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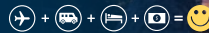
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VIEW DETAILS

NZ mega famil

TRAVEL consultants from across Australia are being invited to register for next year's Tourism New Zealand mega-famil.

One hundred agents will take part in 10 customised itineraries exploring NZ from top to bottom, with the trip to be conducted in partnership with Air NZ.

More details on the **cover page**.

Iceland air merger

ICELANDAIR Group has announced the acquisition of rival carrier WOW air, with the carriers to have a combined transatlantic market share of 3.8%.

The deal is subject to official approval, and both carriers will continue to operate under separate brands.

A statement said the deal "creates opportunities for both companies to become even better prepared to provide international carriers with strong competition".

New ownership for Bestjet

ONLINE travel agency Bestjet has been 100% purchased by the McVicker Investment Group (**TD** breaking news), with the new owners confirming the family of founder Rachel James will no longer have a stake in the firm.

The deal, for an undisclosed amount, also includes Wynyard Travel and Broadway Travel, with the new owners previously selling out of Morris Corporation which supplied catering services to remote locations including in Iraq.

Bestjet controversially battled AFTA in court in 2016 after its ATAS accreditation was cancelled due to its failure to satisfy the "fit and proper person" requirements.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has eight pages of news, including a front cover wrap for **Tourism New Zealand**, a photo page for **Abu Dhabi** plus a page from:

- TMS Talent/inPlace

Robert McVicker Junior said he would now consider ATAS accreditation for Bestjet, telling **TD** "we will review and pursue anything that will bring a benefit to the business".

The most recently released Bestjet figures indicate that in 2015/16 it made a \$928,000 profit with TTV of \$231 million.

ASIC records detailing the new ownership had not been updated as **TD** went to press today.

DriveAway launch

DRIVEAWAY Holidays has confirmed that in 2019 it will offer the Peugeot Open Europe, Renault Eurodrive, Citroen Euro Pass and DS Euro Pass programs as preferred products.

The European vehicle long-term hire programs offer over 60 brand new vehicles suitable for trips of 21 days or more, with freedom to travel to over 40 countries - see driveaway.com.au/euro-drive.

Brunel to Entire

CAROLINE Brunel has been appointed as the new Director of Marketing for Entire Travel Group.

Brunel has been at GTI Tourism for five years, currently as Head of Strategy, and prior to that was with Tourism Ireland for 13 years.

Entire Travel Group's "Travel Connection" brands cover France, New Caledonia, Spain, Portugal, Canada & Alaska, Switzerland, Tahiti and the Maldives as well as Barge Travel Connection and CIT Holidays, which is also now branded as Italy Travel Connection.

AZ to Washington

ITALIAN flag carrier Alitalia has opened reservations for a new five times weekly service to debut next year between Rome and Washington D.C.

The new route will operate from 02 May 2019, with the expansion seeing the reinstatement of direct Alitalia flights between the cities for the first time since 2005.

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CTM halts again

CORPORATE Travel Management shares were once again placed into a trading halt this morning, after the company became aware of a supplementary report by hedge fund VGI (**TD** breaking news). CTM last week comprehensively answered 20 "red flags" raised by VGI in a previous report, and said it believed the new document did not raise any substantive new issues. However the company had its shares suspended so it could make a comprehensive response and ensure the market was kept fully informed. CTM is expected to address any issues raised either later today or tomorrow, with the suspension to be lifted before 10am on Thu.

China Eastern NSW deal

THE NSW Government has announced a new Memorandum of Understanding with China Eastern Airlines, as part of an ongoing strategy to boost inbound visitation from the burgeoning Chinese market. NSW Minister for Tourism and Major Events Adam Marshall said the MoU would see investment in marketing campaigns, familiarisations and new itineraries to drive arrivals to Sydney and regional NSW. Seven Chinese cities are being targeted as part of the initiative, including Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Xi'an, Wuhan and Kunming. "Boosting visitation from more Chinese cities not only provides direct access to our beautiful Harbour City, but encourages dispersal into our incredible rural and regional destinations, turbocharging local economies," Marshall enthused. He said the formalised China Eastern agreement would provide "unprecedented opportunities"

AY leisure routes

FINNAIR has released details of its summer 2019 season, including the addition of Porto, Bologna and Bordeaux to its European network ex Helsinki. Finnair Regional Manager Arnaud Michelin said some schedules would offer ideal connections from AY's range of Asian gateways.

to leverage the China market. MU has a longstanding codeshare agreement with Qantas Airways, with the carrier's Deputy Manager of Customer Committee, Liu Hao, saying "as one of China's top airlines serving nearly 100 million travellers each year, we look forward to continuing the momentum with the NSW Government". Over the past five years tourism from China to New South Wales has more than doubled to 793,000 visitors, with spending up 153% to \$3.4 billion.

Crystal 2021 out

CRYSTAL River Cruises has announced its full 2021 season, claiming to be the first river cruise company to open reservations almost three years in advance. In 2021 the line's five vessels: *Crystal Mozart, Bach, Debussy, Mahler* and *Ravel*, will sail the Danube, Rhine, Main and Moselle rivers on itineraries ranging from seven to 16 days. Crystal will offer 45 individual ports of call, and each cruise will feature at least one overnight stay, according to Crystal MD Australasia Karen Christensen. She said the launch of the offerings for 2019, 2020 and now 2021 allowed luxury travellers to secure their ideal European journeys earlier than ever, with "book now" savings also available. For info call 1300 059 260.

Air NZ hip hopping

AIR New Zealand has launched its latest safety video, with the rap-themed flight instructions featuring a cast of 600 Kiwis from 30 community groups across the country. The video also stars NZ actor Julian Dennison, and was filmed at a range of locations including Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin, Hokitika, Naseby and Balclutha - traveldaily.com.au/videos.

EK A380 to Athens

EMIRATES will deploy one of its Airbus A380s on the Dubai-Athens route next year, with GDS screens indicating reservations open for the daily three-class superjumbo flights now scheduled as EK103/104 from 31 May-30 Sep 2019.



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Backing for visa changes

THE tourism industry has welcomed planned changes to the working holiday visa scheme, saying the measures will help reinstate Australia's standing as a backpacker destination.

The Federal Government yesterday announced it would increase the number of visas available under the working holiday scheme, while at the same time allowing visitors to extend their stay in order to take up farming work in rural areas.

Immigration Minister David Coleman said the move would help resolve labour shortages.

"These incentives will encourage more workers to the regions that need them and provide working holiday makers with more flexibility, as well as the opportunity to experience living and working in Australia's rural communities," he said.

Australian Tourism Export

Council (ATEC) Managing Director Peter Shelley said the changes would strengthen a long-standing avenue of travel for young visitors to Australia.

"Working holiday visas have long been a great way of engaging young visitors and building a relationship with people which often lasts a lifetime and ATEC has been a long standing advocate for changes which support and recognise the value of this market," Shelley said.

YHA Australia CEO Julian Ledger said the changes should encourage more young working holiday makers to visit Australia.

"The number of young people coming to Australia on working holidays has steadily declined over the past five years," he said.

"Young people have choice and Australia must compete with other destinations to attract these visitors."

Japan & the Cherry Blossoms

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MORE INFO

Mel Cup takes flight

TRAVELLERS who find themselves mid-air at 3pm today will be able to watch the Melbourne Cup live on their personal devices aboard wi-fi enabled Qantas domestic flights.

The race will be available via streaming provider oOh! which will also display a live cup broadcast on screens in Qantas Clubs, Domestic Business Lounges and on the Collect and Connect TV screens at baggage carousels in the five major capitals.

The streaming services are part of an expanded promotional campaign by Melbourne Cup sponsor Lexus.

MEANWHILE the Qantas Learning Hub is offering travel agents a virtual training session on its trans-Tasman and South-West Pacific services.

The 15-minute webinar will be available at four times during the day on 14 Nov.

CLICK HERE for details.



Window Seat

A STRUGGLING island off the coast of Taiwan has used kitty power to rejuvenate its struggling economy and ramp up its tourism appeal.

Hujung came up with the novel idea of using its hundreds of stray cats to successfully lure thousands of new visitors, making it the cat's pyjamas among odd tourist attractions.

But now that the cat is out of the bag about the alluring power of felines, it's time for an Aussie town to show some curiosity and follow suit.

It's not as though curiosity has ever hurt anyone, right?



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Leaning Andaz hotel

HYATT has introduced its Andaz brand to the Middle East with the opening of the Andaz Capital Gate Abu Dhabi.

Located in the upper section of the 160m tall Capital Gate building - also known as the "Leaning Tower of Abu Dhabi" - the hotel offers 189 rooms between levels 18 and 33.

Built in 2011, the tower has an 18-degree incline and overlooks the Abu Dhabi waterfront.

Virgin NZ support

VIRGIN Australia has announced a selection of new organisations it will support in New Zealand as part of its community partnership scheme.

They include Eat My Lunch which provides lunches to New Zealand children living in poverty, Conservation Volunteers New Zealand, mental health advocates R U OK? and Black Dog Institute, and CARE Australia.

SMTT sales mission

SANTA Monica Travel & Tourism (SMTT) and key hotel partners will return to Australia and New Zealand next week for an annual sales mission to highlight the Los Angeles beach district's latest developments to the trade.

The team will visit Melbourne, Sydney and Auckland from 12-21 Nov for a series of appointments with industry partners - email kylie@klick.com.au for enquiries.

Enchanted details

PRINCESS Cruises has revealed further details of its next new ship *Enchanted Princess*, which will debut in Jun 2020.

The ship will be named in Southampton in the UK before heading to the Mediterranean for its inaugural season.

Like sister ship *Sky Princess*, it will feature 700m² Sky Suites on the top deck, a Wakeview pool on the aft deck and a Sanctuary area with private cabanas.



THE 2018 Australian Travel Agents Co-Operative (ATAC) conference wrapped up in Singapore on the weekend, with a lavish gala dinner and awards ceremony wowing the crowd with its Chinese lion dance ceremony, cabaret dancers and band.

The evening was also an opportunity for Ken Morgan, Chairman of ATAC, to bestow praise on its members for their achievements throughout the course of the year, while also expressing gratitude to the event's preferred partners and sponsors for making the colourful evening possible.

A group of lucky attendees

didn't leave empty handed, with some amazing travel experiences conferred to the top achieving agents, including an Intrepid tour of Borneo and a Swagman expedition to South Africa.

ATAC's 2019 conference will return to Australian shores next Oct, with Brisbane selected as the host city.

Pictured are the winners on the night representing Meridian Travel in Vic, Ramsgate Travel in NSW, Cruise Express in NSW, Pellegrino Travel in Vic, National Warrnambool Travel in Vic and Flower Travel in Vic with Wayne Hamilton, MD, Swagman Tours (far right).

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CT Partners celebrate growth



CT PARTNERS celebrated a year of growth, success and independence with its annual business meeting at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Bangkok last week.

More than 75 owners and key senior supplier management attended the event with a theme focusing on the Value of Human Interaction.

CT Partners Chairman Grant Wilson said, "CT Partners is the largest and most influential independent travel buying network in Australia, and this year we welcome our newest member TTFN Travel, with offices in Melbourne and Perth".

"With our annual revenue now at \$1.7 billion and climbing, this is another year for us to celebrate together with our supplier partners," he said.

Wilson added "our members are exceptional and the power, ideas and strategy that result from bringing everyone together is a significant advantage".

Keynote speaker, UK entrepreneur and branding specialist BJ Cunningham, presented an address on engaging customers.

Delta Air Lines VP LA & Sales - West, Ranjan Goswami, moderated The Great Debate on the use of artificial intelligence in providing personalisation to add value for consumers.

Mandarin Oriental Hotels' Regional Director of Sales Aust and NZ, Peter Hession was recognised for his longstanding support of CT Partners.

Pictured are: Alba Aradillos, Ranjan Goswami and Nicole Bennett, Delta Air Lines.



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AFTA UPDATE

from Jayson Westbury



IT'S Melbourne Cup today and for many in the travel industry it is not only a day that stops the nation,

it is a day that we all celebrate.

So whatever you are doing today, I hope it is full of fun and activity and perhaps you might even back a winner.

For what it's worth, and it might be a little late by the time you are reading this, I like Ace High, Red Cardinal and Yucatan perhaps in a boxed trifecta.

Last week and over the weekend I had the pleasure to take part in two group member conferences.

The first, the Magellan Travel Group conference, was held at the Hyatt Regency Sydney overlooking Darling Harbour.

While my visit was brief, the desire and passion in the hearts and minds of the Magellan agents was clear as they celebrated a big year of change.

There is no question they have a clear way forward.

A very big congratulations to all those recognised at the awards event & I look forward to further embracing all of the Magellan agents in the year ahead.

The second, the ATAC

conference, was held in Singapore.

So while there was a small nine-hour pause for me between conferences, I was delighted to join the ATAC agents for their annual meeting and conference.

Some really exciting times ahead for the ATAC group and I also pass on my congratulations to those recognised and celebrated during the various events over the weekend.

The travel industry, and more importantly travel agents, are alive and well in Australia and these two groups demonstrate clearly that, united as members, more can be achieved.

During both conferences I was able to share the new television commercial that AFTA is running to highlight the value that travel agents bring to consumers.

The new tagline, "Travel Agents – Experience you can trust" appears to be going well with travel agents and consumers and AFTA is really keen to work with all our members and the trade more broadly as we extend and build on our consumer campaign.

So after a busy weekend for the travel industry and as Melbourne Cup passes by, it appears we are now on a sprint to the end of 2018 with only seven weeks to go until Christmas.

Senior travel event

AUSTRALIAN travel researcher Bronwyn White will share new primary research about the over 50s travel market on 20 Nov at Sydney's Bondi Icebergs.

The three-hour workshop will include the changing needs, values and attitudes of the "New Young" and guidance on how to connect with the market.

For bookings, **CLICK HERE**.

EY Economy space

ETIHAD Airways will introduce a new seating option across its wide-body fleet called Economy Space which features an increased seat pitch of up to 36 inches.

The new seating option will be refitted on the carrier's 10 Airbus A380s by Dec.

It will also be added on 12 Boeing 777s and 21 Boeing 787 Dreamliners by the end of 2019.

Ethihad said the move was in response to popularity and demand for extra legroom seats.

Tahiti agent famil

ELEGANT Resorts & Villas in association with Air Tahiti Nui and Tahiti Tourisme have announced a French Polynesia famil from 21-28 Feb 2019.

To qualify, agents need to book holiday packages with Elegant Resorts & Villas to French Polynesia, including Air Tahiti Nui flights, before 30 Nov and complete the Tahiti Specialist program with Tahiti Tourisme.

Oman 2nd 787-9

OMAN Air has taken delivery of its second three-class Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner.

The airline expects to receive its third 787-9 Dreamliner in Dec, along with nine more 737 MAX 8s within the next year.

The three-class Dreamliner features eight First class private suites with 180-degree flat-bed seats and extra tall doors for privacy, along with 24 Business class seats & 232 Economy seats.

Peakwork additions

TRAVEL technology company Peakwork has signed on three new hotels to join its Peakwork Leisure Travel Network; Abbey Ireland & UK, Olympia Europe and Worldwide Hotel Link.

Peakwork offers clients access to dynamic packaging that provides connectivity to global hotel and flight providers.

QR GlobalBeacon

QATAR Airways has signed on to be the first user of GlobalBeacon, a product that provides airlines with real-time flight tracking.

QR announced last year that it would adopt the new tech and feed it directly into its integrated operations centre.

GlobalBeacon was developed by software company FlightAware and satellite tech business Aireon, and allows for minute-by-minute position tracking of an aircraft at all times, anywhere in the world.

HX AKL reduction

HONG Kong Airlines will reduce its Auckland route from seven to five weekly flights from 31 Mar.

The Asian carrier will cut HKG to AKL services even further from 01 May to 30 Nov next year, moving to three weekly flights.

NSW wine int'l push

THE New South Wales wine sector is gearing up to launch a \$2 million marketing campaign in a bid to attract more int'l visitors.

The NSW Wine Industry Association secured \$1 million in funding through the International Wine Tourism State Grants program and another \$1 million in matching funds through the NSW Government.

"There's a relatively untapped opportunity for the wine sector to focus on wine tourism product development," said Wine Australia Chief Executive Officer Andreas Clark.



THE first guests to arrive at the Ruby Apartments on the Gold Coast were yesterday welcomed by the hotel's CEO David Brook and furry ambassador William the Bear (pictured).

"We are thrilled to welcome Mr and Mrs Griffith from Bulli, NSW to Ruby," Brook said.

"Our Ruby Ambassadors are on hand 24 hours a day to ensure that all the guests' needs are met, and to help them create precious memories," he added.

The first 100 guests checking in to the new complex will become part of The Ruby "First 100 Club", with benefits including souvenir champagne flutes and a bottle of



Moët & Chandon champagne in their room on arrival.

The Ruby Apartments feature 243 apartments and villas with ocean and hinterland views, each with a full kitchen, lounge and dining areas, private en-suite with shower and extras such as USB charging points, Bluetooth speakers & complimentary wi-fi.

Inset the hotel's lobby area.



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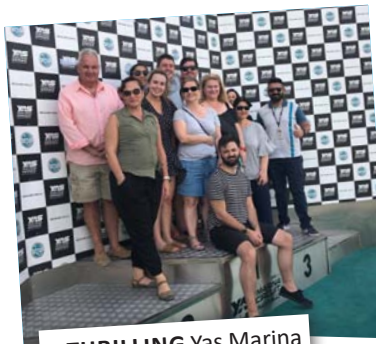
Agents discover Abu Dhabi their way

THE Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi and Etihad Airways recently hosted a group of 30 travel agents from around Australia on their annual Mega Famil.

The agents were split into three groups, each exploring a different aspect of Abu Dhabi – Culinary & Creative, Action & Adventure and Culture & Heritage

During the five-day famil, travel agents had a chance to explore the highlights of Abu Dhabi, as well as some lesser-known attractions and activities, such as the Al Ain oasis, kayaking through Abu Dhabi’s mangroves and visiting the island paradise of Zaya Nurai.

All 30 agents and their hosts joined together to celebrate the start of the famil with a spectacular Friday brunch and ended the trip with a final night party on board a *Prince of Sea* sunset cruise.



THRILLING Yas Marina Circuit tour with Action & Adventure group.



FRED and Barney join the Action & Adventure group at Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi.



THE Culture and Heritage group takes a break for lunch at Emirates Palace.



THE group takes a tour of the highly anticipated Fairmont Marina – Abu Dhabi.



A MUST-SEE when visiting Abu Dhabi - Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque.



SHANNI Leatham, Helloworld Nowra CBD, makes a new friend at the Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital.

READY to take off on a kayaking adventure.



THE Culinary and Creative group gets a taste of ultimate luxury while visiting Zaya Nurai Island.

NOTHING beats watching the sunset in the desert.



THE Mega Famil got off to a great start with a typical Friday Brunch, hosted by Rosewood Abu Dhabi.



CTM celebrates London



MONEY

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

AU\$1 = \$US0.721

THE world is looking to the US today as it prepares for tonight's mid-term election, with the majority of global currencies enjoying stronger positions against the greenback. The AUD ended 0.1% higher overnight against the USD, but fell from its three-month highs against the EUR.

Travellers to Japan will enjoy a surge in value after the AUD returned to one-month highs.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.721
UK	£0.552
NZ	\$1.082
Euro	€0.632
Japan	¥81.64
Thailand	฿23.76
China	¥4.995
South Africa	10.211
Canada	\$0.945
Crude oil	US\$63.14

TOP London booking agents from Corporate Travel Management were recently treated to the quintessential London experience to celebrate their sales achievements.

The group, **pictured**, flew with Qantas before checking into The May Fair Hotel and Cheval Three Quays apartments.

Highlights included the Frida Kahlo exhibition at the V&A Museum, Portobello Markets, and rooftop drinks at Madison.

United Boeing 787

UNITED Airlines has taken delivery of its first Boeing 787-10 *Dreamliner*, making it the first airline in the world to adopt the entire *Dreamliner* family.

The airline has invested in a series of advancements on board the new aircraft, including the addition of the brand's signature all aisle access Polaris Business class, and United Premium Plus seats already installed.

Updated lighting and seatback entertainment also feature.



Terms & conditions

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Fly on South African Airways, Best Airline to Africa and travel with Australia's Best Speciality Wholesaler, Bench Africa, on the Highlights of Botswana Mobile Safari.

To win, all you need to do is have the most creative photo showing your 'Africa' face – the over the top, super excited or emotional expressions that many people make on seeing the incredible experiences that Africa offers. It can be from a trip you took to Africa or even from here (using your imagination)!



Send your entries to bench@traveldaily.com.au

Melb pop-up beer

MELBOURNE Airport has teamed up with Stomping Ground Brewing Company once again to open the facility's pop-up beer garden called "Terminal 3½".

The family friendly venue offers a range of locally brewed beer on tap, with food and coffee also available to travellers.

The venue is located in between terminals 3 and 4, and is open seven days a week.

Hummock go-ahead

THE Queensland Government has given the green light for a new \$1.2 billion tourism project on Hummock Hill Island, subject to "strict conditions".

The proposal includes tourist accommodation, holiday units, and a camping ground, plus retail outlets, a boat ramp and an 18-hole golf course.

Emirates suites

AUSTRIA is set to welcome Emirates' new "game changer" First class product, which will be introduced on Boeing 777-300ER flights between Dubai and Vienna from 01 Dec.

The new private suites offer up to 3.7m² of personal space, and also boast the industry's first virtual windows for suites located in the middle aisle that project real time images from outside the aircraft.

Fish market refresh

RENDERS have been released for a new Sydney Fish Market precinct slated to open in 2023.

NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian said the venue "currently attracts more visitors annually than the Great Barrier Reef", and accounts for approx 20% of international visitors - view images [HERE](#).



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- Exciting travel industry functions & networking opportunities

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