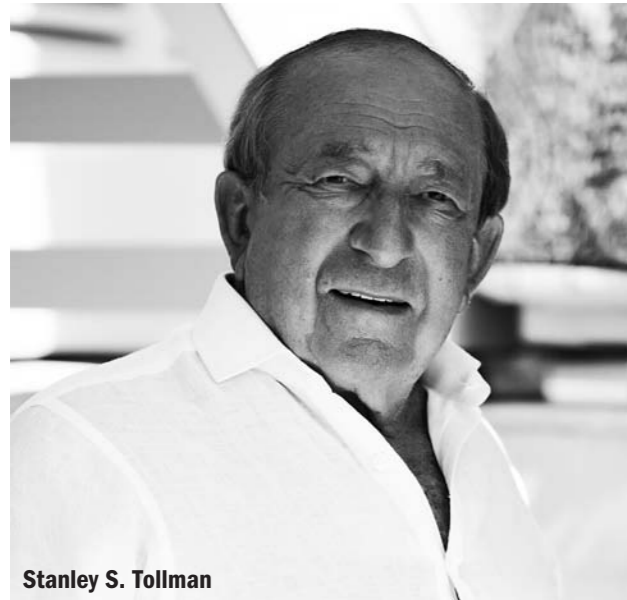
Morrison clarified that it would only be Australian citizens, residents and their immediate family members who he will let in initially, with tourists, students and skilled workers having to wait until Aussies stranded abroad are accommodated on flights home.

Further complicating life is the various vaccination rates of different states, as well as the differing policies each Premier has so far applied to travel, meaning that although residents across the country are able to take a flight overseas from the start of this month, capped arrangements from state to state may complicate where they can re-enter the country and whether they will still need to undergo a phase of hotel quarantine.

Western Australia has perhaps applied the most draconian approach, with Premier Mark McGowan stating WA would open “at some stage next year” – even if the state reaches the magical 80% vaccination threshold sooner. Qantas wasted no time in punishing WA for not staying the course with the National Cabinet plan, announcing that its flights to London would now take off from Darwin instead of Perth, at least for the short-term future.

Meanwhile Queensland’s sluggish vaccination rate has resulted in a delay to quarantine-free travel to The Sunshine State from places like NSW and Victoria, with Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk announcing that it would only be allowed to happen when it reached 80% vaccination, tipped to be around 17 December. Even then, travellers entering via road or air from “hotspots” will still need to be fully vaccinated and test negative within 72 hours prior to arriving in the state. Only at 90% of Qld residents being fully vaccinated will result in free travel across its borders, expected to be early next year.

TRAVEL LEGEND LOST



Stanley S. Tollman

THE founding patriarch of the The Travel Corporation (TTC) died at the age of 91 last month.

Stanley S. Tollman, described in a statement from his family as a “visionary, entrepreneur and philanthropist”, started out in the travel and tourism sector way back in 1954, when he and his wife Beatrice used their wedding money to purchase the Nugget Hotel in Johannesburg.

From there, the Tollmans became leading hoteliers in South Africa based on the principles of impeccable customer service, soon spinning the growing hotel business into a major tourism enterprise, founding The Travel Corporation with the purchase of Trafalgar Tours, a pioneering brand that defined Tollman’s love of international travel. Lamentably, an inhospitable political environment in South Africa meant that Tollman and his family were forced to emigrate and rebuild their empire in England in 1976, and later the United States.

In 1996, Tollman made a move on the Australian market when he purchased AAT Kings, which he built into the foremost South Pacific travel brand, representing the very best of Australia and New Zealand travel. He also brought the world to Aussies through the Inspiring Journeys, SEIT Outback Australia, Adventure World, and Down Under Tours brands.

He died last month in France after a battle with cancer.



CATO VIEW

Brett Jardine, Managing Director,
Council of Australian Tour Operators

THE past 18 months have been enormously challenging for our industry, however, it has provided the opportunity to review the way we operate as an industry and in our businesses, reflect on areas requiring improvement and look at ways to create a more sustainable land-supply sector of our industry.

In July we announced the development of a fit-for-purpose CATO accreditation system for the land supply sector of the Australian travel industry, which will be underpinned by industry standard booking terms and conditions for members. Our members are committed to CATO’s member code of conduct, and we are committed to finding a potential insurance solution that will deliver reassurance to all that work with our members.

In addition, CATO has spent considerable time liaising with departments that will be influential post-COVID, including the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT).

Last month we finalised a project with Tourism Research Australia (TRA) with our collaborative efforts now able to formally quantify how significant outbound leisure travel is - contributing over \$12 billion to the Australian economy and we continue to educate government on this significant point.

CATO has not let up on extensive discussions with the Federal Government over the last month. Meetings with the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison’s office and Minister for Tourism, Dan Tehan’s office, is keeping pressure on the government, as the national approach to opening borders becomes clearer.

Key to our messaging is the ‘cash-lag’ that exists between consumer booking and availed travel when we are able to recognise revenue and the need for ongoing support to assist with re-employment and training of staff. CATO’s efforts in supporting its members and the land-supply sector will deliver direct benefit to its travel agent distribution partners.

Find your preferred CATO Certified Tour Operator or Wholesalers at www.cato.travel.



Nurture your return.

Your
bookings
are secure.

Your
deals are
amazing.

Your
customers
love you.

Expedia TAAP, we’ve got your back.

ENJOY TODAY
www.expedia.com.au/taap



FIJI OPENS TO AUSSIES

ONE of Australia's most popular international tourist destinations flagged plans to open up to Australia once again last month, after more than 18 months of border restrictions. Fiji declared fully vaccinated Australians would be able to travel to the Pacific Island nation from 11 November, with the only restriction being a need to spend two days of their holiday in a booked resort.

Responding to the news, Jetstar and Qantas both introduced direct flights from Sydney to Fiji taking off from mid-Dec, with five weekly Jetstar flights departing from 17 Dec, and four Qantas flights from 19 December - equating to approximately

3,200 seats per week. Fiji Airways also revealed air services would resume from 01 Dec leaving Sydney, followed by Melbourne and Brisbane shortly after.

Dispelling the fear that trips to Fiji would be confined to resorts, the country's Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama said that many safe travel areas would be open to tourists once a rapid diagnostic test was taken 48 hours after arrival, including restaurants, shopping and sanctioned tours.

Aussie travellers will also need to show proof of vaccination and test negative for COVID 72 hours prior to departure.



With Fiji opening up, it won't be long before Australians are snorkelling in the stunning waters of the Mamanuca Islands ©Tourism Fiji

NEW ACCESS FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

By Tim Hoopmann

RUNNING a small business is a unique experience which can involve stress and pressure coming from many directions. If left unaddressed, these demands can sometimes place you at risk of severe or longer-lasting mental health challenges.

Taking care of you as a small business owner is therefore vital to your mental health and the overall success of your business. When you are mentally healthy and make wellness a key part of our small business, you ensure your teams, your customers and your suppliers are all supported as valuable participants to the success of your business.

In March 2021 Beyond Blue in Australia launched a mental health coaching program to support small business owners across Australia.

WHAT IS NEW ACCESS FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS?

NEWACCESS is a free and confidential mental health program, developed by Beyond Blue to give small business owners the support you need. Whether you're just feeling stressed, or completely overwhelmed about everyday life issues like work, relationships, health or loneliness, NewAccess is there when you need it.

WHO IS IT FOR?

NEWACCESS is for anyone aged 18 or over who owns a small business in Australia. For the purposes of program eligibility, a small business is defined as ≤ 20 employees. An initial assessment

conducted by a clinically supervised Coach is used to identify if NewAccess is the most appropriate service to support your mental health needs.

The program avoids clinical language, does not require a doctor's referral and is delivered by relatable coaches – making it an ideal service for small business owners.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE PROGRAM

NEWACCESS uses Low-intensity Cognitive Based Therapy (LiCBT) that allows the participant to recognise the way they think, act, and feel. Instead of a counsellor, they will have a Coach to help them work through an individual plan that they develop together.

Over six sessions your NewAccess Coach will work side

by side with you to overcome difficult issues, providing you with practical skills to manage your stress and get you back to feeling like yourself.

Coaches of the NewAccess program all have a small business background, allowing them to better understand the challenges small business owners may face.

NewAccess is designed to appeal to people who might not otherwise seek support for their mental health and to provide support early, preventing symptoms from potentially getting worse.

ACCESS THE PROGRAM

THE NewAccess for Small Business Owners Coaches program can be accessed in Australia via:

Phone: 1300 945 301

Website: www.beyondblue.org.au/newaccess-SBO

**MY BUSINESS HAS HIT A ROUGH PATCH...
...SO HAVE I**

NewAccess
Developed by Beyond Blue

Free and confidential mental health support for small business owners.

Tim Hoopmann is a speaker, mentor and coach, with a passion for growing small business through using technology to increase productivity and reduce costs. He is also a volunteer speaker for Beyond Blue, working to raise awareness of anxiety and depression, reduce the associated stigma and encourage people to get help.

**NT Summer Sale is back!
Sell more, win more.**

15 prize packages to the NT valued at \$5,000 each up for grabs*

NORTHERN TERRITORY

SAVE UP TO \$1,000*
If you're fully vaxxed

SUMMER SALE

NORTHERN TERRITORY

* T&C's apply.

In it for the **LONG** haul

The Australian Federation of Travel Agents once again has a Chief Executive Officer, with Dean Long taking up his new role last month. Long is no stranger to AFTA, having previously worked for the organisation for five years under the leadership of former CEO Jayson Westbury. But his return has seen him determined to place his own stamp on AFTA as it charts the way forward out of the pandemic. BRUCE PIPER sat down with him for his first official interview.

Two weeks into his new job as CEO of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents, Dean Long is thoroughly relishing the challenge before him. And that's good, because heading up an organisation which, like its members, has been thoroughly battered and bruised by COVID-19, will definitely not be business as usual - and significantly different to his previous stint at AFTA.

Long joined the Federation as Head of Public Policy and Strategic Partnerships in 2014, staying for just over four years. During that time, which now seems like a far-off memory of halcyon days, he was

instrumental in industry deregulation, with his deep knowledge of the sector putting him in good stead to lead AFTA into the post-pandemic world.

The search for a new CEO began in April, after the shock departure of Darren Rudd who was himself in the role for less than 12 months, following the tumultuous resignation of Jayson Westbury just a couple of months after the country's borders shut. With his previous experience at AFTA, Long was firmly in the sights of the Board committee searching for a replacement for Rudd, but as CEO of the Accommodation Association, was deeply entrenched in that organisation's protracted merger with the



Australian Hotels Association as well as growing the Accommodation Association to be a force in the employment services and advocacy space. The AFTA Board persevered, and in the end it became what looks to be a perfect match of experience and expertise.

He modestly downplays his obvious suitability to head AFTA, but did admit to *travelBulletin* that knowing travel is a key advantage. “Moving on from the pandemic, we must have a wider focus. We have to be focused on support, but we also have to be focused on the members - and that means all of the members, from large corporations through to medium-sized businesses and small mum and dad operations.”

However Long is also keen to build on the legacy of his forerunners, noting the remarkable effort and resulting success achieved through AFTA’s grassroots activation campaigns since COVID-19 reared its ugly head. Coming from the accommodation sector, he is well aware of the high regard - and perhaps disbelief - from other lobby groups, that travel agent-specific funding was forthcoming in the form of the COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support Program. For all of the scheme’s perceived shortcomings, the efforts of thousands of travel businesses to highlight their plight to politicians of all stripes across the country created a never-before-seen appreciation of the sector.

Direct advocacy by leaders such as Andrew Burnes and Graham Turner also meant the scale of the travel sector was understood across the spectrum, he believes.

The new AFTA CEO is absolutely determined to make the most of this new-found political position. “The industry has spent the last two years fighting to get to the

front of the line. We can’t let that disappear. You don’t spend two years battling to get a cookie and then go ‘actually, we don’t need any more cookies’,” he said. There is a key opportunity to further entrench awareness of the travel industry in the minds of authorities, he added. “We need to make sure that the role of distribution in the traveller pathway is crystal clear in the minds of authorities. That’s not well understood in government, which is why certain suppliers [read major Australian airlines] appear publicly to have the monopoly on reopening roadmaps,” Long added. “I’m hoping that travel agencies across the country are used to being weaponised, because they are really good at it and it has made a huge difference - and will continue to do so going forward,” he said.

OUT OF THE STARTING BLOCKS

WITH established global and local relationships, the Federation remains the peak body for the travel sector, Long stressed, with strong interest in and nominations from key travel businesses, tour operators and independent agents in the most recent Board election reinforcing AFTA’s industry position. With the pandemic seeing the organisation forced to scale back, just like the rest of the industry this provides an opportunity to rebuild better, Long believes - and thus one of the first things on his extensive agenda is a review of the Federation’s constitution, and the currently convoluted arrangements which govern membership.

With the move previously flagged by AFTA Chairman Tom Manwaring, a Board subcommittee is already looking at the issues around the document which, as Long admits, was developed in an era which



“ We have to be focused on support, but we also have to be focused on the members - and that means all of the members, from large corporations through to medium-sized businesses and small mum and dad operations ”

Dean Long, CEO, AFTA



could not have envisaged what the world of travel looks like today. “The constitution doesn’t really define who we represent. We do clearly define who we represent in the ATAS Charter, but not in the AFTA Constitution. What actually defines a travel agent? When those rules were written, the idea of a website that sells travel would not have fitted into the founding fathers’ definition of what a travel agent is - nor even the idea that you would have someone who is a travel agent or travel business which is not an IATA member.”

“Defining who we are, defining who we represent, and in some ways defining who we do not, will be a more powerful message on where we stand. We’re never going to directly represent aviation, airports and cruise companies, and nor should we, but we have always worked collaboratively with these suppliers. But probably, if you look at ATAS, we want to be representing every travel business that’s in the distribution system.” Everything appears to be up for grabs, but Long noted that ultimately such weighty decisions are in the laps of AFTA’s directors. “As the representatives of our members - our shareholders - their job is to put together a document which they believe will provide future growth opportunities for the organisation, but also ensure that existing stakeholders are able to access the products and services and support they are looking for,” he said.

And on that topic, the actual membership benefits provided by AFTA will also be under the microscope. “We have to get that right, especially in an era where money is going to be tight,” Long said. The disparate nature of AFTA’s member base makes that admittedly tricky. “We need to provide a value proposition for a Flight Centre, a Corporate Travel Management, OTAs like Webjet, as well as making sure we look after our historical membership and mum & dad operators. The product and service review is important because in the past we’ve really had a

one-size-fits-all product mix, and now we'll be a smaller, leaner organisation than we were pre-COVID. We can't just add more products in, we've actually got to work out what we will continue to offer," he said.

Long cited as an example the change in ATAS to a "monitor and support" mode through the pandemic. "That was a really clever move as we moved into fewer resources due to COVID - the organisation simply had to adjust what it was doing." Going forward, support for agencies through the restart will be part of the focus. "We're going to have to look at what that monitoring and support looks like, to support an agency through reopening as well," he said. "AFTA has to provide an ROI for its whole membership going forward - that's what we have to get right."

The constitutional review is just one project, with Long also tasked with developing an overarching strategic plan for AFTA - backed up in turn by a financial and business

“ I’m hoping that travel agencies across the country are used to being weaponised, because they are really good at it and it has made a huge difference - and will continue to do so going forward ”

Dean Long, CEO, AFTA

plan for the organisation. He's developed an initial "Roadmap to Sustainability" (pictured) with six pillars including advocacy and the constitutional/charter review.

Long's six-point plan recognises the looming talent crisis in travel and tourism, with an aspiration to "ensure our industry regains its position as a positive, progressive and rewarding sector in which to work". Based on his time at the Accommodation Association this is likely to be a well-fulfilled promise, with Long's hospitality tenure seeing the organisation develop programs which each month produced hundreds of trained, qualified staff for the industry - each deployed with a generous government salary subsidy. The initiative also provided a welcome diversification of the organisation's revenue stream - something that would likely come in handy for AFTA too.

He believes the industry should be marketing the long-term benefits of a travel career - where people who enter the industry

could end up, not just where they start. "To fill that skills gap both informal and formal training is going to be really important," Long said. "Travel consultants have unique skills in moving goods and services - they are actually experts in supply chain management. We need to take the global leading expertise that we have - which is why we have the highest agency and travel business penetration in the world - and make sure that it is recognised by the Government as a really critical skill set."

DEFINITELY NOT BACK TO THE FUTURE

SOMETHING that has already surprised the new AFTA CEO on his return to the travel sector has been commentary around the former Travel Compensation Fund, with some harking back to Government regulation as a way forward from the pandemic. Nothing could be farther from the truth, according to Long, who believes industry self-regulation through a viable, established and credible accreditation scheme is absolutely vital.

Despite the agency closures forced by the pandemic, things would likely have been much worse under the former TCF regime, he insists. "Imagine if you were a travel agency in the pandemic with a couple of hundred thousand dollars tied up in a TCF bond that you couldn't access. None of the agencies that were forced to put that money in would have received any benefit from it - and as some suppliers ceased trading would probably have been asked to contribute more," he said, suggesting that as the industry looks back it will be increasingly clear that deregulation was an important reform. "Otherwise we wouldn't have been able to trade

through [the pandemic] as well as what we have. And part of that now is that coming out of COVID-19, we need to make sure that industry self-regulation is as strong as it needs to be to ensure that we don't get re-regulated, we don't tie up millions and millions of dollars in travel agency businesses' money in a Government scheme into which we have no say and no oversight."

“ We couldn't have asked for a better choice... given his background across key sectors, his extensive experience within AFTA, and his expertise and networks across government at all levels ”

Tom Manwaring, Chariman, AFTA

Another factor on AFTA's radar is the evolution of the overall travel sector in the brave new world. "Our members are great at selling travel; what's going to be interesting for a few of the businesses is what life is going to be like in a super low commission environment," he said. "Suppliers have definitely taken the opportunity of COVID to slash all that, and it's probably never coming back," Long added.

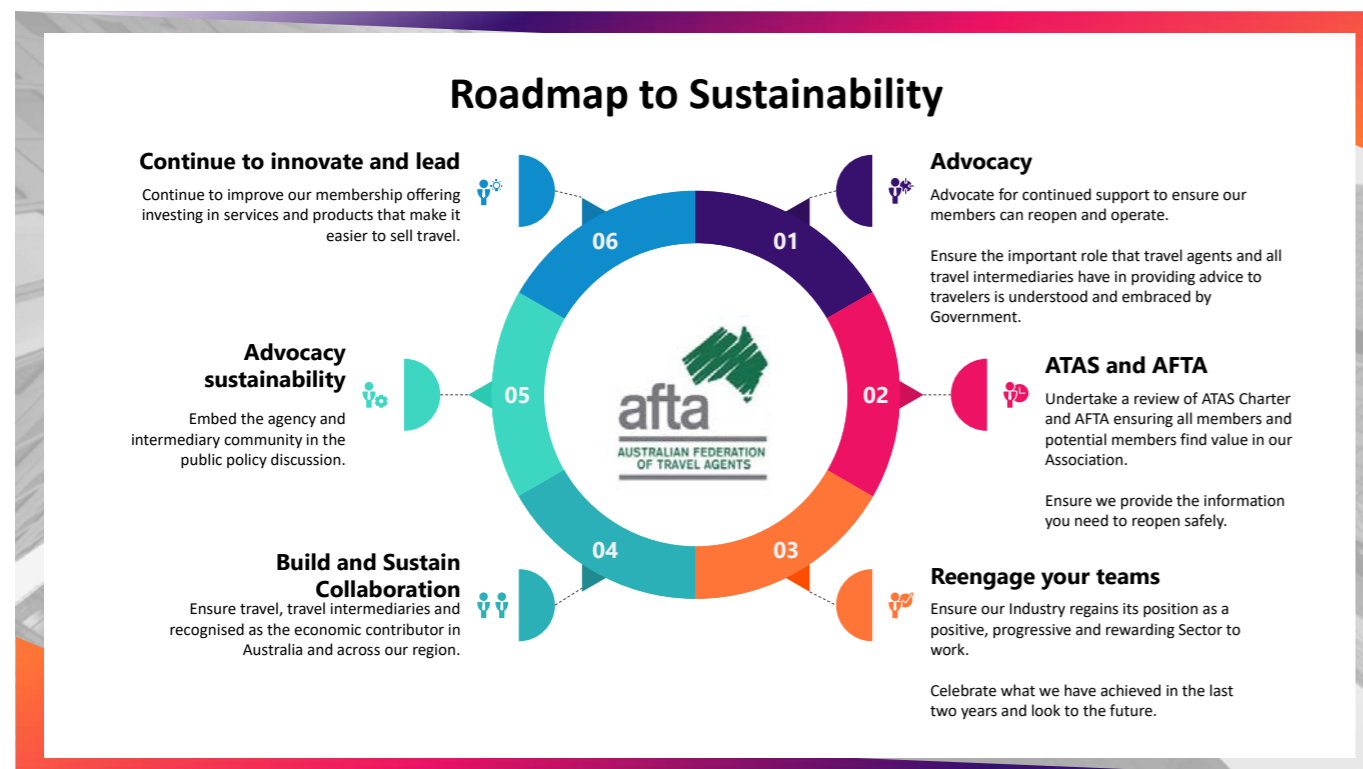
THE BIGGEST PICTURE

THE new AFTA CEO also has a vision to build and sustain sector-wide collaboration, with the aim

of ensuring travel providers and intermediaries are recognised for their economic contribution both in Australia and across the region. That would see the Federation entrench and renew its position on key regulatory committees, reinforcing the distribution system's key role in the passenger journey. "We've always been embedded with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and consular programs, we were the trusted voice to provide a counterpoint to what suppliers like airlines or cruise companies were saying about how things would work in practice," he said.

One example from his former AFTA tenure was Long's involvement on the committee that eliminated the outbound passenger card for travellers departing Australia. For those with not-so-long memories, the information on this document included specifying what you did for work. Underlining the futility of this red tape requirement, Long recalled that "my favourite part was that, according to the data collected, the two most prevalent occupations in Australia were 'porn star' and 'secret agent'".

Dean Long is clearly no stranger to the corridors of power - and as AFTA Chairman Tom Manwaring said when announcing his appointment back in July, "we couldn't have asked for a better choice...given his background across key sectors, his extensive experience within AFTA, and his expertise and networks across government at all levels". Although he has a very full dance card already, the youthful Long clearly has the energy and appetite to drive the Federation forward. The post-COVID world of opportunity beckons for the organisation, and Dean Long seems ready, willing and able to grasp it with both hands.



AFTA's initial "Roadmap to Sustainability" includes ongoing advocacy and a review of the AFTA constitution and charter.

VIKING RINGS IN ITS NEWEST SHIP



Viking Star in Norway ©Viking Cruises

VIKING Cruises has announced its newest ocean ship *Viking Saturn* will debut in 2023, sailing three new cruises in the Scandinavian and Nordic countries, including two 15-day journeys, Iconic Iceland, Greenland & Canada, and Iceland & Norway's Arctic Explorer, and a 29-day Greenland, Iceland, Norway & Beyond voyage.

The 930-guest *Saturn's* maiden

season will also see the return of the popular eight-day Iceland's Natural Beauty itinerary, starting in August 2023.

"We look forward to welcoming *Viking Saturn* to our fleet and to offer guests even more ways to explore this unique part of the world in comfort" said Chair Torstein Hagen.

"The thousands of guests who

sailed our Welcome Back voyage in Iceland this past summer enjoyed the experience so much they provided record level ratings.

"These new itineraries are ideal for curious travellers and trace routes of the early Viking explorers to Iceland and other North Atlantic destinations known for their natural beauty."

Golden Horizon disappears from Australia

TRADEWIND Voyages has announced the cancellation of its 2022/23 Australian season for *Golden Horizon*, citing ongoing uncertainty surrounding the resumption of cruising in Australia, and the expected status of the country's interstate and international borders.

The United Kingdom-based *Golden Horizon* was originally due to arrive in Australia for her inaugural season in local waters this December, but pandemic restrictions forced Tradewind to announce plans for the 2021/22 season to be

deferred to 2022/23 a few months ago.

Tradewind said long-term planning was needed to operate and market the recently launched 272-passenger *Golden Horizon* in Australia, and ongoing and restrictive conditions, and a lack of clarity for cruising and freedom of travel made the season unviable.

Cruise Traveller has already contacted all Australian guests and travel advisors affected by the cancellation and is processing full refunds.

ON BOARD PONANT'S LE COMMANDANT CHARCOT

LE COMMANDANT CHARCOT is Ponant's very first hybrid-electric polar exploration ship, powered by liquefied natural gas.

She is the latest addition to the Ponant fleet, and ferries up to 245 guests, 123 staterooms & suites, (each with a private balcony or terrace), a spa, and two restaurants.

Le Commandant Charcot also features a spacious conservatory, and common areas & public rooms which offer floor-to-ceiling windows, to allow passing scenery & surrounds to never remain too far from reach. She also possesses an almost one-to-one guest-to-crew member ratio.

Ponant recently celebrated the launch of *Le Commandant Charcot* in Le Havre, France and over the past month has been sharing some pictures as she gets ready for her inaugural Antarctic season.



PONANT's National Business Development Manager, Craig Farrell, recently stepped on board *Le Commandant Charcot*.

PONANT CEO Hervé Gastinel (middle) cuts the inaugural ribbon at Le Havre, France.



THE launch of *Le Commandant Charcot* took place in Le Havre, in Normandy, France on 28 & 29 Sep.



THE Owner's suite has a wraparound terrace with private jacuzzi and a \$20k Swarovski telescope.



PANORAMIC view from Le Blue Lagoon on deck 9, an outdoor heated lagoon that uses recycled heat.

AMERICAN RIVER GIANTS MERGE

TWO of the biggest brands specialising in small ship cruises in North America - the American Queen Steamboat Company and Victory Cruise Lines – have merged under the new brand ‘American Queen Voyages’.

The new brand will offer an expanded and diverse mix of river, lake, ocean and expedition sailings, and will continue to

be represented in Australia by leading small ship specialist, Cruise Traveller.

Offering a varied and comprehensive portfolio of North American itineraries, the new American Queen Voyages brand will offer eight vessels by 2023 and deliver encounter-driven, small-ship adventures throughout the United States’

heartland rivers, the Great Lakes and Pacific Northwest, the East Coast of the US, the wilds of Alaska, and Canada & Mexico.

The rebranding was announced by The Hornblower Group, which also revealed Victory Cruise Line’s *Victory I* (pictured) and *Victory II* will be renamed *Ocean Voyager* and *Ocean Navigator*.



©Victory Cruise Lines

CLIA SEEKS RENEWALS FOR 2022

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia’s membership drive for next year began last month.

Bonus commissions, live events and an expanded education program will be among the key benefits, while CLIA’s Travel Agent Rewards Program, first introduced 12 months ago, will also return.

The Program will provide members with bonus commissions and other rewards when making bookings with participating CLIA members.

CLIA live events will include the annual

Cruise360 Australasia conference, which is scheduled to be held in Sydney on 04 March, after 2021’s event was replaced with the online Cruise Forum.

With teaching to become a key focus next year, the travelling education program CLIA LIVE will also return to an in-person format, visiting major cities throughout next year.

CLIA has promised those who join for next year will have access to exclusive benefits and the support needed to make the most of the industry’s revival.

Discover the World Marketing cruise closure

THE Australian office of Discover the World Marketing has announced the difficult decision to close down its cruise department, due to the ongoing effects of the pandemic, with Country Director Jeannie Foster confirming the sad move to *travelBulletin*.

She said existing bookings would continue to be serviced via the main reservations@discovertheworld.com.au email address.

P&O Australia circumnavigation

P&O Cruises Australia has launched a 28-night Australia Explorer itinerary, as part of its 2023/24 program, departing in Jun 2024.

The cruise is a first-of-its-kind domestic sailing for P&O Australia, giving guests the chance to experience 11 iconic Aussie ports aboard *Pacific Explorer*.

Oceania Europe & US 2023

OCEANIA Cruises has unveiled its 2023 Europe & North America Collection, now open for sale, the cruise line’s most expansive and diverse offering to date.

The new season features seven ships sailing 179 itineraries including the inaugural cruises for *Vista*, which will sail 18 voyages, in the Mediterranean, the islands of Greece, the Holy Lands, the British Isles, and more.



CLIA VIEW
Joel Katz, Managing Director
CLIA Australasia

STATES ARE NOW KEY TO CRUISING’S REVIVAL

AS AUSTRALIA moves closer to reopening international borders, attention is now turning to the states and the role they will play in achieving a careful resumption of cruising in local waters.

Over recent weeks we’ve heard increasing levels of public support for cruising at the political level, including from the new Premier of NSW Dominic Perrottet who has confirmed discussions about a cruise revival are underway.

CLIA’s own discussions with governments at the state and federal levels are increasingly positive and show a clear will to make progress.

But after a long focus on the Federal Government and its long-standing cruise suspension, it’s important to remember action is also needed from the states before ships can return.

As the Federal ban on cruise ships ends, state and territory governments will need to agree on detailed operational plans with cruise lines before ships can visit our ports.

Each jurisdiction and their respective health authorities

will need to confirm detailed Covid-safe plans and determine exactly how our industry’s new health protocols are applied.

Dominic Perrottet has already signalled that NSW may be a leader in progressing cruise plans, and this is an encouraging sign for Australia’s biggest cruise market and the country’s most important cruise gateway in Sydney.

Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk has also spoken positively about an initial resumption on a small scale within Queensland waters.

But not all states have shown support or responded to our calls for detailed discussions, leaving our industry facing continuing uncertainty.

The new health protocols cruise lines have adopted internationally are the most stringent to be found anywhere in tourism and are already working in dozens of countries where cruising has resumed.

Now is the time for the states to take action so we can ensure Australia is ready when it comes to welcoming ships back here.



HEADLINES OCTOBER 2021

- 15 Oct** Discussions for return of cruises in NSW
- 19 Oct** MSC to pay Uniworld crash damages
- 26 Oct** CDC’s CSO to be voluntary
- 27 Oct** Pandaw announces closure

NORTHERN EUROPE PORTS GIVE CELEBRITY THE EDGE



Voyages aboard Celebrity Cruises are well and truly on the radar for Australian cruisers, with the line last month seeing record sales for the launch of its 2022/23 local season. However Celebrity is also enticing Aussies to explore further afield, asking “Isn’t it time?” to explore Northern Europe in 2022, as BRUCE PIPER reports.

CELEBRITY Cruises made huge waves in the local market with the bold announcement that its flagship *Celebrity Edge* would debut in Australasian waters in the 2022/23 summer season. The attendant publicity - and surge in reservations - has led to high hopes for the company’s 2022 Northern Summer season too, which for the first time will see the introduction of an Edge-class ship to Northern Europe. *Celebrity Apex* is the second vessel in the series,

like its namesake sister featuring a revolutionary outward facing design which makes it the perfect way to experience the region’s breathtaking scenery. Think fjords, glaciers, quaint seaside villages and more - Edge-class ships provide the ideal vantage point for any spectacular vista.

Celebrity’s 2022 Northern Europe sailings will see the cruise line return to some popular ports it has not visited for several years, such as Visby in Sweden and Norway’s Kristiansand. On top of that, the sailings will also feature maiden calls to Molde and Haugesund in Norway.

Molde is a unique mix of awe-inspiring landscapes and big city sophistication, with its attractions resonating with nature lovers, hikers and bikers as well as culture vultures and gourmands. Molde is the home to Moldejazz, the second oldest jazz festival in Europe, alongside a huge array of museums and cathedrals. Hungry? Like most of Norway, it’s all about the ocean’s bounty, with the bustling Molde harbour area offering some of the country’s best, fresh-caught seafood dishes.

Likewise Haugesund, located intriguingly between mountains, islands and the North Sea, providing the perfect evocation of the country’s Viking heritage. Steeped in history, cruisers can experience a variety of traditional local cuisines, as always featuring ingredients from the countryside and coastal environment.

Of course Celebrity’s 2022 Northern Europe season also features the region’s unmissable favourites, such as St Petersburg in Russia and Reykjavik in Iceland, where there will be plenty of time to explore with overnight stays in each port. Iceland’s majestic Godafoss Falls and the legendary Blue Lagoon are a must-see, while Copenhagen, Stockholm and the UK also feature in the program, which offers so much to experience for novice and experienced travellers alike - all in Celebrity’s inimitable style.

CELEBRITY’S SHIP EXPERIENCE

LET’S face it, there’s a reason people choose to cruise. There’s nothing like returning from shoreside peregrinations to the familiarity of your stateroom, only unpacking once and able to experience service and cuisine aboard your floating home away from home. Celebrity takes cruising to the next level, with its Edge Series vessels custom-designed to create a closer connection between passengers, the sea and



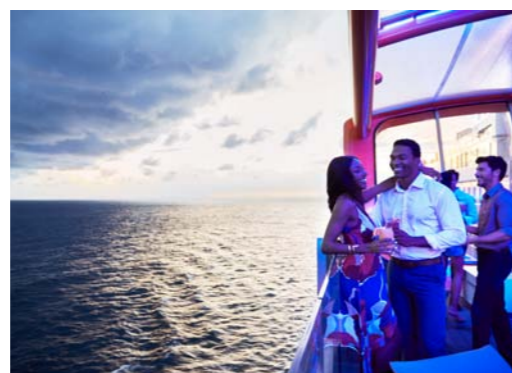
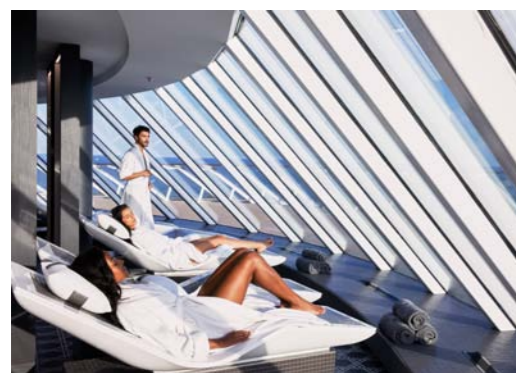
Opposite page: There’s no better way to explore Northern Europe than aboard a Celebrity Edge Series ship.

Top: The Royal Palace, Stockholm is open to the public year round.

Middle: Iceland is powerhouse of geothermal activity.

Bottom: Bergen, Norway is famous for its coloured buildings.

All images on this page ©Celebrity Cruises



Top: The Blue Lagoon, Iceland is a natural geothermal pool.

Left: Guests can step into The Spa on board for an escape within their escape.

Right: High above the sea, the Magic Carpet allows guests to take in ocean views like never before.

the world beyond. *Celebrity Apex* features the key elements of the Edge series ships, with a huge variety of spaces ranging from Edge Staterooms offering so-called “Infinite Verandas” to the reimagined terrace pool deck, providing a spectacular vantage point for the surrounding scenery.

Dining in the incredible glass-walled ship-side Magic Carpet as the ship passes by stunning vistas is something your clients will never forget, and some of the luckiest passengers can watch the world from the private plunge pools in the two-storey Edge Villas. The Rooftop Garden also provides an amazing vantage point - and when it's time to dine there's an unrivalled collection of restaurants, bars and lounges.

In fact there are 29 venues on board, ranging from the brand new Craft Social Bar right through to the completely reimagined main dining room which comprises not one, but four, complimentary restaurants each with a distinctive design and signature dishes inspired by regions across the world. Specialty eateries include the Fine Cut Steakhouse, as well as Raw on 5, the extraordinary culinary journey offered by Eden, and the multisensory experience of Le Petit Chef and Family.

When it comes to other shipboard experiences, *Celebrity* offers the ultimate onboard spa sanctuary, with a meticulous focus on wellness featuring more

than 120 spa treatments - not to mention F45 fitness classes and Peloton cycling to really get those holiday endorphins flowing. Passengers can bliss out in the SEA Thermal Suite featuring eight nature-inspired therapeutic experiences, available before or after treatments and unlimited for guests staying in AquaClass accommodations. *Celebrity's* health offerings also feature the Women in Wellness Program, showcasing wisdom from some of the most respected female leaders in the wellness industry such as skincare icon Noella Gabriel who co-founded Elemis; Soul Cycle's Ruth Zukerman; Olympian and F45 training athlete Morgan Mitchell; yoga master Katie Brauer; and goop Wellness Director, Kiki Koroshetz.

WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA?

FEATURES of *Celebrity's* 2022 Northern Europe season match perfectly with the travel aspirations of Australians who will be eager to scratch their cruising itch after two years of restrictions. The seven night “Norwegian Fjords” itinerary starts and finishes in Amsterdam, conveniently connected to other destinations across the continent making it easy to include as a component of a longer European sojourn. This cruise visits Alesund, Haugesund, Stavanger

and Molde, with popular shore excursions including the 7.5km hike to Pulpit Rock from Stavanger, riding the gondola to see the stunning views atop Alesund's Strana ski resort, and exploring the Horundfjord aboard a day cruise vessel.

Those with a little more time may like to book on the 12-night “Iceland & Ireland” cruise, which again operates roundtrip from Amsterdam but includes opportunities to experience Icelandic nightlife with overnights in Akureyri and Reykjavik as well as plenty of Irish craic in Belfast, Cork and Dublin. This voyage offers visits to the Myvatn Nature Baths, small group discoveries of the Siglufjordur Village and the Herring Hey Days and even a glacier safari.

Heading in the other direction is the 12-night “Scandinavia and Russia” itinerary, which overnights in St Petersburg offering an extended opportunity to explore one of the world's great cities. As well as Russia this multi country voyage also visits Berlin, Germany, Finland's Helsinki, Tallinn in Estonia, Copenhagen in Denmark and Stockholm in Sweden,

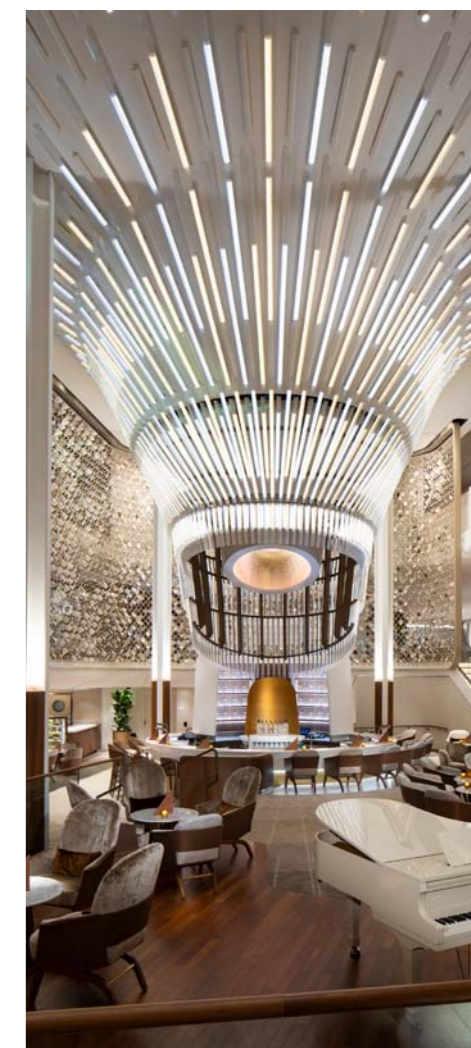
providing a true Scandinavian smorgasbord.

ISN'T IT TIME?

CELEBRITY'S messaging about its 2022 Northern Europe voyages perfectly matches the travel aspirations of the line's target demographic, cruisers seeking new luxury, sophisticated service and authentic experiences both onboard and off the ship. There's no doubt that frustrations about closer to home cruising are continuing to feed into pent-up demand, and so these European itineraries are already proving to be particularly popular.

After the bonds of COVID-19 begin to lift, Aussies appear increasingly determined not to miss any more precious moments, and *Celebrity's* offering provides a perfect solution for those who have long been dreaming about what awaits us in a post-pandemic world, awakening a journey filled with wonder.

To find out more about *Celebrity Cruises' 2022 European sailings* [CLICK HERE.](#)



Top: The Grand Plaza on *Celebrity Edge* showcases the grandeur and luxury across all *Celebrity Edge* Series ships.

All images ©*Celebrity Cruises*



ISN'T IT TIME?

TO EXPLORE THE WORLD WITH YOUR BETTER HALF—HALF OFF.

ALWAYS INCLUDED** DRINKS. WI-FI. SERVICE CHARGES. + LIMITED TIME* UP TO 50% OFF 2ND GUEST FARES

BOOK BY 13 DECEMBER

LEARN MORE AT THECELEBRITYCOMMITMENT.COM.AU OR CALL 1-800-754-500.

JOURNEY SAFE. JOURNEY WONDERFULL™.

Celebrity X *Cruises*®

*Visit celebritycruises.com/au or celebritycruises.com/nz for full terms and conditions. Prices are per person, cruise only, for stateroom category 12, on select sailings and based on double occupancy. Cruise must be booked 02/11/21 - 13/12/21. Offer applies to select 4-night and longer cruises that depart 01/12/21 - 31/03/23. Offer excludes Alaska Cruisetours, and Galapagos cruises. No promo code required. Eligible sailings listed at celebrity.com/. Up to 50% off cruise fare for the second guest in the same stateroom as the first full fare guest at standard rates, combinable with Always Included. All other charges are additional and apply to all guests. *Always Included Pricing Packages apply to inside, ocean view, veranda, Concierge Class, or AquaClass® stateroom ("Eligible Bookings"). All guests in an Eligible Booking who choose the "Always Included" pricing package will receive a Classic Beverage Package, Service charges Included, and an unlimited Surf Internet package. Full deposit must be paid by deposit required due date. Standard full deposit penalty is applied if the booking is cancelled within final payment period. See *Celebrity's* cancellation policy for details. Refer to celebritycruises.com/au or celebritycruises.com/nz and the Cruise Ticket Contract for additional terms and conditions. Changes to booking may result in removal of offer. Offers and prices are subject to availability, cancellation, and change without notice at any time. ©2021 *Celebrity Cruises*. Ships' registry: Malta and Ecuador.



THE ULTIMATE STOPOVER DESTINATION

Rich in culture, natural beauty, and a vibrant atmosphere, Qatar offers the best of the Middle East all in one place. Now open to tourists and with visa-free arrival for Australians and New Zealanders, there is no better time to travel via this ultimate stopover destination, discovers Myles Stedman.

As the world re-emerges to tourism, Qatar Airways has partnered with Discover Qatar to offer a new range of stopover packages.

Anticipating the return of international travel for Australians, and the opportunity to stopover in Qatar when flying with Qatar Airways, the country is focusing on becoming the “World’s Best Value Stopover”, with packages consisting of an up-to four-night stay in Doha.

ARRIVE IN STYLE

HAVING been voted the “World’s Best” Airline for the sixth time in 2021, Qatar Airways will continue to get clients to their destination safely and in comfort. With leading airline bio-security protocols and hygiene measures, there is peace of mind when flying with Qatar Airways.

Those who like to travel in style can do so with the airline’s award-winning Qsuite product, which provides Business Class suites with doors, ambient mood lighting,

lie-flat beds and generous storage space. The pod-style Qsuite provides ultimate privacy and safety, minimising interactions with other passengers.

It is also the airline’s first-ever cabin to offer aft- and forward-facing seats, thanks to its quad-configuration. When travelling with family and friends, movable panels will allow you to transform your space into a social area, changing where you can dine or socialise at 40,000 feet. When you wish to relax or sleep, the space

transforms back into a private room.

A DESTINATION FOR ALL

ON ARRIVAL, Qatar’s comprehensive stopover packages span across hotels in four- and five-star categories, with optional add-ons including breakfast, airport transfers, and activities. These include the Discover the Dunes & Inland Sea trip, where the desert spills into the azure waters of the Arabian peninsula,

and the Discover Doha tour, which immerses travellers in the unique heritage of the country’s capital, through the alleyways of Souq Waqif, Katara Cultural Village, and the Pearl-Qatar.

For those with a bit more time who want to focus on their specific interests in Qatar, there are a range of themed stopover packages available.

Shopping enthusiasts can peruse luxury brands in what is quickly becoming one of the world’s top destinations for



Left: Qatar offers the best of the Middle East, all in one place.

Top: Dhow boats have been cruising the waters of the Arabian Gulf for centuries, so a cruise is an ideal way to soak up Qatar’s rich history.

Right: The Discover the Dunes & Inland Sea trip is an optional add-on to the stopover deals.

All images ©Qatar Tourism.



boutiques, with its range of grand and unique malls including Galeries Lafayette and Place Vendome, which feature high-end brands and select fashion labels.

For art and culture lovers, the country offers awe-inspiring architecture, world-class museums, and cuisine ranging from local and traditional Middle Eastern fare to modern and international gastronomy.

Sports-lovers can experience the nation's world-class golf courses, or if you're after a more up-tempo stay can experience the world-class scuba diving, desert safaris, sandboarding, and dune bashing on offer.

Other featured stopover experiences include exploration of Qatar's expansive coastline with more than 20 sandy beaches, which position the destination as a watersports and nature lovers paradise.

From April to November, visitors can encounter one of the largest and rarest congregations of whale

sharks in the world. Whale sharks can be spotted on a cruise, and for travellers who love being out on the water, there are also many dhow sailings to become immersed in the nation's history.

MORE THAN A STOPOVER

HOWEVER, Qatar is more than just a stopover. The 2022 FIFA World Cup will be held in the country, making it the first Muslim and Arab nation to host the event.

The announcement of the World Cup in 2010 drew a significantly greater amount of attention to the internal work being done within the country's tourism industry, which at its heart, aims to offer the best of the Middle East all in one place, and finished with the region's patented hospitality.

The country offers a diverse range of activities and a varied itinerary for every type of trip or traveller.

Those who are seeking the sun need look no further, with Qatar offering 563 kilometres of

coastline and a myriad of beaches without a dress code, many of which are privately owned by the country's hotels and resorts.

Travellers who prefer to spend their time in the water rather than on the shore can get up close to the country's marine life. Fishing, sailing, water skiing, canoeing, kitesurfing, jet skiing, and windsurfing are all popular, but one cannot miss out on kayaking through Al Thakira mangroves, and greeting some of the local flamingos.

Qatar is also rich in Arabian tradition and heritage, offering cultural diversity like no other country in the region. Souq Waqif – Arabic for "the standing market" - sells traditional garments, spices, handicrafts, and souvenirs. It is also home to restaurants and hookah lounges. Although it was renovated in 2006, the original building dates back at least from the 20th century and is designed in a traditional Qatari architectural style.

Once you're done checking out how modern Qatar took shape,

Top: Experience Qatar's natural beauty when kayaking through the Al Thakira mangroves.

Bottom: Qatar offers both adventure options for all levels, from world class scuba diving to desert safaris.

All images ©Qatar Tourism.



check out how the country itself was formed at Dhal Al Misfir cavern, a natural landmark located west of Doha. At 40 metres deep, it is one of the largest and deepest accessible caves in the country. Formed largely of fibrous gypsum, it sometimes gives off a faint, otherworldly glow, just in case you'd forgotten you were in one of the world's most unique destinations.

EXPERIENCE QATAR

THOSE who wish to experience the destination first-hand can become a Qatar expert and win one of four spots on next year's famil.

To enter, become stopover ready by:

1. Completing three essential modules of the Tawash online destination training **HERE**.
2. Travel agents must also ensure their agency is signed up to the Discover Qatar booking portal **HERE**.
3. Explain why a stopover in Qatar is so unforgettable.

Enter now to discover why Qatar is the ultimate stopover destination. **CLICK HERE** to enter. Competition terms and conditions apply.



Left: Rich in culture, Qatar offers awe-inspiring architecture.

Top: Qatar has an ever-expanding selection of gourmet dining.

Bottom: Souk Waqif is stunning both day and night.



An unforgettable stopover in Qatar

Your clients can turn one holiday into two, making the most of their journey with the 'World's Best Value Stopover' packages by Discover Qatar starting from AUD19* per person per night, including hotel stay and more.

Learn more at qatarairways.com/tradeportal



COLOUR YOUR WORLD....

IN THESE times of stress, mindful colouring can help your wellbeing. Courtesy of NCL's adult colouring book 'Colour Your World' we have a great image for you to enjoy embracing your creativity with. Download your copy of the book [HERE](#).



Travel Daily

Join us to

CELEBRATE

that the travel industry
is still standing

at a cocktail party hosted by Travel Daily
on Tuesday 30th November 2021
from 6pm at Doltone House, Darling Island, Sydney.

Tickets on sale for \$60
from 10th November 2021

*All guests are required to be fully vaccinated in line with NSW Government mandate.

Thanks to our generous sponsors:

GOLD SPONSORS

GLOBUS
family of brands

NCL
NORWEGIAN
CRUISE LINE®

CVFR
CONSOLIDATION
SERVICES

SILVER SPONSORS

Regent
SEVEN SEAS CRUISES
AN UNRIVALLED EXPERIENCE™

OCEANIA
CRUISES®

SCENIC®
LUXURY CRUISES & TOURS

Celebrity **X** Cruises®

SUPPORTING SPONSOR

VIKING



Did you know?

Travel & Cruise Weekly produces a weekly consumer magazine called Keep Dreaming, full of destination articles, cruise stories and more to inspire.

Even better, it's specially designed for agents to send their clients - giving you a reason to reach out to your database who are ready to travel.

[Click here to view Keep Dreaming magazine](#)

[Click here for a toolkit to help you share it with clients](#)



Travel & Cruise

Weekly