

travelBulletin

JUNE 2020

AATKings
Bringing Australia & New Zealand to life

TRAVEL *Better*

A GUIDING LIGHT FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE

Uniting the desire to get back to travel while making a positive impact, AAT Kings offers enriching experiences and much needed support to local communities. With the security of over 100 Years of experience and our global affiliation with TreadRight, you can feel confident AAT Kings will help your customers **Travel Better**.

Earth Sanctuary, Alice Springs

TRAVEL *Better*



It's time to pay homage to all we have to offer in our own backyard

From Tassie to the Top End, Warrnambool to Wave Rock, Airlie to Alice and Kuranda to Kangaroo Island, a holiday with AAT Kings ensures your customers experience the very best of our great southern land – while supporting our local recovery.

We're here to guide you every step of the way.

For more information visit trade.aatkings.com or call our experts on 1300 556 100.

- ✓ **TRAVEL WITH THE BEST** with our expert Travel Directors
- ✓ **BOOKING CLARITY** with TTC Future Travel Credits
- ✓ **SUPPORTING LOCAL** communities recover
- ✓ **A TTC BRAND** global family-owned
- ✓ **100+ YEARS** leading & supporting the industry



Yellow Water Billabong Cruise

TOP END HIGHLIGHTS

Code: **NDKD**

- Cruise the surrounding beauty of Katherine Gorge
- Learn the significance of ancient Aboriginal rock art in Ubirr
- Explore Litchfield National Park, then relax with a dip in refreshing Wangi Falls

6 DAY GUIDED HOLIDAY

From **\$2,225*** pp twin share



Kangaroo Island

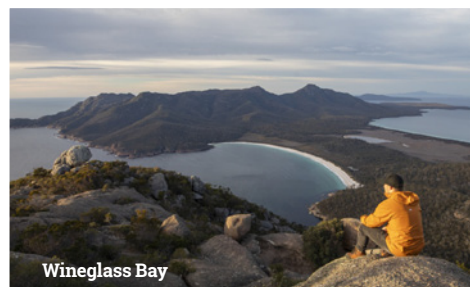
TASTES OF SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA

Code: **ESMA**

- Explore the iconic Great Ocean Road and Twelve Apostles
- Enjoy two nights absorbing the beauty of Kangaroo Island
- Gain insight into Australian farming life at Gold Creek Station

11 DAY GUIDED HOLIDAY

From **\$4,775*** pp twin share



Wineglass Bay

PERFECT TASMANIA

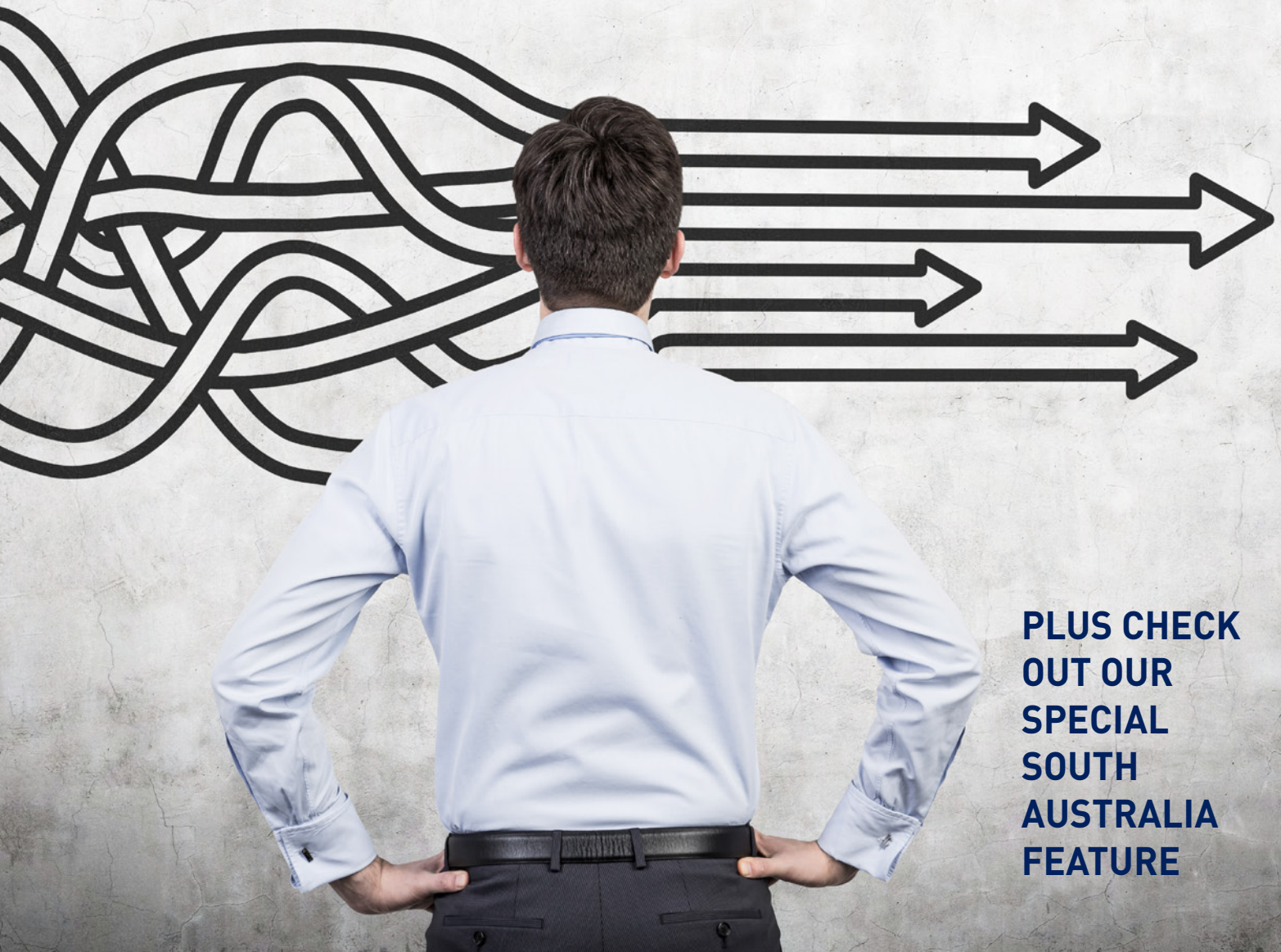
Code: **THLH**

- Circumnavigate Freycinet by boat to Wineglass Bay
- Enjoy time at leisure exploring Salamanca Markets
- Marvel at the beauty of Cradle Mountain National Park

12 DAY GUIDED HOLIDAY

From **\$5,875*** pp twin share

WHERE TO NOW FOR AFTA?



PLUS CHECK
OUT OUR
SPECIAL
SOUTH
AUSTRALIA
FEATURE



INTRODUCING THE TRAVEL DAILY TRAINING ACADEMY

A NEW SOLUTION TO GROW KNOWLEDGE IN THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY.

We offer a service helping travel and tourism suppliers to develop and market a customisable online training platform. It's cost efficient, scalable, accessible 24/7 via tablet, mobile and desktop, and user friendly.

Designed for suppliers that value travel agent learning, development and engagement, the Travel Daily Training Academy is an effective way to get your educational content into the hands of those that will drive your future sales.

Visit our website **HERE**.

[CLICK HERE TO ENQUIRE](#)

Travel  Daily



FEATURES

- 22** South Australia
With international travel on hold, now is the best time to experience South Australia on a road trip.

COVER STORY

- 12** Where to now for AFTA?
With the resignation of CEO Jayson Westbury, the hibernation of the ACS and no income for the organisation for the rest of the year, what is the future of the Federation? Steve Jones investigates.

MONTHLY

- 02** State of the industry
08 Issues and trends
18 Cruise
30 Last word

COLUMNS

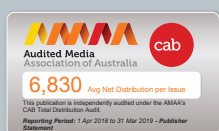
- 02** From the publisher
06 Steve Jones
09 AFTA View
21 CLIA View



This month's contributors

Steve Jones, Joel Katz, Tom Manwaring

travelBulletin



EDITORIAL
Editor in Chief and Publisher – Bruce Piper

Editorial and Production Manager – Sarah Beyer
Ph: 1300 799 220 or 02 8007 6760
sarah.beyer@traveldaily.com.au

Editorial team – Myles Stedman, Jasmine Hanna, Adam Bishop

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

ART
Design – Sarah Beyer

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



WHAT a difference a month makes. The May issue of *travelBulletin* was full of news about what AFTA had been doing, with Jayson Westbury taking the industry's issues to the top, the COVID-19-forced shutdown of the AFTA Chargeback scheme and efforts to bring some positivity to mainstream media coverage.

But then while he was in full stride came the bombshell of Westbury's shock resignation, with many in the industry wondering whether the Federation can recover from the loss of such a passionate figurehead.

As I wrote in *Travel Daily* the day after he stepped aside, Jayson will be sorely missed. His skills enabled him to work right across the spectrum – from high level ministerial meetings and lobbying on the international stage, right through to dealing with the individual concerns of small agencies.

Under his leadership the National Travel Industry Awards reached new heights

of respect and recognition, and we, like the wider industry, have valued his ongoing contributions to our publications.

Unfortunately Jayson's comments about TV host Tracy Grimshaw were indefensible and the AFTA Board understandably felt they had no choice but to accept his resignation.

The industry reeled – but then rallied – in the days after his departure. AFTA Chairman Tom Manwaring has stepped into the breach, and is now engaging with bureaucrats daily to highlight the unique position we are all under due to COVID-19 and border closures.

The AFTA Board has united in its ongoing efforts on behalf of the industry, while the team in the Federation's head office have stepped up to continue Westbury's advocacy and engagement both with AFTA members and the wider travel sector.

Our cover story this month from Steve Jones canvasses the vexed question of AFTA's future in the post-Westbury world. It's a cracker.

IN BRIEF

Domestic Aussie specialists

TOURISM Australia is supporting Australian travel agents as they pivot to the new normal, opening up the Aussie Specialists training program to local participants for the first time. Tourism Australia MD Phillipa Harrison said the initiative aimed to help agents sell Australian tourism experiences, and also to introduce domestic travellers to destinations and experiences with which they might be

less familiar.

"Alongside the great work of the states and territories, the Aussie Specialist Program will equip frontline sellers with updated destination information and news to encourage Aussie travellers to explore the many great destinations and tourism experiences that Australia has to offer," she said. "We know that Australians also spent almost \$65 billion in overseas trips last year so if we are able to encourage them to

spend some of their holiday dollars in Australian instead, it will really help our tourism industry on its road to recovery – and travel agents will have an important role to play in this,” Harrison added.

FCTG sells St Kilda

FLIGHT Centre’s scramble to boost liquidity amid the travel demand downturn has seen it sell its Victorian office for \$62.15 million. Operations will continue at the same location, however, under a lease-back deal for about 75% of the floor space.

The move was part of a frantic month of activity for Flight Centre, which also came under heavy fire for its refund and cancellation policy. Ultimately the company backflipped and confirmed it would waive all cancellation fees where third party suppliers had cancelled due to COVID-19.

Early last month the company also confirmed it was on target for significant cost reductions, with the massive store closure program and other cuts coming in at less than the \$210 million in on-off costs originally anticipated.

Virgin shortlist

THE administrators of Virgin Australia have put the pedal to the metal on the carrier’s sale, soliciting a shortlist of bidders which has now been whittled down to just two.

Bain Capital and Cyrus Capital Partners now have until 12 June to lodge final bids for the carrier, which was placed into administration

“
If we are able to encourage them to spend some of their holiday dollars in Australian instead, it will really help our tourism industry on its road to recovery – and travel agents will have an important role to play in this

”

Phillipa Harrison,
Managing Director,
Tourism Australia

CROATIAN PM VISITS ECLIPSE

THE helicopter landing deck of *Scenic Eclipse* was the perfect spot for an historic meeting last month between Andrej Plenkovic, Prime Minister of Croatia and Scenic’s Captain James Griffiths (**pictured**).

A private tour of the 228-passenger *Discovery Yacht* – its sailing currently paused in Croatia – followed a video call between the PM and Scenic Group Chairman Glen Moroney to celebrate Scenic’s commitment to build five new custom vessels in the Rijeka shipyard through its wholly owned subsidiary MKM Yachts. *Scenic Eclipse II* is currently under construction, with four more to follow by 2026.



in late April. The Bain bid involves former Jetstar CEO Jayne Hrdlicka, while Cyrus has an association with Virgin founder Richard Branson, having backed Virgin America and the 2019 Flybe takeover.

Deloitte is hoping to expedite the process which hopefully will see Virgin ramp up its flights, but any hold-ups could see the carrier liquidated as it’s understood the company’s cash is fast running out.

Fly365 directors face alleged fraud claims

THE directors of collapsed OTA Fly365.com have been accused of transferring more than \$5.5 million out of the company in its dying days, and are also facing a potential public examination to “gather evidence

which may be used in subsequent civil and criminal proceedings”.

The formal Second Report to Creditors from Aston Chace Group also confirms the administrators have probed allegations the company manipulated airline booking classes to delay the issuance of tickets.

Fly365.com ceased trading late in February, with the report estimating unsecured creditors worth almost \$27 million including just under \$18 million to the Commonwealth Bank, \$3.1 million to Air Tickets and \$2.6 million owed to about 1,000 clients.

Sabre, LH battle it out

THE end of this month may see Lufthansa, Austrian, SWISS and Brussels Airlines

Continues over page

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Continues from previous page

flights no longer bookable via the Sabre GDS, with the technology firm confirming the termination of its existing agreements on 30 June.

The move is applicable in all markets, and is the latest move in an ongoing dispute between the airlines and Sabre over a range of issues including the controversial GDS surcharge being applied by Lufthansa Group carriers.

While things have escalated, both sides insist they are engaged in “amicable talks,” but Lufthansa also said it was “taking this opportunity to assess options to accelerate modern airline retailing”.

Bankruptcies spread

COVID-19 continues to claim victims within the travel landscape, with major players including Hertz, LATAM Airlines and Thai Airways all seeking

bankruptcy protection in recent weeks. Other carriers are surviving with the support of governments, including Lufthansa Group which in the last month received a €9 billion bailout, and Fiji Airways, whose CEO Andre Viljoen said government guarantees had enabled financing initiatives without which the carrier “would not survive”.

Singapore plans “green lanes”

AUTHORITIES in Singapore have confirmed plans to establish a range of bilateral agreements covering so-called “green lanes” which would facilitate short-term trips subject to comprehensive COVID-19 health and safety measures.

Talks are under way with Australia, New Zealand and South Korea, while Singapore has already sealed an agreement with China covering travel to

“
Reciprocal
green lane
arrangements
mean there
must be
mutual
assurance of
each other’s
test protocols
and standards
”

Chan Chun
Sing, Singapore
Minister for Trade
and Industry

and from six major cities. Singapore’s Minister for Trade and Industry, Chan Chun Sing said “reciprocal green lane arrangements mean there must be mutual assurance of each other’s test protocols and standards,” with the proposal aiming to eliminate the current need for 14-day mandatory quarantine at both ends of each journey.

AABH domestic pivot

INBOUND specialist operator Australia and Beyond Holidays (AABH) has received a strong travel trade response to its launch of domestic product. Led by former Qantas Holidays chief Simon Bernardi, AABH is offering packages as well as an online booking tool.

Bernardi said there was a great opportunity for agents to cash in on the domestic travel boom and potential trans-Tasman travel bubble – see aabh.com.au/agents.

Travel Daily HEADLINES

- | | | | |
|---------------|--|---------------|--|
| 01 May | HLO COVID-19 survival plan | 11 May | TTC pivots to domestic touring |
| 02 May | Flight Centre waives cancellation fees | 12 May | TTC ready for domestic |
| 04 May | Flight Centre “on target” | 13 May | ACA host accepts apology |
| 05 May | QF extends int’l cancellations | 13 May | AFTA CEO Westbury steps down |
| 05 May | Matt Cameron-Smith CEO of AAT Kings | 15 May | NSW inspiring travel |
| 06 May | NZ travel could be sooner | 18 May | Village may go private |
| 07 May | TA goes live with recovery | 18 May | Virgin bidders shortlisted |
| 08 May | Virgin pauses refunds | 19 May | QF middle seat to stay |
| 08 May | Intrastate travel to resume under plan | 20 May | TA adapts training program |
| 11 May | Door open for Jul travel | 20 May | Gavin Smith appointed Chairman of CLIA |

DATA ROOM

DOMESTIC ON TIME PERFORMANCE

March 2020



Jetstar

Arrivals on time 80.6%
Departure on time 78.5%
Cancellations 26.8%



Qantas

Arrivals on time 86.1%
Departure on time 87.0%
Cancellations 11.4%



Virgin Australia

Arrivals on time 82.8%
Departure on time 85.1%
Cancellations 22.7%



All airlines

Arrivals on time 84.2%
Departure on time 85.4%
Cancellations 17.3%

DOMESTIC AIR MARKET

March 2020

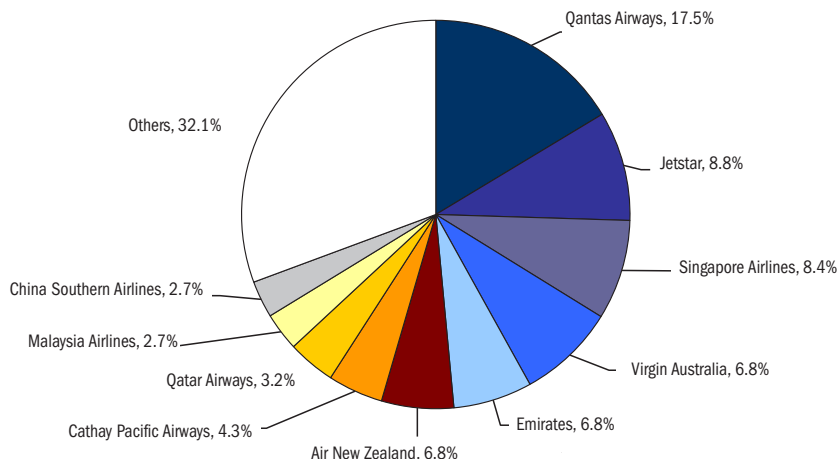
	Mar 19	Mar 20	Growth %	Yr to Mar 19	Yr to Mar 20	Growth %
Total pax carried	5.06m	3.07m	-39.3	60.88m	59.26m	-2.7
Revenue pax km (RPK)	5.72bn	3.60bn	-37.2	70.94bn	69.24bn	-2.4
Avail seat kms (ASK)	7.27bn	5.73bn	-21.1	88.31bn	86.69bn	-1.8
Load factor (%)	78.7	62.7	+16.0*	80.3	79.9	-0.5*
Aircraft trips (000)	53.7	43.1	-19.7	629.4	623.8	-0.9

*Percentage points difference

Source: BITRE

INTERNATIONAL AIR MARKET SHARE

International passengers by major airline – year ended March 2020



Source: BITRE

ARRIVALS

Top 10 destinations, March 2020

Source	Seasonally adjusted (000)	Original (000)	% change - original Mar 19/ Mar 20
New Zealand	52.0	48.2	-56.2
UK	29.4	39.4	-46.8
USA	27.2	34.3	-61.5
China	27.8	27.9	-77.5
India	18.2	20.1	-40.8
Japan	10.0	13.3	-75.1
Singapore	13.1	13.0	-66.3
Germany	9.1	11.8	-46.4
Canada	7.2	10.1	-55.4
Malaysia	9.5	9.5	-68.5
ALL INBOUND	307.9	331.9	-86.4

Source: ABS

RETURNS

Top 10 destinations, March 2020

Destination	Seasonally adjusted (000)	Original (000)	% change - original Mar 19/ Mar 20
New Zealand	88.3	99.3	-26.3
Indonesia	84.8	71.8	-21.8
USA	79.0	53.8	-12.5
UK	71.8	29.8	+28.0
Thailand	33.2	29.1	-30.2
India	26.0	28.5	-24.6
Japan	31.8	27.9	-18.5
Vietnam	14.6	15.8	-46.1
Philippines	15.0	14.6	-30.5
Fiji	19.7	14.2	-29.2
ALL OUTBOUND	706.2	538.4	-33.3

Source: ABS



INTERNATIONAL AIR ROUTES

Top 10 city pairs, March 2020

City pair	Passengers YE Mar 19	Passengers YE Mar 20	% of total	% change 20/19
Singapore-Melbourne	1,591,338	1,548,433	3.8	-2.7
Auckland-Sydney	1,574,354	1,522,674	3.8	-3.3
Singapore-Sydney	1,503,470	1,488,085	3.7	-1.0
Auckland-Melbourne	1,251,422	1,191,020	2.9	-4.8
Singapore-Perth	1,120,814	1,089,086	2.7	-2.8
Hong Kong-Sydney	1,181,966	1,071,453	2.6	-9.3
Singapore-Brisbane	869,163	935,396	2.3	+7.6
Auckland-Brisbane	937,910	916,594	2.3	-2.3
Los Angeles-Sydney	878,627	878,116	2.2	-0.1
Denpasar-Perth	885,246	869,395	2.1	-1.8
Top 10 City Pairs	11,794,310	11,510,252	28.4	-2.4
Other City Pairs	29,952,856	29,067,695	71.6	-3.0
ALL CITY PAIRS	41,747,166	40,577,947	100.0	-2.8

Source: BITRE

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

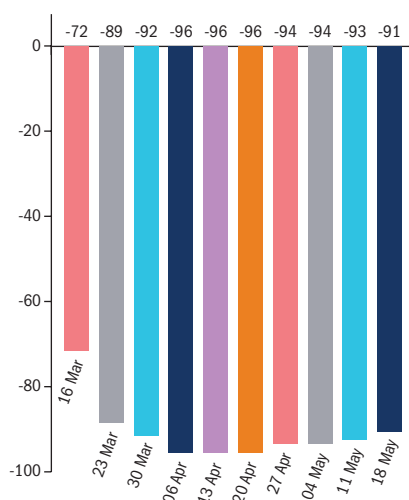
MAIN DOMESTIC ROUTES

Top 10 domestic city pairs, March 2020

City pair	Passengers YE Mar 19 (000)	Passengers YE Mar 20 (000)	% change
Melbourne-Sydney	9,235.9	8,719.1	-5.6
Brisbane-Sydney	4,811.7	4,636.7	-3.6
Brisbane-Melbourne	3,580.0	3,478.0	-2.8
Gold Coast-Sydney	2,696.2	2,652.4	-1.6
Adelaide-Melbourne	2,511.4	2,433.2	-3.1
Melbourne-Perth	2,116.9	2,055.5	-2.9
Gold Coast-Melbourne	2,062.4	2,050.5	-0.6
Adelaide-Sydney	1,892.6	1,800.8	-4.9
Perth-Sydney	1,702.9	1,644.8	-3.4
Hobart-Melbourne	1,654.7	1,605.6	-3.0
ALL CITY PAIRS	60,875.5	59,256.3	-2.7

Source: BITRE

AUSTRALIAN CONSUMER SPEND ON TRAVEL: NEWS CORP AUSTRALIA INDEX



Source: News Corp

AUSTRALIAN AIRPORTS

International passengers through Australia's major international airports, March 2020

City pair	Passengers YE Mar 19	Passengers YE Mar 20	% of total	% change 20/19
Sydney	16,798,820	16,025,802	39.5	-4.6
Melbourne	11,267,313	10,784,129	26.6	-4.3
Brisbane	6,161,134	6,201,953	15.3	+0.7
Perth	4,353,011	4,208,981	10.4	-3.3
Adelaide	1,035,755	1,093,494	2.7	+5.6
Gold Coast	995,258	908,822	2.2	-8.7
Cairns	656,117	594,316	1.5	-9.4
Avalon (a)	131,310	401,007	1.0	+205.4
Darwin	225,160	248,774	0.6	+10.5
Canberra	89,539	79,626	0.2	-11.1
Sunshine Coast (b)	14,303	13,084	0.0	-8.5
Port Hedland	8,597	8,710	0.0	+1.3
Newcastle (c)	6,687	7,371	0.0	+10.2
Norfolk Island (d)	..	1,878	0.0	..
Townsville (e)	4,162
ALL AIRPORTS	41,747,166	40,577,947	100.0	-2.8

(a) Scheduled passenger services commenced Dec '18 (d) Scheduled services ceased May '17 and recommenced Sep '19
(b) Seasonal services only (e) Scheduled services (seasonal) recommenced Nov '18
(c) Scheduled services (seasonal) recommenced Nov '18

Source: BITRE



Steve Jones' Say

OH JAYSON. Why did you need to vent your frustration in those terms? You're a smart guy. You surely must have known such careless talk was laced with danger, and risked such an inevitable conclusion.

Watching the ex-AFTA chief squirm in front of A Current Affair cameras made for torturous viewing. And the tragedy is that it was

entirely self-inflicted. I doubt even Jayson knows why he stooped to such a grubby level as to suggest Tracy Grimshaw, the matriarch of A Current Affair, needed a "virtual" punch. From such an experienced and articulate operator it was a jaw-dropping misjudgement.

The defence mounted by some on social media was that A Current Affair must take responsibility. "Who can blame Jayson amid such provocation?" the argument went. That is risible. Jayson alone is responsible for the words that flow out of his mouth. And the words he spoke on the webinar have no place in 2020, let alone during a period when domestic violence has spiked.

ACA's confrontational and sometimes unbalanced reporting style, and Jason's ill-advised reaction, should not be linked. We can rail against ACA and attempt to put the record straight. But

“The stigma would have lingered... in short AFTA chairman Tom Manwaring had little option but to call time on [Jayson's] 13-year reign”

aggressive remarks towards Grimshaw, regardless of your personal view of her style or the "closed" nature of the webinar, could never be justified.

And what sort of example would it have set had the board continued Jayson's employment? The stigma would have lingered – ACA would have made sure of that – and AFTA's reputation is likely to have been tarnished. In short, AFTA Chairman Tom Manwaring had little option but to call time on his CEO's 13-year reign.

For all that, it is desperately sad, both for Jayson and the wider industry. He made the role his own. He breathed fresh life into a moribund organisation, and gave it a profile and energy that had been lacking. Whether you agreed with him or not, AFTA will be a poorer place without his presence.

BOOK WITH CONFIDENCE

LET'S EXPLORE AGAIN

Flexible and risk-free booking options so you can plan your clients' journeys of a lifetime with confidence.

- Low 5% deposit
- Flexible full payment terms
- Free of charge date change*
- Rebooking fee waiver



REDUCED
5% DEPOSIT
REQUIRED

LEARN MORE

Antarctica

SAVE UP TO 30% ON SELECTED 2021 DEPARTURES**



Norway

UP TO \$500 ONBOARD CREDIT ON SELECTED 2021 DEPARTURES**



Book with Confidence COVID19 Impact Clause

If your guests need to change their travel date due to being personally impacted by COVID19 or government travel restrictions, all change fees will be waived. Based on COVID19 Impact

Policy and they will receive a 100% Future Cruise Credit on all monies paid. Rebook anytime up to 30 days prior to travel. For peace of mind, they can choose to cancel under our standard Booking Terms and Conditions hurtigruten.com.au/terms or use the Book with Confidence COVID19 Impact Clause when making a decision.

Call 1300 322 062 | hurtigruten.com.au/offers | APAC@hurtigruten.com

** Book any eligible Antarctica or Norway Coastal sailing departing in 2021 by 30 June 2021. Other Terms and Conditions apply, visit Hurtigruten.com.au/offers for more information.

TRIPFUSER FUNDING WIN



TRAVEL planning marketplace Tripfuser has successfully completed a \$4.5 million funding round, with the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) leading the investment which will help the Australian technology company take its operations to the next level.

The capital raising has also seen former iSelect and Compare the Market CEO Matt McCann locked in as Chief Executive Officer of Tripfuser. McCann welcomed RACV's strategic investment, saying it was "the strongest endorsement for the Tripfuser tailored-travel marketplace and provides a platform for a long-term partnership".

McCann said the disruption created by COVID-19 would create significant opportunities for travel players to deliver new experiences and meet shifting traveller expectations. "Being able to tailor travel experiences using a global network of local experts will be a key capability in a post-COVID-19 world," he said, adding that Tripfuser was positioned to deliver the unique, safe and authentic travel experiences that travellers and travel agents will require to deliver as demand returns.

“
[The investment is] the
strongest endorsement
for the Tripfuser tailored-
travel marketplace and
provides a platform for a
long-term partnership
”

Matt McCann, CEO, Tripfuser

AFTA VIEW



Tom Manwaring, AFTA Chairman,
on behalf of the AFTA Board

IT HAS been a very difficult time for everyone in our industry and it is certainly a relief to see the government's framework for a COVIDsafe Australia, an easing of lockdown restrictions and discussion of intra- and interstate travel.

We're heading in the right direction, but we know that the fight is not over yet. We'd like to reinforce that each and every day AFTA has been working in the interests of members to ensure they remain connected, informed and supported.

From the very beginning the AFTA Board and team have worked consistently to ensure those making the decisions at the most senior levels of Government, from the Prime Minister down, understand the very unique set of pressures travel agents are facing. Pleasingly, it seems our approach is delivering, with senior politicians including Prime Minister Scott Morrison, starting to acknowledge publicly that we are in a unique situation and require additional support.

AFTA like every other business has had to embrace a new cash flow conscience. The AFTA Pitt St sale provided a sound financial footing for members, allowing for the decision to waive Membership Fees for 2020/21 in recognition of the impact.

The ability of the AFTA team to proactively and effectively deliver for members is a tribute to them and to former CEO Jayson Westbury. Jayson built a team of highly skilled and well connected professionals, and that's just part of his legacy for which we are all very thankful.

The search for a new CEO is well underway and there's already a great deal of interest. The AFTA membership base and the Board reflect the reality that the majority of travel agencies in this country are independently owned and operated. The incoming CEO must represent the diversity of our sector and be able to ensure AFTA has a unified and united voice as we engage with government, suppliers and other sectors to promote travel and travel agents.

Now more than ever, we need to keep working together to ensure positive outcomes for the industry and travel agents.

IT'S TIME TO PLAN A RESTART

THE release of the Tourism Restart Timetable last month sparked hope in the industry by mapping a road to recovery.

Laid out by the Tourism Restart Taskforce, the timetable offered a timeline for when various sectors of the industry could begin moving out of hibernation.

Australian Chamber – Tourism Executive Chair and member of the Tourism Restart Taskforce John Hart told *travelBulletin* the initiative was about providing the industry with markers and identifying when certain milestones would be possible.

This allows the industry and governments to look at what the next step is, and map out what needs to be done to meet these timeframes, he said.

The taskforce has pegged early

July as when Australians could be heading to New Zealand for a holiday, adding that there was a lot of activity going on to plan out what that would look like.

“From the taskforce’s perspective, what we wanted to do is put a line in the sand and say it should be possible from that date,” he said.

Hart said the taskforce was working on a proposal to get “a demonstrational proof of concept flight” up in early July, noting there were several other proposals in the works.

“There’s a lot of stuff that needs to be worked out, but we really need to push to have that worked out sooner rather than later.

“We shouldn’t wait until it’s easy.”

The timetable will be reviewed

at each taskforce meeting and adjusted in response to ongoing health advice and as State Governments make further decisions.

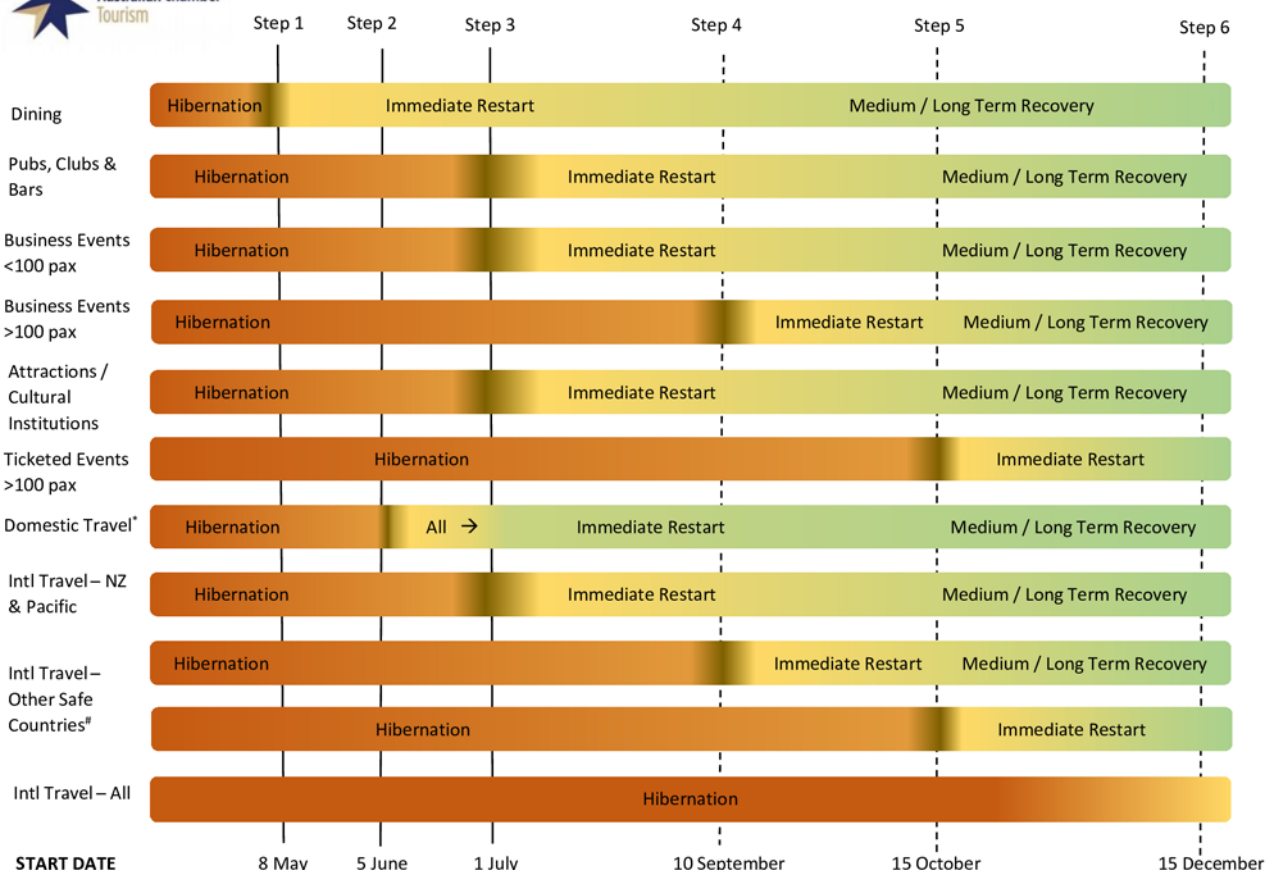
The taskforce has indicated that domestic travel could see an immediate restart from 1 July, but Hart cautioned “the reality is, tourism cannot restart until the state borders are opened”.

Looking further afield, the timetable indicates travel to “other safe countries” is possible by September or October, but it does not envision a full return of international travel until 2021 at the earliest.

Hart said it was too soon to say which market would likely follow New Zealand but noted the taskforce thinks it will be short-haul.



PROPOSED TOURISM RESTART TIMETABLE



* Includes domestic expedition cruises

defined by bilateral health agreement

TTC SERVES UP NEW DOMESTIC OPTIONS

IN A time of upheaval, disappointed customers and overworked agents, The Travel Corporation has been busy expanding its domestic range to allow customers to travel sooner and bring sellers a step closer to their coveted commission.

The company is expanding its range of guided holidays in Australia available across the portfolio of brands, including Trafalgar, Insight Vacations, Luxury Gold and Contiki.

This allows travellers who may have booked an overseas adventure before COVID-19 hit, the chance to instead redeem existing Future Travel Credits on the new range.

The AAT Kings Group will manage the ground handling services for its sister companies in Australia and New Zealand, with Contiki also expanding its trip choices with the additional option of rail in some areas.

Newly promoted AAT Kings Group CEO Matthew Cameron-Smith explained the move sets agents up to generate new revenue sooner.

“What it means is people who are sitting on a credit can actually consume that now, give it to somebody else, or share it with other people, and what that means for agents is it’s clean off their books, that file is closed,” he said.

“It means all the commission settlements are done but also it means that when borders reopen internationally, they can get new revenue.”

Cameron-Smith said the content would be ready to go when state borders open and be followed by New Zealand product, after a trans-Tasman bubble is established and flights resume.

Despite waiting for borders to

reopen, the trips will not need travellers to cross borders.

They will offer itineraries around six or seven days in length and will each operate intrastate.

“

[For agents] it means all the commission settlements are done but also it means that when borders reopen internationally, they can get new revenue

”

Matt Cameron-Smith,
CEO, AAT Kings Group

Under the expanded offering, Trafalgar will introduce six new trips to its Australian collection and Insight will launch five, with Luxury Gold to form part of the Insight Vacation program, and work to leverage its inbound program.

The experiences on offer will be aligned to each brand, delving into food, wine, indigenous culture, and

sustainability.

“These trips are genuinely what Australians want to do in Australia,” Cameron-Smith said.

They will also be able to be booked for private group travel across all brands – an area the company has already seen strong demand for.

The tours will have a group size of around 22, with the company reducing its load factor and incorporating social distancing.

The adjustment comes as The Travel Corporation commits to enhanced COVID-19 protocols and hygiene standards for all its guided holidays once domestic and international travel resumes.

Across its operations, group sizes will be adapted based on government distancing requirements and hotels and restaurants have been vetted to ensure they adhere to physical distancing and hygiene guidelines required in each jurisdiction.

The company has also elevated hygiene protocols and sanitary practices, with staff to be trained in new health procedures and coaches to be cleaned daily.



Have you got what it takes to be an *Amazing Thailand Specialist?*

Sign up to our new learning platform where you can complete a series of modules to increase your destination knowledge and take your Thailand skills from good to great.

With new modules released each fortnight, you'll go on an educational journey spanning all corners of Thailand, picking up some great tips and hints on how and what to sell.

Available now to Australian and New Zealand Travel Agents with quizzes to test your knowledge and prizes up for grabs.

TO LEARN MORE AND TO REGISTER CLICK HERE



Ko Rang, Trat

amazing
THAILAND

A stylized graphic element below the word 'THAILAND', consisting of a thick, curved line that transitions from pink to yellow, resembling a smile or a stylized 'S'.

WHERE TO NO

The shock resignation of AFTA CEO Jayson Westbury last month has come at the worst possible time for the Australian travel industry, which has been the sector of the economy hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. With no clear succession plan, the “hibernation” of the AFTA Chargeback Scheme and no income for the organisation for the next year after suspending its ATAS and membership fees as well as NTIA, what is the future for the Federation? Steve Jones investigates.



W FOR AFTA?

IT WAS an ignoble and untimely end. A momentary lapse, a thoughtless choice of words – spoken out of sheer frustration – and the writing was on the wall for Jayson Westbury.

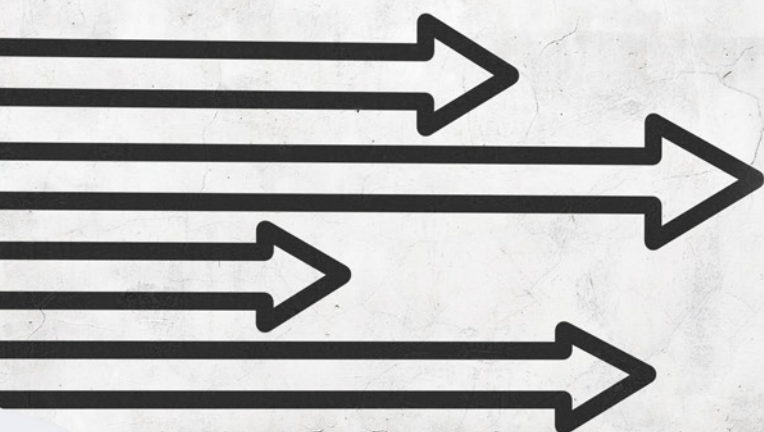
After a near 13-year spell as Chief Executive, the abrupt departure of AFTA's action man was both a personal calamity and industry catastrophe. The fact his exit involved travel's despised adversary, *A Current Affair*, only added to the resentment and deep sense of injustice felt by the agents he represented. Many took to social media to vent their anger, some blaming ACA for continually prodding Westbury and the industry, while others berated the board for failing to stand by their man.

Yet quieter voices accepted that AFTA Chairman Tom Manwaring and the Board were left with little choice. Industry leaders, CEOs, individuals in positions of power and authority simply cannot suggest a woman – whoever that woman may be – deserves physical abuse and expect to remain employed.

Manwaring expressed “deep regret” at the unpalatable corner the Board was forced into, but added: “The Board has a clear charter – to act in the interests of AFTA and our members at all times”.

Nevertheless, it has hugely unsettled AFTA at a time when the industry needs it most. And far from acting in the interests of members, critics of the decision, delivered soon after Westbury's brain-snap went public, argue it has deprived them of their most vocal and doggedly determined campaigner.

So what now for AFTA? No one person is larger than the organisation for which they work. But the feeling is inescapable;





“

It was suggested to him that this would be the best outcome and in deference to him he did not argue. It really would have done a fair bit of damage to AFTA itself [had he remained]

”

Graham Turner, Managing Director, Flight Centre

Westbury was the beating heart and public face of AFTA. He opened doors in Canberra, had links with many trade associations and injected an energy that even his detractors could not question. Will that energy, and the momentum generated over the past decade, vanish with him?

Gil McLachlan, Chief Executive of McLachlan Travel Group, went so far as to suggest Westbury was, indeed, irreplaceable.

“His performance in all areas related to government was extraordinary, and his passion for the industry was conspicuous,” he said. “It’s hard to imagine anyone else living up to his standard in that area.”

Nevertheless, the praise was mixed with frustration that AFTA and Westbury allowed themselves to be cornered by *A Current Affair*, with McLachlan believing the industry had been “let down” during its time of greatest need.

“Whether you blame the Board or the CEO, or both, the industry was taking a beating and this interview was intended to put the record straight. Instead it buried us. Has AFTA engaged a PR company to guide us through this crisis? Surely a PR advisor would have said fronting up is wise, but to keep away from so-called investigative programs where ambushes are routine.”

Flight Centre Managing Director and AFTA Board member Graham Turner agreed that Westbury’s tenure had to be cut short to avoid lasting damage to AFTA’s image. Travel agents have already been portrayed as COVID-19 villains amid the refunds saga. Retaining the services of a leader being condemned for unacceptable language was a risk AFTA was not prepared to take.

“Jayson does occasionally stray

but this was a different case,” Turner told *travelBulletin*. “It was suggested to him that this would be the best outcome and in deference to him he did not argue. It really would have done a fair bit of damage to AFTA itself [had he remained].”

Turner, too, questioned whether someone of his calibre can be adequately replaced, predicting the remit of the role could be narrowed, particularly in a post-COVID world where every organisation will be financially constrained.

“I’d say Jayson is irreplaceable in the role that he played. Everyone is in a world of pain so there probably needs to be a bit of a change in what AFTA is and what it stands for. There is unlikely to be as many resources so the role probably needs to be narrowed and become more specific. Certainly representing the industry in Canberra is very important and that, I suspect, will be the focus.”

Since COVID-19 brought the world to a grinding halt, Westbury has continually been in the ears of politicians, scrapping for whatever assistance he could get to guide agents through the crisis. According to South Australia-based Phil Hoffmann the absence of Westbury’s lobbying is a concern.

Hoffmann also questioned the need to remove the CEO, a view he said was shared by colleagues.

“It was a sad day. I thought they could have rapped him over the knuckles and suspended him for a month,” he said. “Not just me, but other colleagues felt it was severe. It has cost us momentum because he was in full stride.”

Particular anxiety surrounds the extension of the JobKeeper



allowance for the travel industry. With travel widely expected to be the last industry to recover from COVID-19, the September cut off for JobKeeper will come way too early for many struggling firms.

“Jayson was doing some terrific stuff and fighting for JobKeeper to be extended. September is looming so we need someone to be knocking on doors and I am a little nervous of them finding the right person to maintain momentum in what will probably be the hardest year the industry will ever face.”

Hoffman said he expected Manwaring to pick up the pieces. “You need someone talking to the Minister for Tourism and to Scott Morrison. We need to make sure we are getting that representation.”

What does not appear in question is AFTA’s value, and very existence, within the industry eco-system. Senior industry

players unanimously voiced their support, suggesting its efforts during the current crisis alone have demonstrated the need for an independent trade body to protect the interests of travel agents.

McLachlan also pointed to AFTA’s lobbying and marketing efforts, but identified the oversight of ATAS – a scheme he previously opposed – as its key contribution.

“I disagreed with Jayson on deregulation of the industry but now realise he got it spot on,” he said. “AFTA is the only option we have for any degree of industry unity. I see it as having an important role.”

While fearful of the vacuum left by Westbury’s departure, Travel Counsellors Regional Managing Director Kaylene Shuttlewood said AFTA has pulled the industry together “more than I have ever seen before”.

“The webinars and information flows have been excellent. The past few weeks have demonstrated why we are part of AFTA,” she said. “But whoever comes in [to replace Westbury] will need to hit the ground running. They won’t have the luxury of a long handover. Everyone is swimming very deep and we need a captain quickly.”

It is also clear that COVID-19 will throw up numerous challenges as travel adapts to a new reality. The chief concern – and there are many – is how airlines will react.

While Flight Centre and perhaps Helloworld have direct lines of communication with airlines around the world, and possess the muscle to seek an audience with global carriers, smaller independent retailers would simply be cut adrift without a trade body to represent them. In a post-pandemic, cost-cutting world, where airlines are

likely to take another hard look at their trade distribution, such support from industry associations could be critical, Shuttlewood said.

"Smaller IATA agents in Australia wouldn't have much sway with an airline's distribution head office on the other side of the world so they have to band together. That might mean AFTA, ABTA (Association of British Travel Agents) and ASTA (American Society of Travel Advisors) all coming together to present a united front to airlines."

Penny Spencer, Managing Director of Sydney-based Spencer Travel, added her voice to the pro-AFTA lobby, arguing it has a role to play "in everything that is happening now and into the future".

In particular, a likely confrontation with GDSs over cancelled segments and airlines reducing overrides will both require a coordinated response.

"The New Distribution Capability may also raise its ugly head again as airlines pull out of GDS agreements," Spencer warned. "We need AFTA to be our voice along with the agency groups. We are going to need all the help we can get."

Flight Centre's Turner added: "I think everyone accepts that we need a body like AFTA to represent the travel agent sector".

Despite concerns about the immediate future following Westbury's premature exit, Hoffmann echoed Turner's assessment, believing the wealth of experience of the board, coupled with the professionalism of the staff, will enable AFTA to regroup.

Flight Centre and Helloworld, meanwhile, both support AFTA and neither will want the organisation to lose direction, he said. Helloworld Chief Executive Andrew Burnes declined to comment for this article.

“

No organisation should be about one person... the real benefit of a quality CEO is that if they step away at any time the organisation gets stronger and people step up...

”

Tom Manwaring, Chairman,
AFTA

"It's when you have these world issues that AFTA can shine," Hoffmann said. "In the last 12 weeks a lot of the smaller members have really appreciated the work AFTA has been doing on their behalf. That's why I was disappointed to lose that momentum because it can take a while to build. We've had to fight so many wholesaler collapses, some of them overseas, and to have AFTA pulling people together has been fantastic."

And pulling together is exactly how AFTA Chairman Tom Manwaring sees the immediate and longer term future for the Federation.

While dealing with his CEO's misdemeanour, and the fallout from it, has been "extremely difficult", particularly given the industry's desperate plight, Manwaring insisted AFTA has never

been about one man.

He may have been the public, vociferous face of AFTA, but picking up where Westbury left off has been less unsettling than some may believe, Manwaring claimed. Many board members have well-established and top level contacts in Canberra, and the staff who turn the wheels in Market Street have strong credentials, he said.

"No organisation should be about one person," Manwaring told *travelBulletin*. "That doesn't take anything away from Jayson's outstanding record, but the real benefit of a quality CEO is that if they step away at any time the organisation gets stronger and people step up. That is exactly what is happening now. Jayson was the front guy who did a superb job but behind him was an excellent team."

"The board is stepping up, I am stepping up and the office is stepping up. We are all taking on extra responsibilities, and that's fine. Everyone has picked up the ball. The ministers in Canberra, the Treasury, the Reserve Bank, we've all picked that up and are dealing with them on a daily basis. And this follows on from the excellent work that we did in February and March. This isn't something that has happened in the last week."

Manwaring has, unsurprisingly, taken the lead in key discussions, in conjunction with AFTA's strategy head Courtney Duddleston, AFTA's Acting GM of Operations.

Meanwhile, the recruitment process for a new CEO is expected to be completed in late July, with Manwaring anticipating the remit will be a little different from Westbury's. Replicating his strengths in Canberra, with state governments and tourism bodies will be a critical requirement, he said, while developing a close relationship with IATA will also

be imperative.

“For the first year or two the focus will be on Australian issues and the membership,” he said. “But that doesn’t mean it will stay narrow in focus as the new normal takes hold.”

Manwaring conceded that, like every organisation the world over, AFTA will need to prioritise in the aftermath of the coronavirus epidemic. The waiving of membership fees in 2020 – which, together with accreditation fees, pulled in \$2.16m in 2019 – will leave a sizeable hole in its revenue. The cancellation of the national awards will further hit income.

Yet a decision made in the 2019 financial year now looks inspired and, according to Manwaring, provided AFTA with financial security.

“The forefathers of AFTA bought the office in Pitt Street which the current board decided to sell at the absolute peak of the market,” he explained. “That was good management, but also luck. We sold it for a large sum and that will ensure AFTA has a solid financial footing in the coming years.

“Many not-for-profit organisations around the world are in dire straits, so we are fortunate. Waiving the fees will clearly diminish a positive result but we are still financially solid.”

Nevertheless, spending will be curtailed, with high profile – and expensive – TV marketing campaigns of the past two years likely to be dialled back.

Predictably, Manwaring was bullish about AFTA’s future, and insisted large companies represented on the board – Flight

Centre, Helloworld and CTM – have been “nothing but supportive”. In addition, despite the heavyweight nature of the board, he claimed each member has not lost sight of the “corner shop” agency.

“Don’t forget, many of them have come from small businesses. Flight Centre used to small,” Manwaring said. He also singled out AFTA’s training and its role in unearthing “more qualified business people to lead travel businesses”.

According to Dennis Bunnik, Chairman of the Council of Australian Tour Operators, among the most valuable functions of a trade association is the ability to bring an industry together.

All CATO members, from the largest tour operators down to small destination specialists, are using the resources of CATO in equal measure during the current crisis, he said.

“An industry association provides independence and external credibility,” Bunnik added. “A company lobbying on its own is, in essence, just one company. An association lobbying for the entire industry is when you get results.”

It is a view shared by Manwaring, who said it was “critical that members stick with AFTA and get behind us so we can act with a single voice”.

“The stronger AFTA is as one voice for the industry, the more impact we will have in Canberra.

“We are pitching against thousands of businesses and organisations who, like us, are standing at the Treasury door. The only way we have a point of difference is if we continue to make headway through the formal processes and speak with a united voice.”

Unfortunately for all concerned, Jayson Westbury’s voice is no longer among them.

Replicating Jayson Westbury’s strengths in Canberra and with state governments and tourism bodies will be a key requirement of the incoming CEO’s role.



HEALTH AND HYGIENE THE NEW STAPLE OF CRUISING



THERE'S no secret the cruise industry has a large job ahead of it to tempt travellers back onto ships, and many cruise lines have gotten out in front of the problem during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A multitude of lines have drawn new health & hygiene concepts, beginning with A-ROSA, with the German operator the first cruise line to resume sailing in June.

Created by the A-ROSA care team, the concept considers the pandemic regulations of the individual countries through which the ships pass, and includes enhanced cleaning procedures, the wearing of mouth and nose coverings in public spaces, pre-screening and temperature checks prior to embarkation, meals to be served at tables at set times, and the reduction of excursion numbers.

Other measures include a minimum social distance of 1.5m ship-wide; aisles as "one-way-streets"; the enhancement of hygiene logs; disinfectants at all entrances; and access to the ship by external persons to be kept to the necessary minimum.

Avalon Waterways has also unveiled its "path forward to welcome aboard", developing a new Avalon Assurance program

with seven major categories and protocols which span all guest experience touchpoints, including, "welcome aboard", "fresh air", "new technology to ensure cleanliness", "touching hearts, not hands", "blending cultural proximity with social distance", "commitment to the cleanest ships", and "focus on crew health and education".

Hurtigruten, which has committed to phasing in its operations from the middle of June, has implemented a similar plan, with six points, divided into three under "what you do", and three under "what we do".

Hurtigruten's passengers will be required to stay safe with health questionnaires, keep their distance around the ship, and wash their hands diligently.

The cruise line has committed to strict cleaning practices, high knowledge – with all crew members undergoing a health check and completing the World Health Organization's COVID-19 course – and more food service seating sessions and individual plating.

Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection's enhanced health and safety procedure come with the promise of every protocol of interaction having been checked

by President and Chief Executive Officer Ellen Bettridge.

The Uniworld boss said common "welcoming" practices, such as candy jars in the lounge and coffee table books are now part of the everyday experiences that are being reimagined across the company.

"We have been scrupulous in our process to consider every moment that may present an unnecessary concern and why all coffee table books, magazines and brochures for example, have been removed from public use...instead, guests will be able to access these reading materials via our complimentary PressReader app on their personal devices," said Bettridge.

Other companies to have implemented new health and hygiene concepts include Norwegian Cruise Line, which said its new protocols, focusing on six key areas of health and safety, could necessitate itinerary changes, with the line committing to "only visit safe, open ports of call".

Celebrity Cruises and Genting have also added new hygiene and safety concepts, and Cruise Lines International Association in the process of developing an industry-wide standard.

We can't wait TO WELCOME YOU ON BOARD AGAIN

Like your clients, we dream of seeing new shorelines on the horizon. Experiencing new cultures. Savouring new flavours. Meeting people far and wide and realising we aren't so different after all. The moment these dreams become reality, we'll be ready to welcome your clients back.

Until then, the world is changing, and we're changing with it. We're taking extraordinary measures to help everyone stay healthy and safe when we do set sail. That's our top priority—so booking the best holidays can be yours.

#WeCantWait



Celebrity **X** Cruises®
SAIL BEYOND®

CALL 1-800-745-500

CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL ADVISOR

VISIT [CELEBRITY.COM/AU](https://www.celebrity.com/au)

©2020 Celebrity Cruises Inc. Ships' registry: Malta and Ecuador.

SILVERSEA POISED FOR RETURN

SILVERSEA Cruises has confirmed it continues to work on deploying its flagship *Silver Muse* and expedition vessel *Silver Explorer* in Australasian waters at the end of the year, in expectation that current restrictions on local cruising will have been eased by then.

Speaking to *travelBulletin* late last month, the company's local Managing Director Adam Armstrong said "they're ideally sized ships to get into all the ports of call around Australia and New Zealand, so if the bubble is expanded to include

cruise...we've got two ships ready and waiting, ready to go". Armstrong also confirmed the impact of concerted local negative coverage of the cruise sector in mainstream media, saying the company's Australasian booking curve was behind other markets in Europe and the USA which are showing some signs of recovery.

Armstrong takes up his new role as Global CEO of Contiki this month, with Silversea announcing he would be replaced by former Qatar Airways country manager Adam Radwanski to lead the local team.



ULTRAMARINE FLOATS OUT IN CROATIA

QUARK Expedition's *Ultramarine* floated out from its Brodosplit shipyard in Croatia mid-last month, with the ship thus far still on time for an end-of-year delivery despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ultramarine is scheduled to make her debut in the Canadian Arctic next year, with the €106m (A\$177m) polar expedition ship now 70% complete.

The ship is the country's "largest export product", according to Croatian Minister of Economy Darko Horvat, with Quark Expeditions Director of Sales Asia Pacific Jarrod Zurvas also expressing enthusiasm for the project, noting the shipyard's punctuality.

The ship is designed to be "a pioneering mix of advanced sustainability features," and will include a range of cutting-edge technologies aimed at reducing its carbon footprint.

"*Ultramarine* has been issued CLEAN certification by DNV GL, the world's largest resource of independent

energy experts, and TIER III status by the International Maritime Organization," said Quark Expeditions Vice President of Sales Thomas Lennartz.



New CLIA Chair

GAVIN Smith, Royal Caribbean International Managing Director Australia & New Zealand has been named Chair of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia, replacing the outgoing Sture Myrmell, with the four-year term of the Carnival Australia & P&O Australia President expiring.

The appointment was made at CLIA's Annual General Meeting.

Domestic expedition resumption?

DOMESTIC expedition cruising has been included in a proposed tourism restart timetable, which was agreed upon by the Tourism Restart Taskforce late last month.

The timeframe proposed expeditions to restart with the rest of domestic travel from 5 June, although no operator has yet recommenced its itineraries.

Ponant said it "would welcome" the opportunity for expedition operations to recommence, with the cruise line's ship *Le Laperouse* waiting in New Caledonia to resume operations.

New Silversea MD

SILVERSEA has announced its new Managing Director Asia-Pacific is former Qatar Airways Senior Manager Australasia Adam Radwanski.

He took up his new role at the beginning of the month, with the cruise line's President & Chief Executive Officer Roberto Martinoli welcoming Radwanski.

"Adam's wealth of leadership experience will contribute to our cruise line's continued growth in the Asia-Pacific Region," he said.



CLIA VIEW

Joel Katz, Managing Director
CLIA Australasia

COMMUNITIES ARE KEY ON THE PATH TO RECOVERY

PLANS for a revival of domestic tourism in Australia are a welcome step forward after the shutdowns forced by COVID-19. The thousands of tourism businesses hit hardest by travel restrictions are in many cases critical to their local communities, bringing economic opportunities and employment to the farthest corners of the country.

These businesses are also vital to other parts of the tourism economy, like cruising, which relies upon hundreds of local operators in destinations around Australia.

Although cruising remains in suspension, CLIA is firmly behind efforts to restore tourism operations on shore. These operations will be an important factor in our own recovery when the time is right.

With this in mind, CLIA has been holding industry updates to help inform stakeholders nationally on the work being

done to develop a global health framework to uphold the safety of passengers, crew and the communities we visit.

Working with health experts internationally, the cruise industry is planning robust new screening protocols, expanded cleaning and sanitation practices for ships and terminals, and comprehensive measures for prevention, surveillance, and response on board.

When cruising resumes, we expect it will take place in a regional, phased-in manner. By preparing comprehensive new health protocols, we will be able to present them to governments and health authorities in Australia and New Zealand, and discuss how resumption will look.

There is still much work to be done, but when the time comes to sail again we will be able to return our support for many communities, and for the 18,000 Australian workers whose jobs are reliant on cruising.



HEADLINES MAY 2020

- 04 May** Silversea name new MD Asia-Pacific
- 07 May** Princess cancels remainder of season
- 15 May** Carnival's new cost-saving measures
- 18 May** Cruiseco sees reason for optimism
- 20 May** Silversea preps for "cruise bubble"
- 25 May** Ocean cruise ban extended to Sep
- 27 May** Expedition cruising in Aus from Jun

GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD

With the world of international travel temporarily on hold, there is no better time to explore some of Australia's best kept secrets during your next domestic holiday adventure, writes Adam Bishop.



MONTHS of being cooped up at home under lockdown has left many of us with itchy feet, craving an exhilarating adventure in the great outdoors, and there is arguably no better place to fulfil this longed-for ambition than in the majesty of South Australia's long and windy roads.

This vast and majestic state is home to hundreds of amazing road trip adventures, perfect for Aussies wanting to break the shackles of their non-stop Zoom calls and adopted lives as bored sofa spuds.

South Australia boasts a seemingly endless amount of picture-perfect coastline, coupled with otherworldly outback terrain and rugged bushland, just some of the alluring landscapes you will see during your leisurely car trips.

In between checking off some

of the state's natural wonders like the jaw-dropping Flinders Ranges, the tranquil banks of the Murray River and beautiful Limestone Coast, you will have all the time in the world to pull up and stay a while longer in some of the country's most revered food and drink regions. Whether it's enjoying a glass of wine in Barossa or checking out the nightlife in Adelaide, there is no better place to throw your bags in the boot and hit the open road.

THE EPICUREAN WAY

The Epicurean Way links together four of South Australia's most touted wine regions; McLaren Vale, Adelaide Hills, the Barossa and the Clare Valley. There really is no comparable journey anywhere else in the country, providing an unparalleled number of pit stops

which provide a diverse array of local produce together with a superb collection of wines.

On this four-day trip, it is difficult to know what will need to run faster, your car as it bombs along the highway, or your metabolism as you eat your way through the state at some of the best wineries and restaurants in Australia.

Highlights along the way include the d'Arenberg winery on the Adelaide to McLaren Vale leg of the journey, where you'll be able to play winemaker for a day and take home what you have made. Also on offer is the Blessed Cheese shop in McLaren Vale which is one part delicatessen, one part cafe, and three parts delicious.

The Epicurean Way trip also provides a touch of German culture, with a stop in the picturesque town of Hahndorf an absolute must during the drive



Images clockwise from opposite page: Wilpena Pound, Flinders Ranges ©SATC; D'Arenberg's famous cube ©SATC; dining at The Lane Vineyard ©Adelaide Hills Wine Region; the charming town of Hahndorf ©SATC



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

from McLaren Vale to the Adelaide Hills. This delightful European-style town is brimming with culinary delights, from traditional German bakeries, European lolly shops and a range of festive German pubs where you can wash down delicious freshly baked pretzels with a stein of German lager. Before you go, don't forget to pick a few fresh strawberries for the car trip at Beerenberg Farm and enjoy a glass of wine with lunch at The Lane Vineyard Restaurant.

Another must-see along this iconic stretch of road is a visit to the famous Maggie Beer's Farm Shop in Nuriootpa, a delightfully quaint destination to spend an hour or two gazing at the rolling hills. Here you will be able to buy and sample some of Maggie's fresh produce along with a nice cup of coffee or glass of wine, and watch some of the local ducks frolic in a nearby lake from the café's wide glass windows.

EXPLORERS WAY

The desert meets the sea when you jump in the car and travel along Explorers Way, a whopping 3,000km journey boasting breath-taking scenery that beautifully entwines the rich history of South Australia with the dramatic Australian backdrop and abundance of native wildlife.

Start your engines in Adelaide and make your way towards the beautiful Clare Valley, renowned for its Riesling wines. Adventurers can recharge their batteries with a restful stop in Auburn where they can visit some of the many wineries and cellar doors in the region such as Skillogalee and Sevenhill. The opportunity to step back in time at the gorgeous Georgian mansion Martindale Hall is also on offer during this historic



Images from top: Berry picking at Beerenberg Farm ©SATC; camping at Rawnsley Park Station in the Flinders Ranges ©SATC; take in the rolling vineyards in the Clare Valley and stop in at cellar doors like Skillogalee ©John Montesi

Opposite page: Cool off at the remote Brachina Gorge ©SATC



leg of the trip, as is a visit to the copper mining town of Burra.

Humming north, Explorers Way will take you through the Flinders Ranges, the largest of its kind in the state and located about 200km north of Adelaide. Alligator Gorge in Mount Remarkable National Park is a definite highlight, with travellers able to stay in luxury eco-villas at Rawnsley Park Station or Ikara safari tents at Wilpena Pound Resort, as well as campgrounds where visitors can set up their own tents. Where's the best place to enjoy the view? Well, your best bets are the Razorback Lookout in Bunyeroo Gorge or Stokes Hill Lookout, but if it's the unique wildlife you seek, then make sure to have a wander around the remote Brachina Gorge to try and catch a glimpse of the nimble-footed yellow-footed rock wallaby.

The final legs of this trip will see road warriors ensconced in the stony treeless desert and the scarp terrain of the Stuart Ranges near the small township of Coober Pedy, and for those brave enough for more of Australia's amazing red desert, you can travel west from the South Australian town of Marla in search of the iconic Uluru.



FLINDERS BUSH RETREATS,
FLINDERS RANGES & OUTBACK

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

From luxury lodges to remote hotels, striking clifftops to underwater gardens, degustation dining to provenance experiences South Australia has it all on offer. Thousands of unique journeys all begin within Adelaide's awe-inspiring city – curious yet?



AGENT KNOW HOW

travelBulletin sat down with South Australia Tourism Commission to learn how agents can sell this domestic destination.

How can travel agents improve their product knowledge of South Australia?

Travel agents can visit the dedicated [SATC trade website](#) that hosts operator information, itineraries and a variety of training materials. There is a wealth of information on that website to help expand agents knowledge of the state. You can also subscribe to [SA Snippets](#) to stay up to date with the latest trade news from SA.

What kind of training is available to Australian agents wanting to sell South Australia and how can they sign up for it?

Training material is located on the [SA Experts](#) page of the trade website and agents can sign up for future webinars, watch recordings and take the SA Expert quizzes.

What activities/itineraries/destinations would you recommend for first time travellers?

For a first-time trip to South Australia it will depend on the time available. If visiting for a long weekend we have a suggested itinerary called the [best of Adelaide and Kangaroo Island](#) which is a great introduction to South Australia. However, a weekend is certainly not enough time to see the incredible diversity of the State and our suggested eight-day [best of South Australia](#) itinerary is a great introduction to everything South Australia has to offer.

What makes South Australia a unique destination?

It really is a destination that has it all. Relax with a glass of wine in one of the many diverse wine regions, discover ancient megafauna in World Heritage listed caves, get up close and personal to a Great White with a shark cage dive, go star gazing in the Riverland's Dark Sky reserve or play on the longest golf course in the world on the Nullarbor. There really is something for everyone and all with touching distance of the vibrant City of Adelaide.

TAKE YOUR STAY TO LOFTY HEIGHTS

TRAVELLERS to Adelaide Hills will have another luxury option to consider in September, with the anticipated opening of Sequoia.

Located on the Mt Lofty House Estate, Sequoia will offer 14 suites with stunning views over Piccadilly Valley and hills of the area, 75m² of space to relax and unwind in, a gas fireplace, king-sized bed, balcony with day bed and dining setting, bathroom with free-standing bathtub and private access to certain garden areas and a club lounge with heated plunge pool.



Stretch your legs in Fleurieu

WITH all of us being cooped up at home for the last few months, travellers may want to really stretch those legs out on their next trip, and South Australia offers the perfect opportunity to cycle through nature, with a number of trails and paths across the state.

For cyclists of all levels of experience, the Encounter Bikeway on the Fleurieu Peninsula is a great fit. The trail links the heritage towns of Goolwa, Port Elliot and Middleton with Victor Harbour, over a total of 31km one way. It's a flat path, with a mix of on-road and shared pathway sections and travellers can choose to ride the whole way or just shorter distances between towns.

Bike hire is also available for those who don't want to bring their own.

SEALINK RAMPS UP SOUTH AUSTRALIA

MANY of SeaLink's South Australia operations are ramping up again, with the announcement of local travel restrictions being lifted.

Kangaroo Island is likely to see a boost in tourism numbers with SeaLink offering special self-drive

packages and discount vouchers for key tourist attractions and eateries including the Oyster Farm Shop, Kangaroo Island Wildlife Park and False Cape Wines.

The self-drive packages combine ferry tickets and accommodation

deals for visitors taking their own car. A three-night package starts at \$327pp, with travellers staying three nights for the price of two. More offers can be found at www.sealink.com.au/loveki.

The company is also hopeful that the paddlewheeler *PS Murray Princess*, which operates under the Captain Cook Cruises brand, will resume cruising from mid to late July.

The paddlewheeler is the largest of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere and is fitted with 60 cabins. The vessel is expected to recommence with reduced passenger numbers, with Captain Cook Cruises following social distancing and Cruise Well guidelines.



Pennington Bay, Kangaroo Island ©SeaLink

TRAVEL *Better*

OUTBACK ADVENTURE

Code: **NAAD**

Devour delights at Adelaide Central Market, taste the wines of Clare Valley, explore the rugged Flinders Ranges, learn the ancient stories of Uluru and dive into the lush Wangi Falls at Litchfield National Park.

A 15 DAY DISCOVERY FROM ADELAIDE TO THE TOP END

From **\$6,475*** pp twin share

AATKings
Bringing Australia & New Zealand to life



Clare Valley

For more information visit trade.aatking.com or call our experts on 1300 556 100.

Inspiring Journeys

Flavours of South Australia

An indulgent long weekend

Adelaide • Barossa Valley • Adelaide Hills • McLaren Vale



Coming soon for 2021

#EmptyEsky

InspiringJourneys.com/trade-hub

Image courtesy of d'arenberg

INSPIRING TASTE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

TRAVELLERS will once again be able to experience the best of South Australia, with Inspiring Journeys Flavours of South Australia itinerary back in 2021, taking in the best of the Festival State over five days.

Travelling through Adelaide, the Barossa Valley, the Adelaide Hills, and McLaren Vale, and leaning heavily on the fantastic gastronomy and oenology the state has to offer, the itinerary also offers four stays in three

of the state's most stunning accommodations.

Day one sees guests arrive in Adelaide at Adabco Boutique Hotel on Wakefield Street, where guests will explore the city via caddy, and enjoy a four-course roaming dinner in Adelaide Central Markets, while day two takes travellers to the Barossa for a stay at Novotel Barossa Valley Resort, and a visit to Seppeltsfield winery for a private Village Discovery Tour.

Day three features a stay at The Manna by Haus in Hahndorf, in the Adelaide Hills, and a visit to Melbas Chocolates, as well as a range of local wineries and local producers supporting and working with the #EmptyEsky movement. The final day of the itinerary returns to Adabco, after an exploration of the Fleurieu Peninsula and a visit to quirky d'Arenberg, before returning home the next day.

CLICK HERE for more details.



ANCIENT VINES IN THE CLARE VALLEY

SOUTH Australia is often synonymous with wine – the state's climate provides the perfect conditions for grapes to grow. There are over 200 cellar doors on Adelaide's doorstep, making it one of only nine Great Wine Capitals of the World, along side France's Bordeaux and Napa Valley in the US.

But venture just a little further from Adelaide and you'll find the Clare Valley, renowned for its Riesling wines which rate as some of the best in Australia and the world.

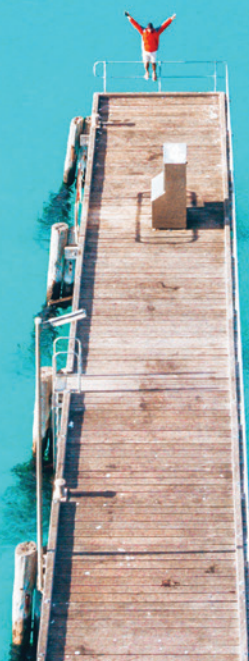
Pay a visit to Sevenhill Cellars, which is the oldest winery in the Clare Valley, established in 1851 by Jesuits to produce sacramental wine. Today the winery is still owned by the Jesuits and produces award-winning table wine, as well as sacramental drops. Recently named as Australia's Best Large Cellar Door in the Clare Valley, travellers can visit the

old stone winery and cellar door, along with the stately St Aloysius' Church and College building on the grounds. Wine tastings and guided tours of the estate are offered during normal times.



HOLIDAY  THIS YEAR

KANGAROO ISLAND YOU'LL LOVE IT



Mother Nature is bouncing back and the island is looking spectacular right now.

We'd love to see you soon – now that we can!

SELF-DRIVE PACKAGES - 4 DAY/3 NIGHTS FROM \$327PP*

Includes return ferry travel with your car and 3 nights self-contained accommodation,
plus discount vouchers for attractions, cafés and cellar doors.

FOR BOOKINGS CALL 13 13 01 OR VISIT [SEALINK.COM.AU](https://sealink.com.au)

SEALINK

A *Brilliant* TRAVELS EXPERIENCE

*Conditions apply. Twin share. Travel 1 June to 31 August 2020.

SUDOKU

Tricky

The aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Each number can only be used once in each row, column, 3x3 box.

5				8	9		3	4
		6				8	7	
							5	
				3		7		
		9	4		1	2		
		8		7				
	1							
	9	2				4		
8	6		3	4				9

www.sudokuoftheday.com – visit them and get a new Sudoku every day!

Funnies Flashback

We've trawled through the *Travel Daily Window Seat* archives to give you blast from the past. Here's a gem from 24 Feb 2012:

VISITORS to Bratislava in Slovakia may be sorely disappointed if they're looking for some authentic local culture.

A public poll to decide on the official title for a new pedestrian and cycling bridge which crosses the Morava River to Austria has seen overwhelming support for it to be named after Hollywood action star and martial arts exponent Chuck Norris.

Although the final decision is up to a regional council, local governor Pavol Freso said it was likely the name will comply with the wishes of the people expressed in the internet ballot.

FUNNY FESTIVALS

UNDERWATER MUSIC FESTIVAL, FLORIDA KEYS

COVID restrictions mean the festival may not go ahead this year, but travellers will hopefully still in the future be able to enjoy the unusual spectacle of the Underwater Music Festival, which is held at Looe Key Reef in the Florida Keys during July.

The festivities include costumed performers and mermaids playing artist-sculpted mock instruments such as a 'manta-lin' or a 'trom-bonefish', while a pre-selected radio playlist is streamed live from underwater.

Of course the festival is best viewed under the waves, so make sure to book a spot with a local dive or boat operator, grab some fins and snorkel or dive down to take in the spectacle.



©Destination Florida

Are your clients ready for a snow holiday?

Whether they are ski-bunnies or never seen snow before, inspire their trip to the Australian ski fields with *keep dreaming...*

The special ski edition includes features on all the major Australian ski resorts, plus accommodation options and more.

CLICK HERE TO VIEW



Travel & Cruise
Weekly

WE'RE WITH YOU

In this unprecedented time in which we are living, we remain committed to supporting you in the travel industry and continue to bring you the latest updates and news. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to keep up-to-date.



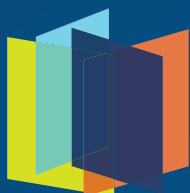
www.facebook.com/TravelDaily



[@traveldailyau](https://www.instagram.com/traveldailyau)

travelBulletin

Part of the Business Publishing Group



**BUSINESS
PUBLISHING
GROUP**

Travel  Daily

Travel & Cruise
Weekly

travelBulletin

Pharmacy
 Daily

 **CRUISE**
WEEKLY

 business events news