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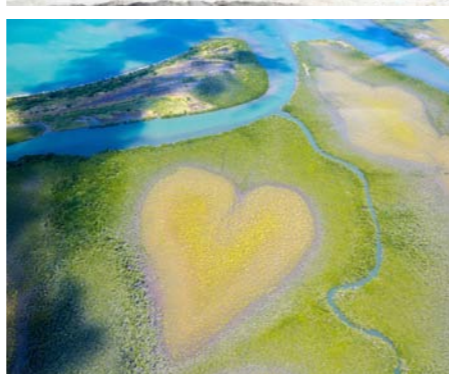


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22

COVER STORY

22 The Metaverse: opportunity or oblivion
Rapidly approaching with its sights set on transformation, the Metaverse is coming to change the nature of technology as we know it. But what actually is the Metaverse and what does it mean for the future of travel? Adam Bishop investigates.

MONTHLY

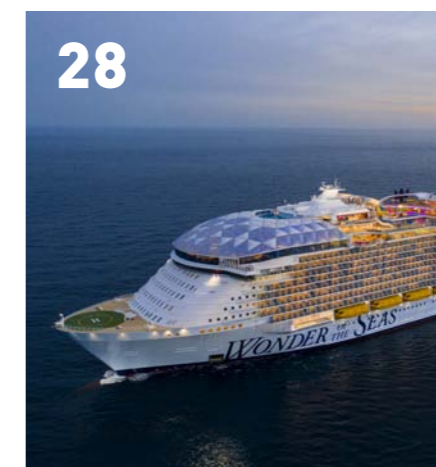
- 04** State of the industry
- 10** Issues and trends
- 20** Mental Health Spotlight
- 28** Cruise
- 34** Last word

COLUMNS

- 04** From the publisher
- 10** AFTA View
- 16** CATO View
- 33** CLIA View



12



28

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From the publisher

Bruce Piper



ALTHOUGH there hasn't been a single word of official comment, last month's revelation of the new Link Travel Group must have absolutely rocked Helloworld Travel, which has lost two of its highest profile member agencies and surely faces the prospect of more to follow.

Link is an invitation-only joint venture created by Spencer Group and the Goldman Travel Corporation, which pre-pandemic are together estimated to have comprised at least \$600 million in TTV for Helloworld.

Spencer Group CEO Penny Spencer was also a key player in Magellan Travel, having been a director of the group when it was controversially acquired by Helloworld about four years ago.

Goldman has also long been a flagship agency in the Helloworld for Business network, with both companies having multiple offices and business operations.

The intriguing move sees them now align with Flight Centre, which owns 60% of Link and will provide members with a range of services including access to its rich product portfolio and distribution capabilities.

An independent Link board of directors will include Penny Spencer and Anthony Goldman, alongside Flight Centre's Head

of Premium Leisure, Danielle Galloway and a number of other yet-to-be-appointed members.

The group will be led by former Magellan/Helloworld Business Travel exec Scott Darlow, who left HLO without notice earlier this year and has presumably since been on "gardening leave".

The expiry of contracts signed when Helloworld acquired Magellan was always going to create uncertainty within the group - compounded by the ructions of the pandemic - but until now most departures have been to join CT Partners.

Link provides a compelling alternative for top performing independent agencies, and the impact on Helloworld's TTV and therefore ability to exact overrides from suppliers should not be underestimated.

MEANWHILE next month will see some significant new initiatives from *travelBulletin*.

While maintaining our strong reputation for accurate, incisive commentary, our content will include new digital options to further reinforce *travelBulletin*'s position as the number one source for travel and tourism industry opinion, news & views.

The enhancements will include a new website, regular EDMs and more, alongside periodic e-magazines, so watch your inbox!

earning and lounge benefits also apply with Qantas.

The move is part of VA's strategy to expand its "virtual" international network through alliances with other carriers, which also includes a newly ACCC-ratified pact with United Airlines.

SAA commission cut

SOUTH African Airways has become the latest carrier to announce it will reduce BSP base commission for travel agents in Australia and NZ on flights operating from the local market - even though it does not have an international fleet capable of flying here and has not announced plans to resume its long-haul services.

Like other fork-tongued commission-cutters, SAA stressed its "ongoing commitment to working with our valued travel partners", adding the decision was "key to our recovery strategy".

The cut from 5% to just 1% is applicable from 01 July - the same date as the looming reduction from Qantas and other key industry suppliers.

DayAway to boost hotel yields

THE Australian launch of DayAway offers a new option for the hospitality sector to easily offer daytime experiences to outside guests, maximising the use of sometimes underutilised in-house facilities.

The technology platform was launched in Singapore last year by founder Martha Waslen, with Sydney-based Chief Commercial Officer

“We are thrilled to welcome these superb Australian properties to DayAway, and know the market will embrace the immediacy of booking, the diversity of day experiences and gifting opportunities within our collection in Australia and internationally.”

Lynne Ireland,
Chief Commercial
Officer, DayAway

NEW SEASON FOR MAYO



BARRY Mayo last month announced his retirement, drawing the curtain on over six decades of stellar travel industry leadership. His diverse career saw him work with six different airlines, before becoming MD of Insight International Vacations in 1993 and then CEO of Harvey World Travel from 1997 to 2005.

In 2007 he was appointed Chair of House of Travel Australia, overseeing the acquisition and growth of TravelManagers, Hoot Holidays and World Travel Professionals/Orbit World Travel, while on an industry level he's served as Chair of CT Partners and in other key roles including Chairman of IATA's Australian Travel Agency Program. Mayo had initially intended to retire after his 75th birthday in late 2019, but deferred his departure due to the pandemic.

In a blast from the past he's pictured at the opening of Tourism Australia's UK offices on 24 January 2005 with HWT UK MD John Donnelly - alongside then Australian Minister for Tourism Fran Bailey and none other than former PM Scott Morrison, who at the time was head of Tourism Australia.

Lynne Ireland announcing initial Australian partners including the Park Hyatt Sydney, The Langham Sydney, Jackalope Mornington Peninsula and COMO The Treasury Perth.

"We are thrilled to welcome these superb Australian properties to DayAway, and know the market will embrace the immediacy of booking, the diversity of day experiences and gifting

opportunities within our collection in Australia and internationally," she said.

Qantas picks Airbus

QANTAS last month confirmed an order for 12 Airbus A350-1000 aircraft which will be used to operate the highly anticipated "Project Sunrise" ultra-long haul non-stop flights to Australia

Continues over page

IN BRIEF

Virgin aligns with Qatar Airways

A WIDE-RANGING new alliance between Virgin Australia and Qatar Airways shows just how much the pandemic has changed aviation. The strategic partnership will see Virgin Australia codeshare on QR flights to about 140 global destinations, and will also provide an inbound feed for Qatar Airways passengers who will be

able to fly onward to VA's Australian domestic and short-haul international network.

Reciprocal loyalty benefits will apply, allowing points earning and burning and lounge access for top tier frequent flyers. The deal has been cemented despite Virgin Australia also having an alliance with Etihad Airways, and Qatar Airways being a member of oneworld, which means reciprocal points

Continues from previous page

from anywhere in the world - including New York and London - from late 2025.

The four-class aircraft will feature 238 seats, with new cabin designs including a dedicated Wellbeing Zone for movement and stretching.

Qantas has also gone with Airbus for its narrowbody fleet renewal plans, placing firm orders for 20 Airbus A321XLRs and 20 A220-300s to replace its Boeing 737s and 717s as they are gradually retired.

MEANWHILE in a busy month for the carrier, Qantas also announced plans to acquire 100% of charter operator Alliance Aviation, which currently flies almost 20 Embraer regional jets under wet lease arrangements to QantasLink.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is reviewing the deal, which is subject to approval by shareholders under

a proposed Scheme of Arrangement.

Intrepid buys into tiny house maker

INTREPID Travel last month announced a \$7.85 million investment in CABN, a business which creates off-grid sustainable accommodation in some of Australia's most stunning locations.

The partnership will see CABN expand its current 11-strong portfolio to more than 70 cabins by 2023, with Intrepid CEO James Thornton saying the firm's offering and business model aligned with Intrepid's move into the accommodation vertical.

"We know the CABN product is of particular interest, not only to our existing customer base, but to the growing market of travellers worldwide seeking out authentic and sustainable travel

" We know the CABN product is of particular interest, not only to our existing customer base, but to the growing market of travellers worldwide seeking out authentic and sustainable travel experiences.

" James Thornton, Intrepid CEO

experiences," he said.

During COVID-19 CABN saw 90%-plus occupancy rates, with the companies targeting almost seven-fold growth to 26,000 room annual room nights.

Rex cuts routes

REGIONAL Express has cited "illegal predatory behaviour" on the part of Qantas for decisions to cease operating flights between Albury and Melbourne, as well as from Sydney to Canberra.

The Albury pullout comes after 29 years of operating the route, with Rex Deputy Chairman, John Sharp, accusing QF of trying to drive out competitors in a war of attrition, "knowing that its competitors do not have the balance sheet to lose money indefinitely".

Sharp said the return of Virgin Australia on the Canberra route was also a factor, along with high fees imposed by Sydney Airport.

DATA ROOM

MAIN DOMESTIC ROUTES

Top 10 domestic city pairs, March 2022

City pair	Passengers YE Mar 21 (000)	Passengers YE Mar 22 (000)	% change
Melbourne-Sydney	905.6	2,756.9	204.2
Brisbane-Sydney	702.8	1,321.0	88.0
Brisbane-Melbourne	486.0	1,021.9	110.3
Brisbane-Cairns	682.8	1,005.0	47.2
Gold Coast-Sydney	303.3	999.0	229.4
Gold Coast-Melbourne	362.7	975.3	168.9
Adelaide-Melbourne	280.6	877.4	212.7
Brisbane-Townsville	460.2	682.0	48.2
Adelaide-Sydney	336.3	626.8	86.4
Hobart-Melbourne	251.7	558.4	121.9
ALL CITY PAIRS	12,983.5	26,034.1	100.5

Source: BITRE

VISITOR ARRIVALS

Top 10 destinations, March 2022

Country of residence	Mar 2019	Mar 2021	Mar 2022	change - original Feb 22/ Mar 22
UK	74,000	810	27,460	14,030
New Zealand	109,920	2,060	18,680	14,020
India	33,990	400	15,140	5,750
USA	89,180	1,110	14,380	7,790
Singapore	38,610	320	13,490	8,310
Canada	22,680	120	4,960	2,380
Germany	21,970	150	4,580	2,530
China	124,370	260	4,260	-810
Malaysia	30,320	100	2,910	1,420
France	11,430	90	2,690	870
All visitors arrivals	836,350	8,320	161,270	+80,490

Source: ABS

RESIDENT RETURNS

Top 10 destinations, March 2022

Country of stay	Mar 2019	Mar 2021	Mar 2022	change - original Feb 22/ Mar 22
India	37,860	780	19,410	-1,000
USA	61,410	590	18,940	6,150
UK	23,290	480	11,360	3,170
Fiji	20,010	50	11,210	3,820
New Zealand	134,780	1,760	9,450	7,970
Singapore	34,560	250	6,840	1,620
Thailand	41,660	150	6,420	2,540
Pakistan	3,470	330	5,290	-2,180
Unit Arab Emir	4,790	180	3,800	460
Canada	9,020	120	3,610	470
All resident returns	753,510	9,250	146,340	+29,480

Source: ABS

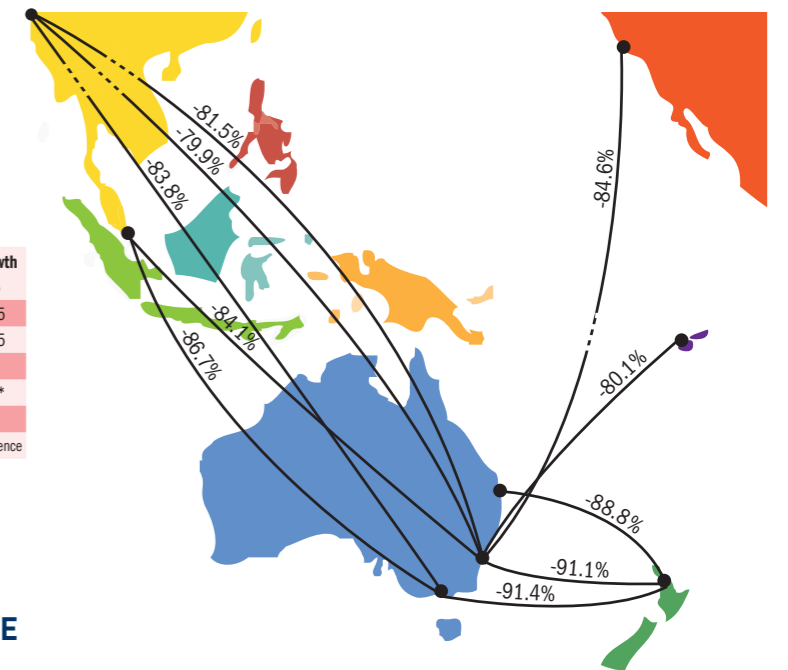
DOMESTIC AIR MARKET

March 2022

	Mar 21	Mar 22	Growth %	Year end Mar 21	Year end Mar 22	Growth %
Total pax carried	2.80m	3.60m	28.4	12.98m	26.03m	100.5
Revenue pax km (RPK)	3.13bn	3.92bn	25.1	21.72bn	29.59bn	102.5
Available seat kms (ASK)	4.70bn	5.40bn	14.8	24.23bn	47.62bn	96.5
Load factor (%)	66.7	72.7	+6.0*	60.3	62.1	+1.8*
Aircraft trips (000)	37.2	43.8	18.0	230.1	391.0	69.9

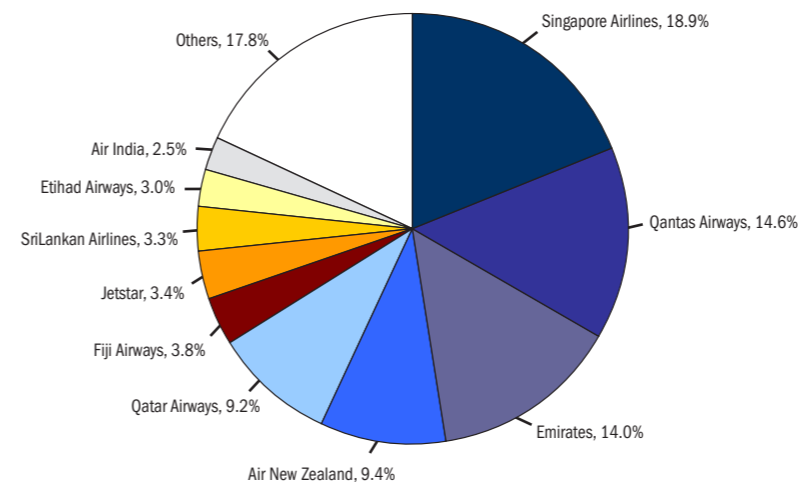
*Percentage points difference

Source: BITRE



INTERNATIONAL AIR MARKET SHARE

Share of passengers carried - March 2022



Source: BITRE

INTERNATIONAL AIR ROUTES

Top 10 city pairs, year end March 2022

City pair	Passengers YE Mar 19	Passengers YE Mar 21	Passengers YE Mar 22	% change 19/22
Singapore-Sydney	1,503,470	26,274	239,731	-84.1%
Singapore-Melbourne	1,591,338	13,827	211,062	-86.7%
Dubai-Sydney	824,782	24,599	152,827	-81.5%
Auckland-Sydney	1,574,354	49,270	139,440	-91.1%
Los Angeles-Sydney	878,627	22,470	134,983	-84.6%
Auckland-Melbourne	1,251,422	27,238	107,712	-91.4%
Dubai-Melbourne	653,345	16,259	105,823	-83.8%
Auckland-Brisbane	937,910	29,423	105,207	-88.8%
Nadi-Sydney	483,528	2,178	96,286	-80.1%
Doha-Sydney	472,454	66,366	95,059	-79.9%
Top 10 City Pairs	10,171,230	277,904	1,388,130	-86.4%
Other City Pairs	31,575,936	516,613	1,566,566	-95.0%
ALL CITY PAIRS	41,747,166	794,517	2,954,696	-92.9%

Source: BITRE

Travel Daily HEADLINES

- 02 May** The sun finally rises for QF
- 03 May** We can do it faster: CTM
- 04 May** Flight Centre back in the black
- 05 May** Qantas to acquire Alliance Aviation
- 05 May** Leaders Link for new group
- 09 May** Intrepid invests in CABN
- 09 May** Sydney scores Premium Emirates
- 10 May** ETC lands Arcadia
- 11 May** NZ open from August
- 12 May** VA granted interim authorisation for UA

- 13 May** WA sinks \$70m into tourism
- 16 May** EK records strong recovery
- 17 May** New Intrepid ANZ leaders
- 18 May** Mayo confirms retirement
- 19 May** Jetstar Aeronology direct
- 20 May** Comm cuts slam Webjet
- 23 May** TTC partners with Luxury Escapes
- 24 May** QF takes TripADeal stake
- 25 May** ACCC probes QF, Alliance
- 30 May** Rex pulls pin on 5 routes

A NEW ERA IS COMING

travelBulletin

Travel has changed
and *travelBulletin* is
changing too.

NEW WEBSITE

Featuring the in-depth commentary that *travelBulletin* is renowned for, updates from peak industry bodies, analysis of big industry issues and the travel statistics that interest you most. Plus our new space, 'Rants & Raves' for you to have your say.

In an evolving time, *travelBulletin* is expanding its digital presence with new online offerings to meet the new needs of the post-pandemic travel industry.

EDM

A twice weekly EDM, including an all new Saturday wrap up of the week that was, highlighting the big stories from *Travel Daily* and *Cruise Weekly*.

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AFTA VIEW

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

AS WE head into the end of this financial year, it's wonderful to hear from so many members that enquiries and bookings are continuing to climb and that not only are you seeing steady increases in revenue flowing through, but that there's an increasing sense of us all being through the worst of this.

Alongside this is the reality that replacing the people and skills lost to our sector is going to continue to be a massive challenge.

With more than a third of our people gone, this is not an insignificant gap. This is and must continue to be a focus for AFTA as we work with Government across this great country including the incoming Albanese Government.

But it's also about so much more than that.

AFTA exists to serve each and every one of our members, from independents through to those who are branded or part of a network, from individual working from home agents to TMCs, from leisure to corporate, through to the wider AFTA family including tour and cruise operators. We are proudly a broad church and we are at a pivotal time in our reinvigoration.

Just this month, the AFTA Board met in Sydney for a workshop on the new constitution. The aim of this project is to ensure the constitution will deliver on the current and future requirements of the Association and provide clear objectives for operating.

There has been over three months of consultation with Board members and industry leaders, and a draft discussion paper will be shared with members and the greater sector in the coming month.

This is a once-in-a-generation project, taking all of the lessons learnt from the establishment of ATAS, the pandemic, and ongoing evolution of the Sector.

Please take the time to share your views via the discussion paper.

There is much to be done. We need to do it together, unified and all pulling in the same direction. We look forward to hearing from you.

Webjet reveals FY2022 turnaround

WEBJET'S financial results for the year to 31 March reflect the investments the company made during the pandemic, with the company returning to profitability in the second half of the fiscal year despite the looming losses projected from the deficit of overrides and commissions.

The second half of the period also saw Webjet's WebBeds division back in the black, but the overall result was still a loss, impacted by the \$14 million write-off of the Online Republic brand which had previously operated Webjet's now defunct cruise business.

Webjet also projected that the impact of the swathe of airline commission cuts coming into effect shortly will hit its bottom line by between \$10 million and \$12 million, with the revelation in stark contrast to other travel companies such as Helloworld, Corporate Travel Management, and Flight Centre Travel Group, all of which have so far downplayed the impact of the commission cuts.

The company is forecasting a return to pre-pandemic booking volumes in the October 2022 - March 2023 period, as its working capital continues to improve, with a cash surplus of \$4 million per month versus a \$5.5 million monthly cash burn in the prior corresponding period.

Chief Executive Officer John Guscic acknowledged the "special cooperation of our global industry partners" as the company endeavoured to minimise disruption.

"This year has been one of incredible and unprecedented industry challenges, consequent upon the chaotic changes in travel plans and restrictions which have put all travel industry service levels under enormous stress," he said.

Meanwhile, Webjet plans to mitigate much of the hit to its revenue from commission cuts by reducing local marketing spend according to Ord Minnett Senior Research Analyst John O'Shea.

"In our view, domestic travel agents have little choice but to increase focus on the fee for service component of their offering," he said.

"The Webjet online B2C offering is already a fee for service model, and we expect the division to continue to build on the market share gains (offline to online) delivered during the pandemic," he predicted.

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VICTORIA

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Where : Koorie Heritage Trust, The Yarra Building, Federation Square,
Flinders Street & Swanston Street, Melbourne, VIC

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

When : Friday, 1 July, 9.30AM - 12.00PM

Where : National Gallery of Australia, Parkes Place East, Parkes, ACT

A unique cultural experience will follow a short presentation at each event. Further dates and locations around Australia will follow.

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COLLETTE EXPECTING BIG THINGS IN AUSTRALIA



Line Dancing during the conference led by world champion Chris Watson from Tamworth's Chris Watson Travel



Sullivan and Liebl-Cote with Stephen Bradbury, special guest at the forum gala dinner

GLOBAL tour operator Collette believes there is huge potential for its product in the Australian market, with CEO Dan Sullivan and Head of International Business, Christian Liebl-Cote last month heading Down Under for the inaugural Collette Forum in Cairns. This highly anticipated gathering - which COVID-19 has forced to be postponed five times - provided an ideal opportunity for the industry to get together, commiserate and celebrate the bounceback which is now undeniably under way.

Sullivan and Liebl-Cote believe the pandemic has provided a significant reset in the local distribution sector, creating an "amazing opportunity for everyone".

"Previously you had companies that were there for decades and decades which controlled things... now everyone is on the same level right now, we're starting over from scratch". The family-owned business, which has now been in operation for 104 years, has had a distinct advantage over some of its competitors through the pandemic, in that a longstanding policy to not actually own any

coaches, hotels, cruise ships or other infrastructure meant when things closed down Collette was able to quickly wind back most of its spending. In addition, all customers with impacted trips were fully refunded - to the tune of more than US\$170 million - so there are no future travel credits hanging over the business.

Sullivan told *travelBulletin* the company had decided to invest in Australia. "Australia, for us, is going to be one of our largest markets," he said. "Canadians and Americans, we have to make them understand what touring is, whereas Australians know what touring is, and they love it." Pre-pandemic, Australian bookings comprised 5-7% of Collette's bookings globally, with the company targeting this to increase to 20% in the coming years.

Collette's top selling destination out of Australia is currently Japan, with the company's global portfolio covering a wide range of destinations and travel styles including small groups, which are particularly resonating in the current environment. Sullivan and

Liebl-Cote cited fundamentals of the local market including Aussies' propensity for long-haul travel and extended leave entitlements. "Typically an Aussie averages 24 days with us," they said, compared to just 10 days for US customers and 17 out of the Canadian market, with many Australians doing back-to-back trips to maximise their time away.

While Australia's pandemic policies have left it about six months behind the rest of the world in terms of recovery, things are really taking off in other markets, with Collette now already experiencing about 83% of 2019 booking levels as pent-up demand for travel bubbles up. They also cited other key advantages of the Collette offering, including the ability to cancel for any reason within 24 hours of departure - something which really builds confidence among travellers to book. Collette uses its own team on the ground in each destination, meaning "we control every part of the product," Sullivan and Liebl-Cote enthused.

Night at the museum -- charm of Jiangsu's Relics and Museums



Water is the indispensable element that nourishes human civilization. It is particularly the case for Jiangsu Province, looking at the historical path of Jiangsu, there have been innumerable cultural heritages. The museums and cultural relics have connected the footsteps of the water-nourished civilization and reminded us of past glory, while, in the meantime, provide a lot of reference for research and study.



Grand Bao'en Temple Heritage and Scenic Area •Awe of the Buddha

The Grand Bao'en Temple was one of the oldest Buddhist temples in China. Its splendid Porcelain Tower was recorded as one of the seven wonders of the medieval world by Western missionaries. The Temple was unfortunately destroyed in the war, and later rebuilt on the original site. Every year during the Spring Festival, this place will be surrounded by beautiful colors and lights. People flock here to enjoy all kinds of lanterns, creating a scene of traditional customs to celebrate the lunar new year.



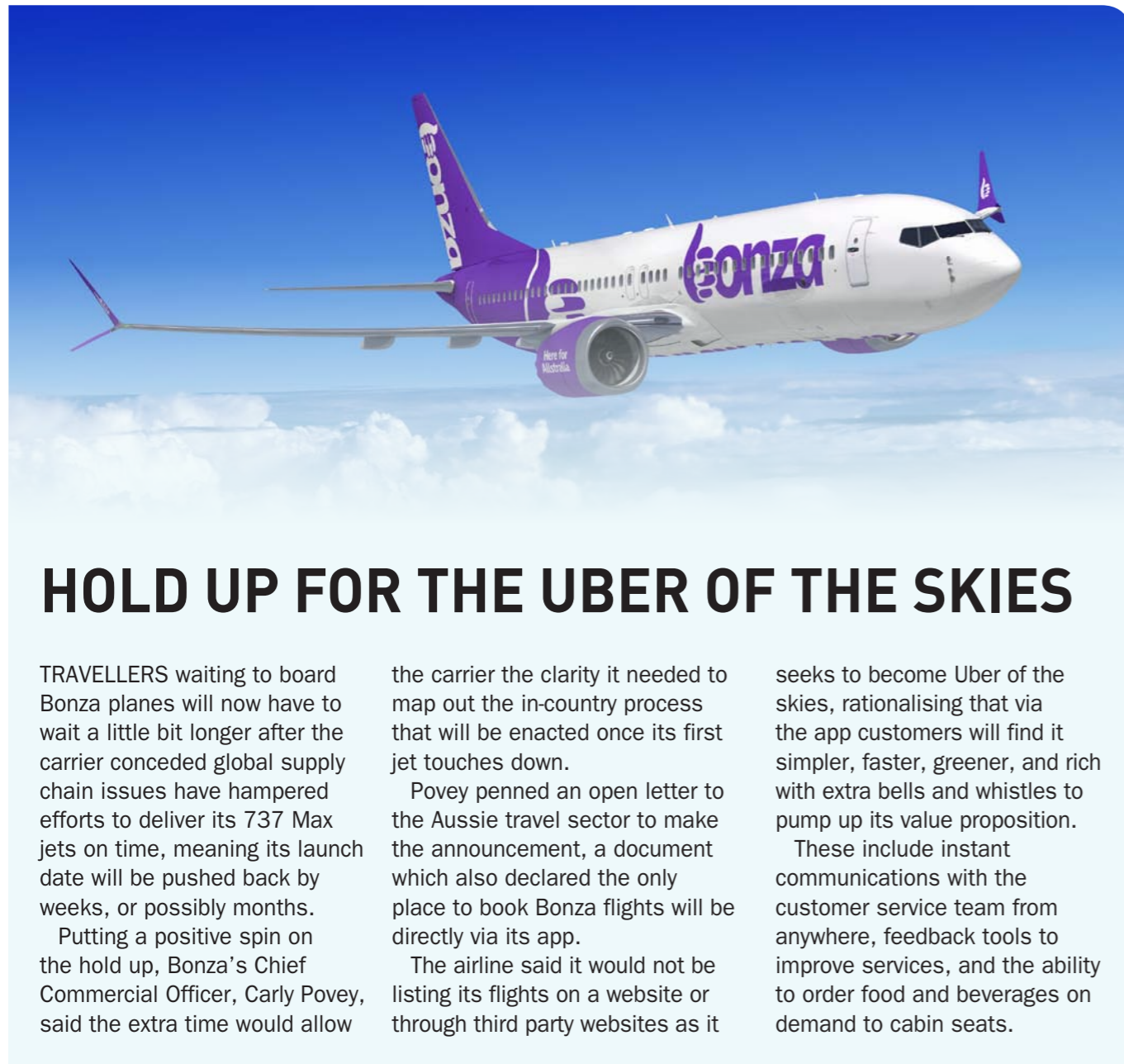
Suzhou Museum •Suzhou Aesthetics

Suzhou Museum, founded in 1960, is a comprehensive museum integrating modern museum buildings, ancient buildings, and innovative landscape gardens. The new Suzhou Museum building was designed by Ioh Ming Pei, a famous Chinese architect. Among the cultural relics (more than 40,000 pieces) collected in the museum, there are numerous "Relics of Wu". During some theme events, Suzhou Museum creates a wonderful experience connecting the ancient and modern times by providing various traditional cultural shows.



Nantong Museum •The First Public Museum

Founded by modern industrialist Mr. Zhang Jian, Nantong Museum is the first public museum in China privately founded by Chinese people and is also a museum of distinctive style. To commemorate Zhang Jian, his former residence has been preserved and restored in the museum. In April each year, the two century-old wisteria vines in front of the residence are in full bloom, so stepping into the residence past the wisteria is like travelling through time and space, where the stories of Zhang Jian and Nantong are unfolded one by one before our eyes.



HOLD UP FOR THE UBER OF THE SKIES

TRAVELLERS waiting to board Bonza planes will now have to wait a little bit longer after the carrier conceded global supply chain issues have hampered efforts to deliver its 737 Max jets on time, meaning its launch date will be pushed back by weeks, or possibly months.

Putting a positive spin on the hold up, Bonza's Chief Commercial Officer, Carly Povey, said the extra time would allow

the carrier the clarity it needed to map out the in-country process that will be enacted once its first jet touches down.

Povey penned an open letter to the Aussie travel sector to make the announcement, a document which also declared the only place to book Bonza flights will be directly via its app.

The airline said it would not be listing its flights on a website or through third party websites as it

seeks to become Uber of the skies, rationalising that via the app customers will find it simpler, faster, greener, and rich with extra bells and whistles to pump up its value proposition.

These include instant communications with the customer service team from anywhere, feedback tools to improve services, and the ability to order food and beverages on demand to cabin seats.

Intrepid women take the lead

INTREPID Travel has announced its first all-female regional leadership team, with Sarah Clark at the helm as Managing Director for the Australian and New Zealand (ANZ) market. Clark has been an integral member of the management team for the past two years and has held senior leadership roles at the adventure travel company since 2018.

Yvette Thompson is also adding her wealth of experience to the leadership team, after her promotion to General Manager of Sales and

Partnerships across the ANZ region. Thompson takes over from Cameron Elliott, who will manage global sales for the 25 destination management companies under the Intrepid umbrella.

Louise Laing, General Manager of Marketing ANZ; Julie Risteveski, General Manager of Inside Sales and Customer Experience ANZ; and Lauren McCormick, General Manager of Commercial Finance ANZ, complete the impressive line-up for Intrepid's all-female leadership team.

ESCAPES TTC TIE-UP

LUXURY Escapes is expanding its tours offering via a major new international partnership with The Travel Corporation, which will see travellers gain access to itineraries from Trafalgar, Insight Vacations, Luxury Gold, and AAT Kings.

More than 150 itineraries are currently available to book, and as the catalogue is further developed, more will be available, from brands Contiki and Costaver which will be offered on the Scoopon, Cudo and Treat Me platforms.

"Our customers drive all of our decision-making and we're committed to innovating to deliver amazing travel experiences for them," Luxury Escapes co-founder & Chief Executive Officer Adam

Schwab said.

The Travel Corporation Chief Executive Officer David Hosking said Luxury Escapes had been a valuable partner during the COVID period with strong domestic sales, particularly through its AAT Kings and Inspiring Journeys brands.

Rather than source itineraries itself, the partnership allows Luxury Escapes to offer trusted, quality product to its customers while outsourcing much of the legwork.

Likewise, for The Travel Corporation, the partnership opens up a massive distribution mode for its own product – an invaluable advantage as the popularity of Luxury Escapes grows, and Australians begin to return to travel.



The partnership will give travellers access to ©The Travel Corporation brands such as AAT Kings (top) and ©Inspiring Journeys (bottom).



Jetstar offering agent distribution

A NEW technology offering from Aeronology now allows travel advisors to book and ticket Jetstar fares via a direct connection to the low-cost-carrier's platform, with payments via a weekly invoice rather than the longstanding instant purchase requirement through the JQ agent portal.

The new system, offered in partnership with Express Tickets, is a first for the industry, with the Jetstar LCC connection complementing Aeronology's GDS and NDC links to see the Australian tech provider's offering become even more comprehensive.

According to Aeronology CEO Russell Carstensen, the move means agents have accessible content to all Jetstar services in Asia, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. "Tickets can be paid for weekly via Express Tickets' normal invoice," he noted, adding that advisors can also add on their own markup and add an in-house logo to the Jetstar flight itinerary.

"To provide the ability to sell Jetstar off our platform and be able to bundle packages together in key leisure markets will be critical as the market evolves, rebuilds and expands," Carstensen said.

EMIRATES PREMIUM COMES TO AUS



Emirates' new Premium Economy cabin ©Emirates

EMIRATES is set to launch its Premium Economy Class experience from 1 June 2022 on popular A380 routes, including London and Paris, adding Sydney on 1 August and Christchurch from December.

The new Premium Economy Cabin, which features cream and bronze tones, is located at the front of the aircraft to give guests greater priority when exiting upon landing.

The cabin also offers more space to relax, with wider leather seats, raised cushion leg rests, six-way adjustable headrests, and a deeper recline, complemented by overhead mood lighting.

Guests can enjoy a multi-course dining experience consisting of a selection of mains inspired by global flavours, fresh fruits and salads, crackers and cheese, and sweet

treats, along with complimentary drinks, including fruit juices, soft drinks, wines, beers, and spirits.

Additionally, Premium Economy guests can take advantage of the thousands of entertainment channels included in the upgraded inflight entertainment system, as well as high speed Wi-Fi.



Emirates' entertainment system ©Emirates



CATO VIEW

Brett Jardine, Managing Director,
Council of Australian Tour Operators

WITH the federal election now behind us and a new Government in place, CATO's advocacy efforts will continue to focus on the challenges that remain for our sector.

Tour Operators and Wholesalers play a critical role in product development to provide a wide offering to travelling Australians.

This results in the need to continually invest in new product long before travel can take place and underpins much of what retail agents sell and earn commission from.

The investment in product and resource requires significant cash to support through to final delivery, and these organisations are not able to recognise real revenue until travel has availed.

CATO will continue to seek ongoing support from government to ensure Tour Operators and Wholesalers are here for the long-term to support Australians venturing overseas.

In the weeks leading up to the election it was pleasing to hear the outgoing government pay homage to outbound travel, traditionally seen as Australians taking their holiday dollars out of the country.

What is now well understood within government circles is the simple fact that outbound travel does deliver an economic impact as it is complimentary to inbound travel and underpins aviation capacity, two areas that are critical to our economy.

It goes without saying that if fewer Australians are leaving to go overseas, there will not only be less capacity for inbound travellers but also less capacity for freight – not a great outcome for Australia!

From our ongoing engagement with the Labor Party whilst in opposition, this overarching message was very clear and well understood.

We are now very keen to ensure the new government is true to their word and continues to recognise the value we bring to the economy, through ongoing support as we emerge from COVID.

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QANTAS SPREADS WINGS INTO PACKAGING

THE acquisition of a 51% stake in TripADeal by Qantas last month will have set tongues wagging across the industry, as the carrier continues to expand its operations across the travel spectrum. TripADeal's offering of curated packages combined with a world-class online booking platform - and a rapid growth rate - proved irresistible for Qantas CEO Alan Joyce, who highlighted TripADeal as a way to further expand the Qantas Frequent Flyer Program ecosystem.

"This is a great opportunity at the perfect time. Coming out of the pandemic, people want a holiday experience that is special but also tried and tested, and there is a huge shift to booking online," he said. While the full terms of the all-cash purchase are not being disclosed, TripADeal cofounders Norm Black and Richard Johnston remain significant investors in the business, alongside BGH Capital, the private equity firm which took a stake in the company at a pre-COVID valuation in September 2020. However the agreement does provide a mechanism for Qantas to move to 100% ownership of the company in four years time, at an agreed multiple of TripADeal's bookings at the time.

Black is enthusiastic about the opportunities which being aligned with the Qantas Frequent Flyer program will bring to TripADeal. "This is a business that needs eyeballs,



Alan Joyce, Norm Black, Richard Johnston.

and exposure to the 14 million strong QFF database is huge," he told *travelBulletin*. "We're going to take this thing to the moon," he enthused, with Joyce and Johnston similarly extremely positive at the ability for all of TripADeal's stakeholders to share in the ensuring growth. Joyce suggested that TripADeal would be able to triple its bookings over the next couple of years which would see it transacting well over half a billion dollars annually, based on pre-pandemic revenues.

The acquisition is being made under the Qantas Loyalty umbrella, which has performed very well during the pandemic and has been a significant contributor to the carrier's overall survival. Joyce noted that despite the lack of flying over the last two years, members earned and burned large volumes of points on the ground

and customer satisfaction actually reached record levels. "I don't think any other airline loyalty program managed to do that," he said.

Black and Johnston insist that despite its new majority owner, TripADeal will remain close to its roots, maintaining its headquarters in Byron Bay along with existing trade relationships. Packages will continue to feature a variety of airlines alongside Qantas and Jetstar, and the pair's hands-on approach will continue. "This business is about making it easier for people to take amazing holidays essentially at the click of a button...it's taken a decade for us to build the relationships direct with suppliers to be able to offer all the experiences we have, and the ability to now use Qantas Points for that is really going to drive our growth in the years ahead," Johnston said.



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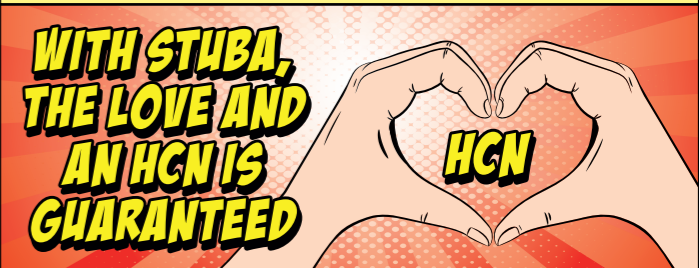
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STRENGTHEN YOUR SELF-WORTH

By Tim Hoopmann

AS A business owner, you understand the importance of strengthening your sense of self-worth. It is going to be key to getting through each day successfully. It takes effort and resilience to maintain a great sense of self-worth. It is important to help create a successful business. Believing in your value is a critical emolument to maintaining good mental health.

To have a high level of self-worth means having a favourable opinion of yourself. It means having unshakable faith in yourself and in your ability to follow through and get things done. Having a high degree of self-worth means feeling worthy of good things. It recognises that you are valuable because you are you; you are unique, and there is no one else like you in the world.

Self-worth is important because it heavily influences your choices and decisions. It serves as a motivational function by making it more likely that you will take care of yourself and explore your full potential. There are many aspects which impact your self-worth. The importance here is to be as resilient as possible to negative effects on your self-worth. Also, to not punish yourself when things do impact you. We often must get up, dust ourselves off and shake off any negative effects.

Here are some suggestions on how to strengthen your self-worth:

Believing in Yourself is important to maintaining confidence. You must trust yourself regardless of what others say or expect of you. It is important to support yourself through all of your choices and decisions. Trusting that you know what is best for you.

Live and Speak your Truth by allowing yourself to listen to others as they tell you who you are and what you should be doing gives your power away to them in that moment. It is important to stay connected with what you believe, your values, integrity and how you want to live your life.

Take in Compliments and the better you get at accepting compliments, the more easily you can boost your self-worth. When someone offers you a compliment, thank them and then feel the joy it provides for that job that was well done.

Stop Criticising Yourself - sometimes, we're so worried about being criticised that we criticise ourselves before anyone else has the chance.

There is a difference between identifying areas for improvement and criticising yourself. By concentrating on improving rather than being self-critical means you can maintain a better sense of self-worth.

Find the Good in Yourself - when something goes wrong or a mistake is made, you can rebuild your self-worth by looking for the ways you are good in that role or situation. Things don't always go perfectly. It becomes about how we manage situations when they do that help us protect our self-worth.

Keep Moving Forward - just like you must forgive yourself, you must also forgive others and let go of the past. Let go of anything that is keeping you from being focused on the present. Allow yourself to see how far you have come and how much you have grown by getting out of your own way.

It is important to have a strong sense of self-worth in life and in business. Seeing yourself in a positive light requires an awareness and an alignment of your thoughts and actions. It also requires discipline and consistency, so you can shift any self-negativity into positivity. It takes daily work, but the results are tremendous.

“
... you are valuable
because you are you;
you are unique, and
there is no one else
like you in the world
”



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.



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THE METAVERSE

OPPORTUNITY OR OBLIVION?

Rapidly approaching with its sights set on transformation, the Metaverse is coming to change the nature of technology as we know it. But what actually is the Metaverse and what does it mean for the future of travel? ADAM BISHOP investigates.

SCIENCE fiction author William Gibson once suggested that the future is already here, it's just not very evenly distributed. While the majority of us working in travel have only vaguely heard of this notional reality called the Metaverse, a powerful cohort of tech companies are working furiously around the clock in their virtual tool sheds to create platforms and business models to propel the ambitious cyber concept from its abstract infancy to being the next big warehouse of commerce. So, I guess the pertinent question to ask is, what

exactly is the Metaverse?

It's actually a great query because like almost everything in the world of tech, in-house chatter about the answer is encased in seemingly endless jargon-laden, esoteric language that laymen on the outside feel embarrassed to broach.

The truth is there is no one succinct answer unfortunately, other than to say it is a broad business movement to create virtual worlds that harness cutting-edge experiential technology like virtual reality and augmented reality to allow users to engage, theoretically at least, in almost any activity they desire. This description is somewhat inadequate and far from encapsulates the full scope of what the Metaverse purports to offer, but then perhaps no definition at this preliminary stage could do that justice.

The reason all of this is important for people working in travel is because its mainstream adoption could have far-reaching ramifications on a host of consumer behaviour, including our appetites to travel. Allow me to walk (so old school) you down a path in the not-too-distant future, a world where the Metaverse is widely subscribed, and people can enter virtual worlds from their loungerooms to be transported anywhere they wish. Experiences could range from conducting virtual business meetings, admiring the architecture on the streets of Paris, or even blasting off into space on a dubiously-shaped Blue Origin rocket. These are worlds and experiences that only time, and a little more elbow grease from skateboarding tech heads in Silicon Valley, stand in the way of becoming

a mainstream reality. So, what would this mean for travel?

There are many schools of thought about whether this technology would be a friend or a foe to the sector. To play devil's advocate for a moment, the obvious threat is that it could destroy the industry by replacing physical travel altogether. Some tech observers have already speculated that consumers would travel less when the Metaverse is fully plugged in because the virtual worlds would provide them with all of the buzz and excitement of a trip without having to encounter any of the possible burdens. Your virtual trip to New York City is unlikely to feature the scourge of a possible street mugging for example, or the necessity to quarantine to avoid the next rogue virus, or endure the administrative and financial rigmarole that goes along with losing your wallet on the subway. In theory, users could travel anywhere they wanted to virtually, unplug for an hour or so to pick up the kids from school, and continue enjoying the sights and sounds (no doubt in time the smells, tastes and feel) of any destination. And for the same reason Doc Brown would scream incessantly at Marty in *Back to the Future* for not thinking fourth dimensionally, the like-for-like wholesale replacement of physical travel with virtual travel would only be the tip of the digital iceberg.

For entrepreneurs like Facebook (now Meta) founder Mark Zuckerberg, part of the appeal of this daring new synthetic reality is not only the ability to transport from place to place as easy as it is currently to click on a link, but it's also



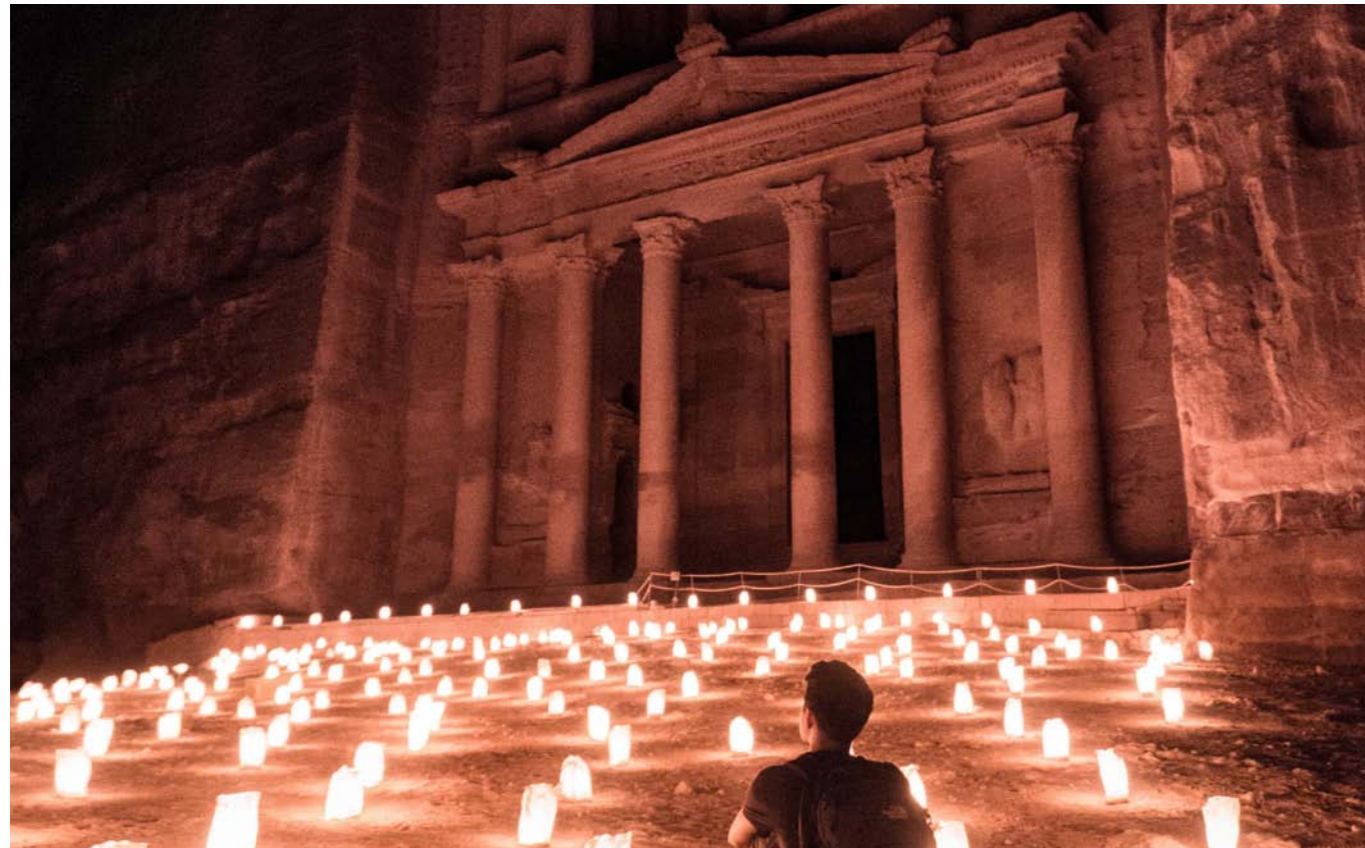
In the not-too-distant future, the Metaverse has the potential to offer unique 'travel' experiences from the comfort of home. From watching a whale breach right in front of you, to taking a virtual cycling trip, the possibilities that the Metaverse offers travellers are vast.



“
the Metaverse
can provide a
complementary
enhancement to an
overall experience
that, over time,
can become an
essential part of the
travel ecosystem
”

Emily Weiss, Senior
Executive Director and
Global Head of Travel,
Accenture

the ability to travel away from yourself. That is to say, you need not necessarily depart on a trip as you; travellers could for example select any avatar they like, from an undercover detective to a space alien, you know, for those of us who don't feel removed enough from reality as it is in the pervasive era of social media. While Zuckerberg's Meta empire is leading the way with its hefty investment to fine-tune their interpretation of Metaverse capability, they are certainly not alone. Thousands of major corporations are racing to claim their piece of this sprawling and mostly intangible pie. Some of these businesses are pioneering currencies that would work in various Metaverses, while others are selling virtual real estate to major brands like Adidas and Pepsi, who have already slammed down large wads of cash on the table for their place in this mysterious new shop-front window. For those of you across the tabloids, you may already have heard that US rapper Snoop Dogg is at the crest of the Metaverse wave too, charging people up to a half a million dollars to stake a parcel of virtual land near his cyber house in a virtual world called The Sandbox. Yes, users can plug their VR headsets in and revel in the virtual 'Snoopverse' to see how the swaggering musician lives, walk the halls of his digital mansion, and take a seat and smoke a silicon doobie in the front row of a Snoop Dogg concert. It's worth grabbing your head to stop it spinning for a second to contemplate the huge volume of cash that is being channelled toward this unprecedented project.



The Metaverse could serve as the ultimate travel brochure, offering clients a taste of destinations that leaves them hungry for the real deal.

While many of us may still feel a healthy amount of scepticism about its future impact, there is clearly an exuberant minority of confident businesspeople who think this will be much bigger than the advent of the internet. Casting my own mind back to the mid-2000s, I remember having similar misgivings about all the manic chatter friends of mine were having about these so-called social media platforms sprouting up all over the place. For better or for worse (I would contend worse), these platforms have come to dominate our lives in ways that even the founders of Facebook and Twitter failed to conceive of at the time. With that framing in mind, it might be time for the travel sector to at the very least take stock of what the Metaverse offers and see where its application may benefit, or potentially threaten, their own

“
... the ultimate travel brochure, providing clients with a truly immersive digital pre-experience, cultivated specifically by brands, to help get bookings or lucrative upselling opportunities over the line
”

jobs and businesses. Some glimmer of optimism was recently noted in a report by professional services company Accenture, which argued virtual travel experiences had the potential to incentivise growth in travel if businesses like travel agencies and operators were to jump aboard the technology and embrace its capabilities.

“It is important to recognise that the Metaverse can provide a complementary enhancement to an overall experience that, over time, can become an essential part of the travel ecosystem,” Accenture’s Senior Executive Director and Global Head of Travel Emily Weiss noted in the report.

“Giving the option to sit in a virtual First Class seat, experience the lounge, or walk through a resort or hotel room opens up opportunities to truly engage and inspire people before they travel.

Through the ‘try before you go’ concept, recreating landmarks in all their past glory or allowing travellers to investigate parts of nature they can’t explore in a real-life interaction could be a major benefit,” she added.

In other words, there is a way Metaverse architecture could serve as the ultimate travel brochure, providing clients with a truly immersive digital pre-experience, cultivated specifically by brands, to help get bookings or lucrative upselling opportunities over the line. Imagine a sales team with access to advanced experiential tools which could show clients all of the luxury amenities on offer at a swanky hotel in Singapore in acute detail, harness the awe of a whale breaching off the hull of an expedition cruise ship in the Arctic, or provide unmatched insight into what life is like on tours through the Amazon; the possibilities are, quite literally, endless.

However, the same Accenture report also delivered a stark warning to sectors like travel and tourism who fail to embrace the benefits of engaging in the Metaverse, stating a strong likelihood of being “left behind” and unable to compete with businesses who choose to migrate sooner.

“The era of the Metaverse has begun, and so for consumer-facing companies, it’s not about deciding if they’re going to enter the Metaverse, it’s about deciding how,” the report warned. “The Metaverse can help build loyalty through personalised experiences that go beyond simply purchasing a product.”

The reality (excuse the pun) is that this technology is not going to storm through the shop-front windows of travel companies tomorrow offering better-than-real-life travel experiences, however, given the exponential speed of



The Metaverse opens up a world of opportunity for accessible travel, with travel agents key to linking clients with all that this new technology has to offer.

“
The era of the Metaverse has begun, and so for consumer-facing companies, it’s not about deciding if they’re going to enter the Metaverse, it’s about deciding how
”

Accenture Report

technological progression it is some seriously augmented food for virtual thought. Some travel businesses may find themselves, for example, hedging their bets in the future by dabbling on both sides of the fence, offering travellers the option of both physical and virtual travel through separate divisions. Either way, it’s worth remembering that tech only marches in one direction, and what appears to be impossible today will almost certainly become a societal norm at some point sooner than you think (except flying cars, they should seriously be ubiquitous by now). But I’ll give the final word on all of this to Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web, who once prophetically observed, “The Web as I envisaged it, we have not seen it yet. The future is still so much bigger than the past.”

NEW CRUISING WONDER SHOWS SIZE DOES MATTER

THE plethora of activities, entertainment options, restaurants and bars on Royal Caribbean's new *Wonder of the Seas* shows just what the cruise industry is able to achieve when it sets its mind on something. **travelBulletin** was invited on the first European departure of this gigantic ship, the fifth and largest in the Oasis class series, which debuted in the Caribbean more than a decade ago. Like its sister ships, *Wonder* features the innovative Central Park precinct - a capacious area in the middle of the ship open to the sky, complete with thousands of plants alongside eateries, cafes and bars - which allowed Royal Caribbean to introduce the concept of "internal balcony cabins" which overlook this pretty green space.

Wonder also features the Aquatheatre, an ice rink, the enormous Grand Promenade and a host of activities for kids and adults alike, but has also been enhanced with the addition of a new "Suite Neighbourhood" where Royal Suite guests are welcomed to a private sun deck with a plunge pool and bar, an exclusive restaurant and lounge and the new Ultimate Family Suite (pictured middle), an outrageously lavish two-storey accommodation which can sleep a family of 10 complete with an in-suite slide, a cinema, karaoke lounge and even a ping pong table.

With 2,867 staterooms *Wonder of the Seas* has capacity for 5,734 guests at double occupancy, but this can expand to almost 7,000 passengers once additional berths in family cabins are filled. It truly is a small city on the water, with 2,300 international crew serving passengers across 18 decks.

The ship also boasts a host of new technology features, such as 24 high-speed guest elevators, a smartphone app that makes your device into a room key, and behind-the-scenes, lots of environmental enhancements to help lift the ship's sustainability credentials in areas such as waste management, emissions reduction and fuel efficiency.

Along with old Royal Caribbean restaurant and bar favourites such as Chops Grille, 150 Central Park, Johnny Rockets and Starbucks, *Wonder of the Seas* has added The Mason Jar, a southern-style eatery where you can enjoy waffles and chicken for brunch - with a side of bacon and all smothered in maple syrup of course! The robots at the Bionic Bar are a popular feature, and certainly got a workout during our voyage.

There's really something for everyone on board, with the ship seeming to have some activity or other going on almost 24 hours a day. Whether it's the spectacular skating in Studio B, Olympic-class synchronised swimming and high diving at the Aquatheatre (pictured bottom) or the opportunity to ride a zipline six storeys high, guests will certainly not be bored.

Currently the only port in Australasia which is capable of handling ships of this size is the new Brisbane International Cruise Terminal, so it may be some time before we see Oasis-class vessels in local waters. But in the meantime there's plenty of opportunity in both Europe and the USA to experience these ships, with *Wonder of the Seas* a truly apt name for what Royal Caribbean has achieved.



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P&O AUSTRALIA EXPLORES BRISBANE

ONE of the highlights of Carnival Corporation's return to sailing in Australia was its christening of the Brisbane International Cruise Terminal.

The company's P&O Australia's *Pacific Explorer* was the first leisure vessel to utilise the facility when it arrived for the first time in early June.

Carnival President Australia Marguerite Fitzgerald described *Explorer's* arrival in Brisbane as the start of a relationship which has been frustratingly delayed due to the pandemic.

"It's fantastic," Fitzgerald told media at White Bay Cruise Terminal ahead of the cruise.

"That's what Carnival planned when we originally created our relationship with the Brisbane International Cruise Terminal.

"We are going to be running more than 100 calls there every year, and so this is just the first of many, and the economic activity it brings back to Queenslanders."

Fitzgerald and many members of the Carnival team, as well as the company's suppliers, were at White Bay in the lead-up to the cruise to

“...the pizza ovens are preheated, and the Disco Diver and Super Slider waterslides are ready for cruise-goers to splash out”

Brett Annable, Head of Entertainment, P&O Cruises Australia

witness *Explorer* being stocked with essentials ahead of her first voyage.

Fitzgerald defined the moment as broken ground for the Australian cruise industry's restart.

"[The] big delivery of produce to *Pacific Explorer* is where cruising and economic opportunity meet," she said.

"It is also strong confirmation of the multiplier effect of cruise tourism and the diversity of the cruising ecosystem."

Ahead of the first cruise out of Sydney, *Explorer's* crew had to fold more than 5,000 bedsheets, polish a multitude of wine glasses, and prep the galley for the thousands of meals that will be served each day.

However, as P&O Australia's Head of Entertainment Brett Annable explained, the crew was absolutely thrilled to be undertaking such tasks once more.

"We couldn't be more excited to be welcoming our first guests back onboard," he enthused.

"The pizza ovens are preheated, and the Disco Diver and Super Slider waterslides are ready for cruise-goers to splash out."

Aurora debuts *Sylvia Earle*

AURORA Expeditions has announced *Sylvia Earle's* maiden voyage will be the Subantarctic Safari to South Georgia and the Falkland Islands, embarking on 04 November.

Sylvia Earle's christening by her namesake marine biologist will take place before the 17-day cruise, which Aurora promises will "appeal to wildlife lovers and history buffs alike", as it sails from Santiago to Ushuaia.

Guests will explore the history-steeped Falklands, a bird lover's paradise, home to an incredible diversity of penguin species and the largest colony of blackbrowed albatross in the world.

This will be followed by South Georgia, which is known for its King penguin colonies and beaches lined with Elephant and Antarctic fur seals.



Expeditioners getting up close to penguins in Antarctica ©Jocelyn Pride/Aurora

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DON'T DREAM IT'S OVER...

GENTING Dream will be making a comeback later this month under billionaire Lim Kok Thay's new cruise brand.

The former Dream Cruises ship will set sail from her homeport of Singapore on 15 June under the new 'Resorts World Cruises' brand, for which planning began in February, according to its President Michael Goh - who held the same title at the defunct line.

Genting Dream is set to be joined by more fleetmates in the near future too, according to another former Dream executive-turned-Resorts World corner office-holder, Colin Au.

"The company will aspire to have many more ships in other parts of Asia," he said, adding,

"it is a reaffirmation that cruising is good for the region and will be a growth industry."

Au also noted unlike Dream, all cruise payments made will be kept in a separate account to be drawn down only prior to the cruise commencing.

Bookings are now open, with *Genting Dream* to undertake cruises to nowhere, ahead of plans to launch trips to Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia from September.

Resorts World will offer complimentary cruise credits of the equivalent value for all paid passengers affected by *World Dream's* cruise cancellations in Singapore between 02 March and 31 August.



Genting Dream sailing under the now defunct Dream Cruises © Dream Cruises

Azamara partners with Versonix

AZAMARA has announced a booking software partnership with Versonix, which will launch in the first quarter of next year.

The collaboration will see the two cooperate on the launch of Azamara's new reservation platform, a venture the cruise line is very happy about, according to President Carol Cabezas.

"We are very pleased to officially partner with Versonix Seaware to provide a more seamless customer experience for our travel partners when booking with Azamara," she said.

"We're focused on creating a smooth transition for travel advisors," she added.

“
...to provide a more seamless customer experience for our travel partners...
”

Carol Cabezas,
President,
Azamara

Downs back up on his feet

BICTON Travel's former National Sales & Promotions Manager Barry Downs has returned to the travel industry, taking up a new role with Hunter Travel as General Manager Marketing & Product.

A highly experienced cruise professional, Downs is the voice behind the Big Cruise Podcast, which recently published its 100th episode.

Hunter Chief Executive Brett Dean told *travelBulletin* the move aimed to keep the group at the forefront of the travel industry's recovery.

Angell floats on CLIA cloud

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line Vice President & Managing Director Asia-Pacific Ben Angell has been elected as Cruise Lines International Association's (CLIA) local Chair.

The appointment comes after the conclusion of former Chair Gavin Smith's two-year term, with Angell elected at CLIA's annual general meeting in Sydney last month.

CLIA's local Managing Director Joel Katz described Angell as an "accomplished industry leader who would offer invaluable experience at a time when the cruise sector was working to establish a new course for its future".

Oceania selling strongly

THE release day of Oceania Cruises' 2024 Collection ranked among the best 24-hour booking periods in the line's history, with almost two-thirds of the staterooms aboard the 35-day circumnavigation of Australia already sold.

All of the 2023 and 2024 bookings from the collection are new cash reservations, with no dilution from future cruise credits.

Oceania said it continues to see "strong demand from new-to-brand guests".



CLIA VIEW

Joel Katz, Managing Director
CLIA Australasia

CRUISING'S RECOVERY HAS ARRIVED

AUSTRALIA'S cruise revival is now underway.

With P&O Cruises Australia's flagship *Pacific Explorer* now sailing from Sydney and Brisbane – plus international expedition ships like Ponant's *Le Lapérouse* and *Le Soléal* joining local Australian operators in the Kimberley – we can now celebrate the beginning of a recovery of cruising in our region.

Other ships and brands will begin returning over coming months, building slowly as we approach the summer months when we can once again expect visiting international ships on their world cruises and seasonal deployments.

At the same time, New Zealand has now confirmed it will open its maritime border at the end of next month, paving the way for operations to resume in October ahead of the traditional summer season. This will mean a revival of trans-Tasman cruising and allow New Zealand to share in the economic recovery that cruising will bring businesses across Australasia.

No doubt we still face challenges ahead, but the cruise industry's response to the global pandemic has resulted in the most stringent health protocols to be found anywhere in world tourism.

Though we still see considerable levels of COVID-19 in our cities and towns, we can draw confidence from the experience we've gained internationally which shows the incidence of serious illness and hospitalisations at sea are much lower than on land – thanks to testing requirements, vaccine mandates, enhanced onboard medical facilities and extensive protocols for identifying and managing cases.

The collaboration and strength that Australia's cruise community has shown in its fight for revival has been incredibly effective – and our travel agent partners have been among the most passionate voices in that quest.

We're incredibly grateful for this backing, and it's something we'll all benefit from as cruising recovers. We've achieved an incredible amount.



HEADLINES MAY 2022

- 06 May** RCI looking at year-round cruising
- 12 May** New Zealand reopens
- 23 May** Carnival ready to christen Brisbane
- 27 May** Qatar to headline Cruise360 as major sponsor

CONNECT THE DOTS

Draw a line from one number to the next, starting at 1 and going all the way up to 81 to see what picture it creates!



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